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EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN

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Views and Opinions

Finding—and Using—God

I SAID last week that my method of handling religious believers is—to use a phrase of John Morley's—to explain them out of existence. It is the method which on another level and in essence is practised by doctors. The doctor listens to all the sick man has to say, he probes for a full description of symptoms, asks questions concerning the family history of the patient, explains—often to himself only—the real nature of the complaint, gives advice as to what must be done, and with a bottle of medicine—often to please the sufferer—sends him on his business.

I had another opportunity for putting this method into operation before the article named was in print. It happened on the evening of April 9. My typewriter was in good humour, turning out quite—to me—satisfactory stuff, and all I had to do was just to press the keys, leaving the rest to the machine. I was thus able to devote a part of my attention to the radio, which also was going at full speed, and also, from a clinical point of view—turning out some interesting matter. This time it was the case of the Rev. Jack Wilson, who was delivering the first of four sermons. But it was a single sentence that brought my fingers off the keys of my machine. The parson had asked a question. He also answered it—and the answer was quite satisfactory to the questioner. That is the great feature of the B.B.C. religious discussions. Questions and answers come from the same source, and dissatisfaction is rare.

The parson was talking of man's need for God. Man has always been looking for God. It has been a fairly successful search because gods have been found by the thousand. But taking one thing with another, finding gods has its drawbacks. I recall the case of a woman in America who was charged with killing her two young children. She said God had told her to offer them as a sacrifice. She had found God. Abraham lived in a much more pious age. Finding God led Loyola to establish the Society of Jesuits. Torquemada found God, and he kept the torturers of the Inquisition busy. Hitler found the "good old German God," and his find resulted in a world-war. Finding gods is not all beer and skittles.

How it is Done

To get back to the Rev. Jack Wilson. He believes that man has always been searching for God. When did he begin the hunt? Mr. Wilson's reply gave me an "ear-full." He declaimed in raised tones, "The search for God began when man first felt the need for

him." As Dominie Sampson would have said, "Prodigious." Yet there seems something curious about it. We can understand a man looking for a better tool, or a better shelter, for more food, or for better food, ease from pain, and so forth. He knows, at least in general terms, what he wants, and when he finds it recognizes it as belonging to one of the group of things he requires. But there seems something of a very cock-eyed quality about this man of Mr. Wilson's. For he begins to look about for something he has never had, does not know what it is like, and therefore cannot recognize it if he happens to come across it. He cannot even conceive what it is he wants, for conception must fundamentally be based upon experience.

Can we find a way out of this dilemma in the story of the horse-dealer who sold one of his animals as "hunter." The disgusted buyer brought back the horse, and enquired how the dealer came to describe it as a hunter? Well, replied the dealer, I tried it for nearly every kind of service and found it was fit for none of them. So I said, "God must have intended the horse for something, he must be a hunter."

But even this would not apply to the case of one who searched for God without ever having seen, or known one. For recognition is re-cognition, it means identifying what is seen with a thing that has been seen before. But man simply cannot feel the need for something he has never before experienced. Even the favourite word "yearning" will not do. For, again, one can only "yearn" for something one knows. We must conclude that Mr. Wilson was just talking. What he said meant nothing. It was never meant to mean anything more than to jungle familiar phrases in the ears of his listeners, and then run in "God," the modern combination of "fee-fo-fi-fum," and "abracadabra" that is so powerful in the worlds of magic and religion.

The B.B.C. is fond of running a "Puzzle Corner." I suggest that it submits to the "Corner" the following puzzle, "How and when does a man feel the need for something he has never known and never experienced. And, assuming that he does come across it, how will he know he has done so?" I would give five pounds to anyone who solves the problem.

Fact and Fable

Let us look at the question, I will not say from another point of view but rather, from another angle. Like so many religious statements it involves at best a fallacy, and at its worst a deliberate falsehood. At no time in human history has man run around looking for gods. It is true that man, when getting to just a little above the animal stage, has gods; but he did not hunt for them, he did not search for them, it was the gods that found him. The gods were created by man reading himself into nature. There is very substantial agreement among modern scientists on this point. The idea of primitive man running round with a "I want God" on his lips, and of this being the cause of his discovering gods, is so absurd that I do not expect even Mr. Jack Wilson will accept the idea when it is put plainly before him. And it lies on the face of the history of religion that the great task of the Medicine-

man, from the most primitive sample of his kind down to the present Archbishop of Canterbury, has been to prevent man ignoring the gods. "We neglect God," "We ignore God," "We have forgotten God," all these are common expressions that we are always hearing. What significance have they save that the notion of gods is one that has no solid basis in common everyday facts? Some forty thousand professional preachers, and quite a large number of non-professionals are busily engaged year after year to prevent people leaving God out of their thoughts. And for months the papers and the pulpits have been busy with the cry that unless we can force God upon children the odds are against their bothering their heads with God when they grow older. And it is not those who grow up without God who are miserable; it is those who have grown up with God who are fearful that if the children are left free of religious teaching God's followers will surely decline in numbers. Gods were born of a misunderstanding, they were fashioned in fear, they decline with the growth of human knowledge and independence.

God as Guide

* * *

A shrewd opponent of the kind one seldom meets, because if he is shrewd enough to use the argument against an educated Atheist he will most probably have wit enough to conceive the uselessness of the reply, may say at any rate a belief in God acts as a great driving power. I agree, with the addendum that any strongly held idea will serve the same purpose, irrespective of whether the aim is good or bad. It is, for example, well recognised by a scientific psychology that the constant dwelling upon the torments of hell by preachers of three or four generations ago, was an exhibition, for the most part, of sheer sadism. They got from their gloating over the doctrine of eternal damnation all the gratification that a certain type of character gets from watching torture. On the other hand if the preacher was of a more just and generous nature his belief in God might add to his exertions to save others. But the illuminating fact is that the same results may be found unconnected with any religion. And the really scientific deduction is that religion may strengthen a man's action, as may love of family, of country, or desire for fame, or money. But most often religion provides a cover which prevents a man realising himself. It is the easiest of cover for humbug and hypocrisy.

I recall a case which occurred in the United States at a time when leading American politicians, and "big business" cast a longing eye upon the Philippines. The President, McKinley, addressing a meeting of Christian Ministers said:

I walked the floor of the White House night after night till midnight, and I am not ashamed to tell you gentlemen that I went down on my knees and prayed to Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one night it came to me in this way—that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and to lift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could do by them as our fellow-men for whom Christ died. And then I went to bed and slept soundly.

This is in line of the true Anglo-American spirit. Before McKinley, Mark Twain had remarked of the Pilgrim Fathers who went to America to glorify God, that they landed on Plymouth Rock, and before God at once fell upon their knees. Then they rose up and strong in the power derived from God fell upon the aborigines. Unfortunately God who had inspired McKinley to annex the Philippines did not inform the natives of his counsel. The result was

the Filipinos opposed the annexation, and I am sure that the pious President felt that he was only carrying out the will of God.

We have had in this country some of the same type of statesmen. A very well known one, W. E. Gladstone, who died very soon after he was buried, and a recent one Baldwin, who has been buried before he was dead, were both convinced that God guided them. Indeed it was Gladstone of whose *Labour* there said that while one might find him playing a game of cards with a fifth ace up his sleeve, he would be quite certain that God had placed it there. The coincidental identity of the wishes of God with a man's propensities is very marked. And on the other side of the North Sea we have the same remarkable agreement between the impulses of the Nazi gang and the German God.

The phenomenon indicated is world-wide. The statesman praying to God for guidance finds the reply curiously running on the lines of his own or his party policy. The religious military leader gets advice from God that agrees with the text-books and his own ideas of what should be done. The parson asking God for direction as to whether he shall accept a "call" to a new job has an answer that runs in the direction of a larger salary and a more important position. In the early days of the Christian revival of slavery the English and Dutch and Spanish felt they were justified inasmuch as they were bringing the heathen within range of Christian influences. Havelock Ellis notes that the Spanish brigand would pause in the middle of an act of robbery, or even worse, to observe a religious obligation. We have colonized the "dark" places of the earth because we felt that we were carrying out the will of God in doing so. President McKinley annexes the Philippines for the same reason. Hitler and Co., fulfil the desires of the German God in trying to bring the world under his "new order," and in the name of God and in defence of Christianity we oppose his divinely directed robbery and murder. And we may be ready to find the blasting of the slums of England, and the incidental slaughter of men, women and children, as God's intimation that these slums ought to have been wiped out long ago. It enables the B.B.C. to lie, to deliberately suppress other aspects of the subject with which it deals, to hire men with a small sense of either public or private responsibility, to suppress in the name of freedom and to distort and misrepresent in the name of religious truth and justice.

I think I have touched here upon the deepest, but least recognized, evil that religion inflicts on a society removed from sheer savagery. It prevents a man from coming face to face with himself, from analysing his own motives and so discovering a meanness and a falsity that he might otherwise remedy. To say, in any position from Prime Minister to dustman, I will do what I consider right in the discharge of my duties that may be mine, is to leave the road wide open for correction, and if a man will play the soundest the most important factor—himself—is informed of the nature of what he is doing. But to be convinced that what one is doing is carrying out the will of God is to raise to the level of almost unquestionable value rascality in any or all of its forms. My chief complaint against Christianity has never been that it had in its service so many bad characters, but that it so easily, so fluently, corrupts good ones.

But this leads me to a very wide field of examination, and must be left for some other occasion.

CHAPMAN COHEN

The strength of belief varies immensely with the amount of use that a man has made of his reasoning faculties.—Balzac.

The "Man" Jesus

I.

IN returning once again to a well-worn subject—though I shall endeavour to treat it with some fresh argument in a short series of articles—I hope readers will understand that I make no claim to infallibility. I am fully aware that a good many of them profoundly disagree with me, and that some very learned writers have put up an extremely strong case against those other eminent writers who hold opposite views. It would be rank intolerance on my part not to admit this—though, as far as I personally am concerned, I am all the more delighted to meet a very strong case. If I put my own views in a forthright manner it is, of course, because I believe them to be true; but the other fellow has an equal right to put his case, and it is for the readers to weigh the evidence, and form their own decision.

One thing the discussion has done for us is to do away with the deity of Jesus. Whatever else we Freethinkers may believe, we no longer believe that piece of primitive nonsense. It is much more difficult, however, to decide that there never was a man called Jesus Christ—a man who went about "doing good," or teaching some novel views running counter to orthodox Judaism. It is a fact that most of our great Freethought writers have believed that the man Jesus really lived, and some of them even went so far as to praise him above all the sons of men. If I say that their arguments have not satisfied me, and that on this point I can think and read for myself, it is because, on such a subject, great learning or renown is not necessary. We are dealing with something that is supposed to have happened nearly 2,000 years ago, and it seems to me that it is a question which anybody with average intelligence can study for themselves. Eminent writers can point the way, but in the ultimate a man must decide for himself what he believes.

The four canonical Gospels have caused more discussion perhaps than any other books ever written; but I always feel it is hopeless to reason with anybody on the question who takes them to be, in the main, straightforward narratives, intended by their writers to be plain recitals of events which really happened. For me, they are just the opposite—full of esoteric and mystical teachings based on nosterism in some part, and various allegories in other parts. I am quite convinced that the authors and editors of the editions of the four Gospels which we now have knew this—just as Maimonides, considered by Jews to be the second Moses, knew that Genesis contained an underlying meaning not for the vulgar, and he clearly said so.

There is not a single authentic speech in the Gospels. Even those who believe there is, are hard put to tell exactly what their Jesus said, for he certainly knew no English, and it is almost as certain he never spoke Greek. The language in Palestine in his day is presumed to be Aramaic and nobody knows who translated his Aramaic, if he ever spoke at all, into Greek. And there is just another point which is vital. It is, that in the main the Gospels are anti-Jewish documents, though as quite a number of Jews went over to the new religion—just as, for example, quite a number of Christians went over to Joseph Smith—it was necessary to show Jesus came not to destroy one tittle of the law. Mostly, however, he is laying down the law against them with "But I say unto you, etc." For some Freethinkers, this makes Jesus a great "Freethought Figure," but it is not unfair to point out that choosing those speeches which suit us can make Jesus anything. If one cared

to use an Apocryphal Gospel it would be easy to show that Jesus was the Greatest Carpenter that ever lived for he made a door, which was built too small, stretch to the correct size. No other carpenter has ever done this.

I once heard a Salvation Army captain attacking Darwin, and punctuating his attack with "But I tell you Darwin is a fool to say we all come from monkeys; I tell you that the Word of God gives him the lie; I tell you, etc." I am by no means inclined to call that gentleman a Freethinker because he showed independent judgment against a notable scientist.

Nor am I impressed with authorities who are "learned" Jews. They have a right to their opinion, and must be allowed to express them; but—as far as I have read their works—they appear to me to be influenced on the Jesus problem almost entirely by what the Talmud says. The Talmud does mention a Jesus, and therefore there must have been a Jesus.

I once had a discussion with a well known Rationalist on this historicity question, and met some days later a couple of Jewish Rationalists who told me how much they enjoyed the debate. "Only," said one of them, "I agreed with your opponent, not with you." I said that was a tribute to his fine arguments. "Oh no," he added hastily, "you see, Jesus is mentioned in the Talmud." Our arguments did not matter two hoots to these people—they merely gave them some entertainment.

Eisler, Klausner, Dr. Claude Montefiore, and many other Jewish authorities, just leave me cold. They seem unable to understand the mythical argument, just as they so often deliberately suppress the argument from allegory or esotericism. For them, Bible writers just put down mostly statements of fact, and there are no or few underlying meanings in the Bible narratives. Yet even in the Bible itself is pointed out that some of the stories are allegorical.

Jewish authorities will retail the story of Abraham as if the events described actually happened. Yet who ever wrote Galatians clearly states that at least some of the things concerning Abraham are allegorical. (See Gal. iv. 24.) Modern archæologists writing of their discoveries in Chaldaea, insist that these point to the existence of a real Abraham—though, for me, their arguments are mostly childish nonsense. How anyone can believe that Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, ever lived is beyond me. Yet if Abraham never lived, how could Jesus have descended from him?

But apart from the Bible, what have we got in the way of evidence that a man called Jesus Christ ever lived? Only the well-worn arguments from Josephus, Tacitus, and the Talmud. For those readers who are unfamiliar with some of the reasons why these arguments provide no real evidence, I will devote a few articles to their examination. Unless one has a good library, or has access to a good one, it is not easy to get the necessary books, and thus follow the reasoning step by step from first-class authorities. I shall try and show what it was which influenced men like Dupuis, Volney, Robert Taylor, Arthur Drews, W. B. Smith, and John M. Robertson to come to their conclusions. Readers can then judge for themselves and make their own decision.

H. CUTNER

Whatever was required to be done, the Circumlocution Office was beforehand with all the public departments in the art of perceiving how not to do it.—*Dickens*.

The Sitwell Comedy

THERE is to be no appeal. The curtain has been finally drawn. I may therefore comment, with no frustration of the flow of justice, upon the trial of the libel action brought by brothers and sister Sitwell against *Reynold's News*, on the ground that Mr. Hamilton Fyfe stated that amongst the curiosities of the literary history of the 1920s would be the vogue of the Sitwells, who had gone into oblivion.

In the valley of the shadow of the law, as Dickens called it, in which I pick up my pence, it brought rays of humour. It is long since one of the courts of the King's Bench has had so much the semblance of a literary society. The subject was did the Sitwells, as Dr. Levy said of Edith, "belong to the history of publicity rather than that of poetry?" The protagonists in the debate were Mr. G. O. Slade, with his three Sitwell allies, and Mr. D. G. Roberts, K.C., who fought a lone hand, as, for inexplicable reasons, Mr. Hamilton Fyfe was invisible. Mr. Justice Cassels was a kind of chairman, knowing little of the subject but willing to learn.

If I must categorize the level of the debate I fear it did not rise higher than secondary school level. This was the fault of the Sitwells. They had been habituated to phrases that please the adolescent mind: they were well equipped, it was clear, for a good old literary "rag." For example, of Austin Dobson, whose delicacy and charm remain in the minds of many of us, Edith had said that he "had more of the functions of a hair-dresser than that of a poet." Still worse, the effects of his attempts at rhythm were "like catching his toenails in his beard" (incidentally he was clean shaven). I once heard a "lady" in a factory use the minatory malediction, "I'll 'ave yer guts fer garters." (This is to be found in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. Curiously enough her name was Scott, although I doubt if she had ever heard of "The Wizard of the North"). For a literary lady, was Edith more elegant? Our gracious queen of literature also said of a reviewer that he was "like a libidinous old sheep dying of foot rot in a field," and once published a picture of a tombstone which was "sacred to the memory of Miss Topsy Jones, poet"; it bore a cross and the letters R.I.P. Even Edith though was capable of one good deed even in her slanging of stupid Sallies. She told us in soft tones, in the witness box, that later she made it up with Topsy.

I have read and enjoyed a little of Brother Sitwell's poetry, and this was not affected by the quotation in Court of lines which had been spoken at the Æolian Hall by Sister Edith through a huge mouth, flanked by red cheeks:—

Hell is more proper
Than Heaven or Bath or Joppa.

Obviously, in a debating match of this kind, the best specimens of the Sitwellian muse were not to be offered by Mr. Roberts. Perhaps it was this sort of thing that led *The World* to write that "the Sitwells poetry is sheer inanity and unadulterated drivel."

Other analogous literary families were cited, and evidently Mr. Justice Cassels had heard of the Brontës. It was surprising nobody cited the Bensons. It could not be said of them in the words of Mr. Roberts, that "they always seem to be happy when they are writing about themselves and each other." Edith mentioned the Powyses. It was clear the Judge had never heard of that iconoclastic trinity. The name was spelled out and he took it down. I daresay it was unknown also to "learned Counsel," so often unlearned in matters beyond the law. The legal mind does not turn like a magnet towards books with the title *Damnable Opinions*, or to a study of Christianity daringly labelled *The Pathetic Fallacy*.

I think even the staff of the Court enjoyed the comedy. Mr. Associate (does any legal gentleman

earn so much by so little?) wore down his pencil at an unprecedented rate, marking exhibits from the serried row of Sitwell books. (Mr. Roberts said his junior had had the "heavy task" of reading them through. Was the adjective "fair comment"?) The usher, probably glad of relief from a succession of wearisome "running down" cases, smiled at times. Perchance he was trying to remember the name of Mrs. Leo Hunter, of whom he had read in a book called *Pickwick Papers*. The *Graphic* had said "the Sitwells should be flattered by attentions of any kind." They succeeded in keeping the attention of the Court for three days, and in getting themselves photographed outside it. Under cross-examination as to this it was maintained that they were snapped whilst looking for a taxicab. A few words of advice in the Sitwellian ears. Do not all look one way for taxis in the Strand. Taxis came from the east as well as from the west. Do not stand so far away from the kerb.

This case has its moral for us Freethinkers.

One point of interest was raised by Mr. Roberts. "Is the Bible a good 'bed-book'?" It was not clear whether Counsel was here considering its weight in avoirdupois or its mental content. I think the Court was uneasy at the introduction of this question. It wanted to change the subject. Certainly many sinners, reading it one assumes for salvation, have found its soporific qualities. Then there is the generosity of the award, £350 apiece. The original sum of £50, offered for a settlement, was much nearer a true valuation of any damage caused. One could not but wonder how other judges would have dealt with it. I imagined the late Lord Darling, sitting like an eager cockatoo, awaiting the opportunity to remark that Edith's saucy sallies did not sit well on her. The late Mr. Justice Avory would have sat with immobile face and acid aspect. No smiling matter for him. The present Mr. Justice Hawke would have swooped in intermittently with "Where are we getting to now?" I do not think either of these judges would have rated the damage so high.

As for Mr. Justice Cassels, the remarkable feature of his summing up was the omission of any reference to the internecine warfare of the Sitwells with the omission of any reference to the interesting warfare of the Sitwells with their fellow authors. No doubt he preened himself on his judicial impartiality. A common jury, he told himself, would not have seen that these had no relevance to an attack made by somebody not assailed by the Sitwells. Nevertheless lay common sense may do more justice than legal learning. A jury would likely have said that those who live in glasshouses should not throw stones. If they do, can they complain if a brick-bat is the response? One could not, of course, have such an omnibus defence to a libel action, but it was a pity Miss Topsy Jones and the executors of Austin Dobson were not allies of Hamilton Fyfe!

Would Mr. Justice Cassels have smiled and given generous damages if the Sitwells had been left wing in religion or politics? I daresay not. Supposing, instead of Mr. Fyfe's review being of an anthology of poetry, the subject had been Christianity and the Bible, and the reviewer had attacked what he could call banal blasphemies? The moral is you can be saucy, but you must be safe. The one instance aduced when a Sitwell had come a cropper was significant. Osbert had drawn a picture of a suffragette chained to rail and bearing a banner with a strange device, "Vote for Jesus." He paid £250 for this joke. You may attack literary gods, but at your peril you try it on the Trinity.

Sir Hugh Walpole, oddly asking "a moment's space" in the *Daily Telegraph*, thanked the Sitwells because they had "stood up in defence of us all." He had found writers "Meek, modest and doubtful of

themselves." Where has this discovery been made? Not, I am sure, in Bernard Shaw's boudoirs. Sir Hugh had "seen one author after another attacked in terms that no doctor or civil servant or business man would suffer silently." I asked what have I done to escape? My eight books have brought about three hundred reviews. Not more than 5 per cent have been adverse; less positively unkind. Yet I never bribed a reviewer; one invited me to supper at the Savage Club, another to lunch at the National Liberal Club. But—here's the rub!—my main interest has been London history and topography. This is so incapable of shock that it could be offered without offence—perhaps not without boredom—even in a Salvation Army barracks. Some writers may have hopes based upon the Sitwell case. Bad sellers may bring good damages. I looked through my press-cutting album and found a review of my *Encyclopædia of London* in the *Daily Worker*. What a promising defendant in a libel action! Who would find for them? The reviewer however concluded by recommending that every library should buy a copy! Other writers may have better luck. It would not, however, be wise to go all aboard for damages if the book attacked had such a title as *Damnable Opinions, Letters to the Lord or Religion and Sex*. If Sir Hugh Walpole had had Freethinking writers in mind he would have been justified. You may punch on the printed page, but you must punch with care. Let your victim be one already bound by the law and Mrs. Grundy.

W. KENT

Wallace Nelson

Not one of the "small number" of Freethinkers in this country who remembers Wallace Nelson has yet emerged since your note in the *Freethinker* of March 9.

Grant me space to send him a greeting, and to let him know that he is a well-remembered figure to two Freethinkers—myself and my elder brother—who listened to him frequently when they were youngsters.

Wallace Nelson was the first Freethought lecturer I ever heard. I have heard many since, including three Presidents of the N.S.S., but I can still see that slight figure of the great little Scotsman standing on a dray in Barnsley Market Place delighting huge crowds by his witty discourse.

Wallace Nelson worked in Sheffield during the eighties, and he often came to Barnsley to deliver three open-air lectures on each Sunday visit.

As near as my memory serves, the first time I heard him would be while Foote was serving his sentence for blasphemy.

My brother and I used to go with father to all the meetings of the local branch of the N.S.S., and hawk back numbers of the *Freethinker* and the *National Reformer* at half price to aid the branch funds.

Once we heard Wallace debate with a man called Taylor, who also hailed from Sheffield. This debate was held in a hall crowded to suffocation. I'm sure Wallace Nelson will recall a bearded gentleman, somewhat deaf, Liversedge by name, who regularly mounted the platform in opposition. On one occasion this gentleman, perhaps to appease the lecturer, stolidly informed him and the audience that his own mother was a Scotsman.

"What a massive lot of information you have given me," the lecturer led off in replying, and after a jocular appreciation of his opponent's parentage, he demolished his arguments with twinkling humour in Scotch accents of a pleasing quality.

About this period, David Pattison, also a Scotsman, was President of the Branch. Besides having some platform ability he was well known to dog

fanciers throughout Great Britain as an official judge (at principal shows) of Skye terriers and Dandie Dinmonts.

Wallace Nelson was blessed with the comic spirit. Even opponents could not help joining in the laughter his droll exposures of their absurdities created.

In words of your own, Wallace Nelson knew that religion was too serious to be taken solemnly.

Is it this spirit that keeps him young and active despite the flight of years?

H. IRVING

Acid Drops

The Papacy is shocked that in Germany obstacles should be placed in the way of Roman Catholic priests ordering their followers what should be done with regard to Nazi regulations when they touch Roman Catholicism. Our opinions concerning persecution whether the persecution be against religion or in favour of it, should be well known to all. In the case of the papal protest this is on the level of Hitler complaining that in this country his followers are not permitted to behave with regard to the Jews and Communists as they do in Germany.

But look at the case of Spain, a Fascist State to which we have just "lent" two and a half million pounds. The chief of that State is General Franco, a very staunch Roman Catholic who has received the blessing of the Pope in return. From a recent issue of "The Voice of Spain" we learn that about five of every six Protestant Churches have been closed. Outside lettering on Protestant meeting-places are forbidden as they "constitute a menace to the public life, and offend the well-ordered feeling of the whole of the nation." In 1939 "the Government confiscated all the Scriptures it could lay hands on and destroyed them." "The Bible House in Barcelona has been closed, and in Madrid probably 100,000 copies of the Bible, Testament and Gospels have been confiscated." "Nationalist Spain, is worse, in regard to religious toleration than the Spain of George Borrow one hundred years ago." And the papacy cries out against the persecution of religion!

We should like some responsible parson to explain to us the "spiritual" significance of the defeat of Yugoslavia. That has succeeded a Day of Prayer that has brought us victories, we are told. Now, except for guerilla bands, Yugoslavia is in the hand of the Germans. Really God ought to make up his mind one way or the other as to which side he is on. Up to the present, Germany seems, by the religious reading of the situation, to have much to thank God for. It almost looks as though God is trifling with both sides, and only when one side has triumphed will he show which side he backed.

George Eliot said that prophecy was the most gratuitous form of error. I think she was wrong when she gave prophecy the first place. Prophecy is closely associated with religion, and religion, when man reaches a moderate degree of civilization, is almost driven to prophecy as the one thing it can speak on with the greatest security. For most religious prophecy is concerned with what will happen in the next world and so defies contradiction. But still we would give first place to that gratuitous form of folly exhibited when men go out of their way to write or talk, or publish, quite unnecessarily, downright rubbish—even for religion.

For example, "The Scottish Electrical Engineer" for April, quite unnecessarily, exhibits folly, or a semi-insane desire to please the least intelligent of its readers, by printing, with approval

some sentences by the Rev. Lloyd Jones. Says the godly Jones, "The attempt to produce a moral state without religion could be demonstrated to be fallacious in the following ways. Firstly, it is an insult to God, and . . . religion was not to be commended because of benefits which follow its practice." All we make of this is that we insult God when we manage to do without him. If we can do without him, and many millions do, and are the better for it, God has as much justification to feel insulted as a butcher has because one of his customers have given up eating meat. Probably Mr. Jones believes that we insult God by not bothering about his representatives. At any rate people do get along without God, and the only people that suffer are those of Mr. Jones's brand.

The second insult, says Mr. Jones, is offered to man, because, it assumes that actions are more important than the man himself. Now what does this light of the Church mean? If you take all man's actions, from the most elementary physical ones, to the most intellectual and moral ones, what on earth is there left? What is a man apart from his actions? And if his actions are good, in what sense is he bad? Now we are well acquainted with this clotted bosh of the clergy, but why need a technical trade paper republish pulp nonsense as though it were pure wisdom? We would like to be able to make the editor of the journal explain on a public platform exactly what he thinks Mr. Jones means.

It is not actual, so much as wilful, blindness that keeps a vast number of people from understanding the real nature of the existing religious position. For example, a leading article in the "Record" remarks "Unbelief as a reasoned opposition may not be as much as Mr. Bradlaugh once expected, but of consistent unconcern there is much to challenge every effort of the Christian Church." We note this because of its complete misunderstanding of the religious situation. In the first place the unconcern about God is immensely greater than it was in Bradlaugh's time. When Bradlaugh began his campaign the belief in God was immensely more realistic than it is today. Then in the middle of that campaign there came the development of the theory of evolution and the researches of anthropology. The result of this combined onslaught was that "God" lost its realistic character, and became one of the many primitive beliefs that have come down to us. But this also made the way clear for a development of sociology, and the result of this was that those who found the ground clearer for action—thanks to the work of Freethinkers that had been going on since the time of Paine—were able to deal with sociology and economics in a more thorough way. And if anyone were to calculate the interest in the social sciences to-day with that shown, say in 1850, by the mass of the people, he will get some indication of the extent of the reaction of the Freethought attack on social life.

Of course, we do not agree with those who turn their backs on the direct attack on religion. These people are taking up a scientifically unsound position. Religious ideas and feelings, which go back to the dawn of human history, are not to be wiped away in a generation. The play of the old ideas continues, and the operations of the B.B.C. with its paid gang of primitives shows us these more primitive aspects of religion being revived with only a slightly changed emphasis and terminology. The worst forms of the present world-war would have been impossible without that background of religion which is still strong enough to threaten the life of civilization.

The "Record" writer falls into the usual nonsensical religious jargon when he says that with the weakening of the Christian Church, there has gone on "a laxity of personal morals that may be quite as injurious as the grosser evils of the eighteenth century." It is rather interesting to learn that there is a danger of our getting back to the eighteenth century in morals, when conduct was worse and the Christian Church very much stronger. But the talk about the decline of morals of recent years is just rubbish, when it is not part of a deliberately lying Christian propaganda. There is greater frankness, a less widely spread semi-concealed indecency that there was among the young people of our own youth, but frankness does not of necessity involve indecency. There is a greater intellectual independence—poor as that may be—and it is the independence of the new generations that has hit the Church the hardest. As we have so often said, Nazism in its worst form is only an exaggerated Christianity. And if the Christian environment of the past had been weaker, the furious brutality of the German might be less than it is. No one can quite escape the influence of his ancestry.

The four new Governors of the B.B.C. appear to be all carefully chosen from the religious point of view, Mr. A. Mann, in particular, being, we are told, "a keen Churchman." No doubt they will take good care to keep up the Reith tradition of seeing that whatever else emanates from Broadcasting House there will be plenty of the narrowest type of primitive Christianity radioed on every possible opportunity. Even the "Church Times" has been led to protest at the intellectual quality of the services we get—it says, "If the new directors can secure a less unworthy presentation of the established religion of the country, their work will be great indeed." Even we could hardly show more our contempt for the past "presentations"—though we would urge their complete obliteration as being even more worthy of commendation.

The Bishop of Worcester wrote to the "Birmingham Post," that the Day of Prayer resulted in such amazing successes of our arms in the Mediterranean and in Africa that he had hoped Easter Sunday would be taken advantage of to give more thanks to God for what has happened. The stand by Yugoslavia he thinks calls for special thanksgiving. It is strange that God's attention is not called to affairs more frequently, and that some hint is not given that he might act earlier, and finish the job better. Good Christians will thank God for enabling us to beat the Italians in Africa, although we understand that General Wavel and our troops had a little to do with it. Why on earth did he not give his worshippers a hint that the Germans were landing a number of troops and a good supply of tanks, and were now retaking some of the territory we had conquered? As to Yugoslavia. Why did not God inspire the Yugoslavs not to take a firm stand earlier? And having inspired them to resist why did he permit the Germans to destroy Belgrade, kill large numbers of the people and let the Germans take Yugoslav territory? Really God ought to make up his mind what he wants, and see that it happens. He is really too indecisive. If he can interfere and does, why are his interferences so uncertain in their consequences? Besides, why does he wait to be asked, anyway? A man who can do good would probably do it, without grovelling before him. Whatever gods there be should at least behave at least as well as decent human nature.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

War Damage Fund.—Reader (Kingsway, Ossett), 2s.; C. M. Hollingham, £1.

J. Macniven.—See "Acid Drops." We do not regard the paragraph offensive. One does not take offence at the capers of a fool. One feels sorry.

T. Stephenson.—Mr. Hannen Swaffer takes himself very seriously.

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Sugar Plums

This issue of the "Freethinker" again bears marks of the war, in the shape of mixed type, although the real trouble is known only to those within the inner circle. The raid of April 16 did no damage to the structure of the Office, but it broke the gas mains and so put our linotype machine out of action. This involved getting the paper set up where and how it was possible. But the main thing is that the paper is out and we need here thank heartily all those who have helped us to that end. We hope to be back soon to a state that is as normal as the time will allow us to be. Meanwhile we know our readers will be generous with regard to the vagaries of type in this issue.

We continue to make new subscribers from those in the services. Part is due to the policy of distributing free copies of the "Freethinker" and pamphlets, part to the efforts made by those who are already subscribers. We are always pleased to hear from those serving in the forces, and to give whatever help and advice is possible.

Messrs. Watts and Co., have added two more pamphlets to their "Thinker's Forum" series. The first is "Priest or Physician," by George Godwin, and provides a lively and informative criticism of the various faith-healing cults throughout the ages. The reading of this pamphlet will provoke many a smile, even though there is a feeling of sadness underlying it. It almost invites one to divide the greater mass of humans into fools and fakers. We are quite certain that many of those who encourage these faith-healing devotees come well into the second of the two groups named.

The second pamphlet is by Mr. C. Delisle Burns, "After War—Peace." Mr. Delisle Burns has many good things to say, as those who read him would expect, and it is certain that if a real peace is to be obtained it can be done only if the war is lifted from the low level of armed combat to that eternal warfare of ideas and ideals. With this we are sure Mr. Delisle Burns will agree. But we do not know what Mr. Burns has in mind when he says that "Christianity first made current to the world the idea that the difference between the good man and the bad was more important than differences of race or nation or social class." Putting on one side the correctness of this tribute to Christianity, it is certain that philosophers

dealt with the aspect of life mentioned long before Christianity was heard of. The statement is so clearly wrong that one fancies that there is some occult significance in the words quoted that we are unable to grasp.

Phrenology and Determinism

(Concluded from page 149)

THE brain comprises perceptive, reflective and emotional organs. Of the reflectives, some are associated with the intellect and others with the emotions. The perceptive gather in the raw material on which the reflectives can set themselves to work according to the nature of the material. It might be Newton's apple falling down, or Blatchford's poor people being treated unfairly or inhumanely. One kind of reflective takes care of the first, another of the second. Newton's faculty of "Causality" (that is, his brain-organ that hungers to clear up the cause of a phenomenon) would be agreeably stimulated; but Blatchford's propensity of "Benevolence" (the organ of the brain which hungers to see happiness in sentient beings) would be disagreeably stimulated. And it is probably true to say that Newton would never notice what Blatchford did—and vice versa.

It will be seen from the above that only some of the organs of the brain are active at any given time, and that some may never be activated, even if well-developed. Edison once said that he never realized that he possessed the faculties which constitute the "gift" of invention until some phrenologist told him so. We think in bits at different times. You could call it "staggered" thinking—thinking "spread over" to obviate congestion in the morning and evening of the mental day.

I see in Chapman Cohen's *Almost an Autobiography* that Mr. Priestley comes under castigation for loose thinking on the subject of immortality. Mr. Priestley had said that he did not want immortality for "this bunch of habits and bags of tricks"—meaning his earthly self. What he does want Mr. Cohen has defined and analysed in his own incomparable manner. What I am concerned with is Mr. Priestley's accidental lapse into wisdom in calling himself a "bunch of habits." This is sound phrenology. When he speaks (as he does) of having yearnings which "a few years of this life cannot possibly satisfy," and when he says that different yearnings come upon him at different times, you have an excellent illustration of the "staggered thinking" just spoken of. Sometimes his yearning takes the form of "vastly and oddly impersonal curiosity." Good: curiosity proceeds from the brain-organ "Causality." And certainly it is impersonal, because the property of this organ is to search for causes irrespective of the kind of phenomenon to be investigated. By itself it would indiscriminately seek the causes of all phenomena. But it is never by itself; there are other organs of the brain which operate to narrow its field of search to some particular category of phenomena. Again, it is impersonal in another sense; it doesn't know "Mr. Priestley," it is simply one faculty among others which, in minding its own business, creates one of the characteristics which together register the personality of Mr. Priestley.

Notice, further, that Mr. Priestley uses the adverbs: "vastly" and "oddly" to qualify his impersonal curiosity. That is very interesting. For there is a brain-organ that has an insatiable hunger for vastness. It is called "Sublimity," and there is another organ which specializes in the inexplicable—the mysterious. It feeds on oddity. It is called "Spirituality." But, from the phrenologist's analysis of it, the better name

would be "Superstition." (You see, phrenologists are human; and they do not like using terms that would offend "spiritually-minded" people.)

Put these facts together, and you will see that in Mr. Priestley's phrase: "vastly and oddly impersonal curiosity," the two adverbs do not qualify the nature of the curiosity but the object of it. The phrase should read: "impersonal curiosity in vast and odd phenomena." In that form it fits in perfectly with what we all know of Mr. Priestley through his writings. He is preoccupied with ideas like "God," "Immortality," "Time," etc., all of them embodying concepts of majestic dimensions and mysterious significances. To coin a phrenological appellation of my own, he is a Superstitious Sublimist. For that reason his organ of "Causality" functions in a narrow field of search and speculation appropriate to his leading propensities.

Touching the subject of "God," I must allude to a third propensity, named: "Veneration." It hungers for anything ancient, be it an object, a building or an institution. Obviously nothing is more palatable to this brain-organ than the concept of God the Everlasting—the Creator of All Things. ("Before the world was, I AM") Appropriately enough it inhabits the central flat on the top floor of the cranium. It is nearest to the sky. One can be morally certain that Mr. Priestley carries about a flourishing specimen of it under his hat.

We have now completed the holy trinity of organs that distinguish the deist. It is a trinity, not of three persons, but three hungers—hunger after the vast, the mysterious and the ancient. These three are one; and we might call this "one" the "Worship-Hunger."

To go one step farther with Mr. Priestley; he confesses to a periodic "hunger for beauty." Well, "beauty" is so meaningful that it is meaningless. I prefer the word "perfection," though I admit that it is very little nearer intelligibility as it stands. My reason is that phrenology locates and identifies an organ of the brain called: "Ideality." This the phrenologists describe as hungering after perfection; not as an abstraction, but in the sense of requiring everything to be of the best after its own nature. To my mind a more precise name would be Fastidiousness, connoting, for example, the exacting demands of the epicure. Anyhow, the point I want to make is this; that this organ is doomed to disappointment in the very nature of things; and the more developed it is the more it stimulates the sensation of repugnance at the prospect of death stopping its search.

Now, Mr. Priestley is like most of us in hungering for "beauty." We all want the best in the particular thing our faculties enable us to discover, appraise and enjoy. But what has just been said about organs of hunger in general affords no ground for Mr. Priestley's implied proposition that because he leaves this life hungry he will finish his meal in another. It is not as if he could prove that his yearnings proceeded from other-worldly organs that phrenology cannot detect. Admittedly this science cannot explain all mental phenomena. (For one thing it postulates a physiologically healthy brain.) But it can certainly explain mentalities like Mr. Priestley's without leaving any loophole for unverifiable theories of causation to wriggle their way through.

Well, now, to conclude on the issue which started this discourse, Determinism has yet to be faced with a phenomenon that is demonstrably incapable of explanation on our determinist principles. There are things which, at present, cannot be explained at all. But everything that has been explained in the past has been grist to the determinist mill; and this establishes the presumption that no exception will occur until the sun rises in the west.

JOHN GRIMM

James and his Epistle

(Continued from page 191)

II. continued—THE community was evidently disunited. For he accuses them of "jealousy and faction," which involved mutual "wars" and "fightings," and says plaintively, "Murmur not, brethren, one against another that ye be not judged." As a remedy he exhorts them to have "patience," following the example of the prophets, and of the patriarch Job. This means that common irritability gave them individually an opportunity of perfecting their spiritual life by suffering with patience their mutual provocations. A truly resplendent idea!

III.—Besides misconduct with respect to their position as members of a religious community, they were evidently guilty of dissolute living, since he assures them of praying for the means whereby to gratify their "pleasures," and says, "Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." (iv. 3-9) They are also charged with adultery (iv. 4), but, as the verse goes on to say, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God," it appears that infidelity to the Almighty is here expressed in a figure quite familiar from the Old Testament. This figurative way of speaking helps us to believe that when he talks about his readers fighting and warring among themselves, and killing one another (ix. 1-2), he does not mean that they really committed murder unless it were in the sense that, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John iii. 15). They are strongly warned against censoriousness. He that accuses or judges his brother, sets himself above the law, and whilst assuming the position of judge, comes into the hands of him, who, as both lawgiver and judge, is able either to save or to destroy (iv. 11, 12). The moral depravity of the persons addressed in this Epistle has induced certain critics to believe that it must have been written long after the early days of Christianity. But this belief is invalidated by the fact that the apostle Paul attributes great wickedness to some among his converts, particularly those of the Corinthian Church, and that in other cases he finds it necessary to insist upon the practice of what are really the common decencies of life. Hitherto I have assumed that the author was of the Christian persuasion. This is the usual assumption, and in my opinion it is correct, still it has been questioned. The crucial point is as follows: Is the Epistle of Jacob, *alias* James, the work of a Christian, even though he belonged to the Hebrew race, or is it the performance of an orthodox Jew which has been tampered with for the purpose of giving it a Christian appearance.

Here are some relevant facts.

Of the other Epistles in the New Testament, no less than twenty in number, seventeen have a definitely Christian greeting, and of these, thirteen have a definitely Christian farewell. The exceptions are *Hebrews*, *1 John* and *III John*, which lack both those features; and *Romans*, *Colossians*, *I Timothy*, *II John*, and *Jude*, from which the second feature is lacking. *Romans* and *Jude* end with a glorification of God through Christ, whilst the other two conclude respectively by saying, "Grace be with you," and "Peace be with thee." A good example of the customary practice occurs in *Philemon* (v. 3-25), which says: "Grace to you and peace from . . . the Lord Jesus Christ," and, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." In marked contrast to the above examples James gives no Christian salutation, and bids no farewell whatever; and, although he introduces himself as "a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ," the latter phrase—four words in the Greek

text—would be an easy interpolation. In the first verse of the second chapter the author says:—

My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

Here the two words "Jesus Christ" can be removed without injury to the syntax of the passage. If this were done, the person referred to would be the Lord God, not the Lord Jesus. The expression "God of glory" occurs in *Psalms* (xxix. 3) and in *Acts* (vii. 2); but "Lord of glory" is found in *1 Corinthians* ii. 8), where Jesus Christ is obviously the subject. Touching respect of persons, the margin to *James* gives three references in each of the Testaments, and everyone relates to God. Excepting on those two occasions, neither "Jesus," nor "Christ," is to be found in the Epistle. Moreover, the work makes no allusion whatever to the most important theological doctrines taught by Christians, as, for instance, the redemption of sinners through Christ's vicarious atonement as sealed by his resurrection, and secured to them upon the condition of their faith in its efficacy. There is also complete silence about the fact that under the Christian scheme of salvation, Gentiles, as well as Jews, enter into the heavenly kingdom. It is strange indeed that, where the author gives moral injunctions attributed to Jesus in the Gospels, he does not support them by the mighty weight of his master's authority.² But, it is stranger still to find him flatly contradicting a petition in the Paternoster, namely, the one where we ask God not to get us tempted. The Greek text is the same in both the existing reports, that of Matthew (vi. 13) and that of Luke (xi. 4). In each of these cases the Authorized Version has: "Lead us not into temptation." whilst the Revised Version has: "Bring us not into temptation." This last is closer to the original. James, however, writes thus:—

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. (i. 13-14.)

The Greek noun, which, according to Matthew and Luke, Jesus used on this occasion is the correlative of the Greek verb employed by James in the above passage, whilst the English noun "temptation," and the English verb "tempt" are exact renderings of the two Greek words. Neither in the case of Jesus, nor in that of James, can it, even for a moment be supposed that either "temptation," or "tempted" is used in the sense of "testing," or "tested," for the context in both cases shows that something morally bad is in question. Jesus (in *Matthew*) proceeds to connect exemption from temptation with delivery from evil, whilst James teaches that tempting and being tempted are evils impossible to God. It is worthy of note that James, who in the above verses thus frees God from the suspicion of enticing men into sin, and rightly attributes the enticement to the coincidence of their evil instincts with the corresponding force of evil attractions, affirms in the preceding verse that he who overcomes his temptation will receive the promised "crown of life." The Greek text does not say who made this promise. The Vulgate inserts *Deus*, and both our versions insert "the Lord." As the word *Theos* occurs twice in the next verse which continues the subject, "God," and not "the Lord" would appear to be the word omitted. References to the award of a "crown" occur in *1 Corinthians* (ix. 25), *2 Timothy* (iv. 8), *1 Peter* (v. 4), and *The Revelation* (ii. 10, iii. 11); and on the penultimate occasion it is called "the crown of life." C. CLAYTON DOVE

(To be continued)

² Much of what Jesus teaches in the Gospels evidently came from different persons, whose views were sometimes in conflict. Hence, it may be that James did not borrow from Jesus, but that Jesus has been credited with sentiments which James expressed.

Education

"EDUCATION," says James Harvey Robinson in *The Human Comedy*, "is another name for man's life, so far as it is really human and not merely animal and vegetative. Hope and fear, joy and sorrow, success and frustration, sympathy and resentment, are our teachers; they never shirk their tasks nor fail in their influence. They smile and frown, encourage and reprove from the cradle to the grave. Like other teachers, they are often bungling and perverse, cruel and unfair, breeding lethargy or despair as well as new power and insight. Compared with them, the teachers of the classroom sink into a secondary place." And Mark Graubard, in *Biology and Human Behavior*, says that "The essence of education and progress is not to respect 'nature' or 'natural' things as such, but to learn to control them to the best advantage for us."

Both of these statements are, of course, perfectly true and, without thinking, one is inclined to say: then how is it, if experience is such an excellent teacher, that we are not better educated than we are? How is it that injustice and cruelty abound throughout the world, and that we tolerate man's inhumanity to man? Why aren't we all sane and sensible and peace-loving?

The explanation—unquestionably—is that in the past and so far nature has been busy, to use a convenient phrase, mainly with man's physical upbringing, and that it was only yesterday that the organism called man developed any sense whatever of social justice. A certain sensitiveness manifested itself many millions of years ago in the lower forms of life—first of all in fish, so it is believed—and the lower animals were thus enabled to adapt themselves to their environment and live. Were that not so obviously nothing could have evolved from the non-sentient beings. And that that "sensitiveness," too, developed into something finer, i.e., more highly specialized and more useful, is equally obvious or there could not have been any progress from animal to man.

But what this quality really is few appreciate even to-day. By some, by the religious and timid, it has been—and still is, in fact—called the "still small voice," the "divine spark," the "soul," "spirit," and so on according to the times, the understanding and desire of the individual; by others—the scientists and the better-informed—"conscience," or perhaps more precisely and correctly just "awareness." A sense of social justice—the highest and best manifestation of this quality "awareness": awareness of all that has gone before, is now and can be, if men only wills it so—is, however, only just beginning to show itself.

Nor—to face facts—is this to be wondered at, having regard to the history of this planet and its inhabitants. During the evolution of the human race there was, from the very nature of things, at the outset bound to be much groping in the dark—the darkness of ignorance: mistrust of almost everything and everybody, timorous trial and tragic error, and consequently a general inclination to conservatism. To begin a very long way back: the caveman was naturally suspicious of his neighbouring cavemen, and his disposition towards the man next door, so to speak, if and when he showed himself or came very near, was, we may be sure like the disposition of the dog with a bone which sees another dog approaching: he regarded him as an enemy, snarled and showed fight, simply because he knew no better.

When they and their families left their caves and began to form groups and live together in a communal state, these cavemen were, as a class, still mistrustful and suspicious, but their mistrust and suspicion were now directed to other groups. The fact that these men had by now started group life showed that they

were still very little better than animals, with an animal's limited outlook. Any others who came near them and were not of their tribe were regarded as strangers, foreigners (though they hadn't coined that word: that was left to us to invent and frighten ourselves with), and there was either a stampede or a stand-up fight.

During the many thousands of years that have elapsed between that period of the world's history—when group life and the herd instinct first appeared—and this, the human race has, of course, made some remarkable forward strides, but these have been chiefly on the physical side. The mental side has been slower in its growth. Man has, in the meantime, learned to provide himself with a long list of bodily comforts, and done his best to make life easy—up to a point.

But the human family as a family is no more responsible for this one-sided development than is the man in the moon. What has happened is that mind—using that word in its comprehensive sense as the centre of "consciousness" or "awareness"—has developed comparatively rapidly in a few members of the human race, but very slowly in the majority. In the case of the few: some have, knowingly and for their own selfish ends, done their utmost to keep the masses in a state of ignorance; some have been fearful of the—to them—possible result of letting the people know the truth of the origin and history of the world, and their possibilities if they only opened their eyes wide; while here and there a courageous one has stuck out and struck out for general enlightenment. The first have preached contentment to the poor and enriched themselves the while; the second have, also knowingly and with ulterior motive, said little but done a lot—behind the scenes—to keep things as they were; the odd one or two have fought—and generally died—for the emancipation of the masses. It has been so all along the line, from the days of slavery and serfdom down to date. To put the matter in another way: nature has not been allowed to have full play. During the evolution of the human race, the more enlightened have believed that evolution meant revolution—as of course it does, but not in the sense in which they understood the term—and, with one or two exceptions, they have done everything in their power to thwart nature, or keep it from expressing itself to the full.

The tools of thought and communication employed to-day are evidence of the fact that, generally speaking, man's mind is several centuries behind his body. One has only to listen to a conversation, to examine the press, or listen to the radio to have evidence of this. But as James Harvey Robinson has said: "Hope and fear, joy and sorrow, success and frustration, sympathy and resentment, are our teachers: they never shirk their tasks nor fail in their influence" and as we are having a good deal of "hope and fear, joy and sorrow, success and frustration, sympathy and resentment" just now we should, in due course, feel all the better for it.

It is, in a way, a pity that so many of us have to be educated in this manner—although there is this much to be said for it: whatever we learn from bitter experience is, as a rule, more informative and lasting than what we are told by someone else or read in a book. But, largely as a result of the brake that has been put on us by those who knew just a little and feared the worst, we are a lazy-minded lot, or many of us are at any rate, and we now need a kick in the pants from life before we will sit up and take notice of those things which concern us even intimately.

What is happening in the world just now is bound to have a general enlightening effect—it cannot be otherwise, because the masses are thinking and comparing notes as they have never done before—and to that extent there is something to be thankful for. Indeed, it is safe to say that if those primarily responsible

for the present upheaval could have foreseen what is sure to be the outcome of their handiwork, they would have held their hands lest they brought about their own destruction. But being blind to the implications of man's achievements down to date, they have foreseen—nothing! Inevitability is unknown to them. In the long run their acts are educative. That is to say: oppression and hardship educate the masses so that they eventually see through their opponents and take their revenge in one way or the other. That is the lesson of history.

GEO. B. LISSENDEN

Train Up a Child

It started when he was twelve months old. Having laid him down to sleep one warm Sunday afternoon his mother did not want him wakened. So when the Salvation Army arrived Mrs. Lloyd closed the door and window.

Seeing the action the Salvation Army captain prayed aloud, "Ho, Lord! Hif they won't 'ear thy 'oly message through the hopen door, then send hit him through the key 'ole!"

Alberic Lloyd's mature comment on that was "Symbolic, or prophetic! Perhaps his prayer has been indirectly partially answered. For a quarter-century the hounds of piety have pursued me, resulting in my being a complete sceptic. They will not leave me alone."

Full pursuit did not begin till Alberic was aged five years. Then the chase commenced in earnest. At the Church Infants' School he learned the first facts about God, devil, apostles and angels; a curious sub-God called Jesus Christ, and an indefinite God, the Holy Ghost, who played hide-and-seek with people.

These otherworld denizens wore long robes, solem visages, and were angry at natural human actions. Except the Holy Ghost, who was wraithlike in form and had no face, and did all manner of unexpected tricks!

Hymns were learnt, such as "Jesus Loves Me." Alberic Lloyd felt an irreverent preference for comic songs which he heard adults sing.

Promoted to the big school the seven-year-old boy found the same teaching, save that supernatural beings seemed more allied with teachers and other oppressors, a sort of monstrous police.

A remarkable book full of queer stories now appeared. This was not to be regarded as a book, but as a kind of cross between a talisman and a God, as the stories were not stories but a species of super-truth. It was all very puzzling, especially when Catechism was added, prayers, graces and more hymns. Prayers, hymns, Scripture lesson for nearly an hour, grace at twelve and two o'clock, prayers before going home at afternoon —!

In later years Alberic Lloyd could never get an answer to the question: Why should education always be soaked in religion; more—dominated by it?

Over the top classes of the Church Boys School the flood of religion rose higher. The pupils read and studied Bible and Prayer Book and wrote about them. They had weekly instruction visits from clergymen, and were tested by the Bishop's Examiner. Being left a few minutes to read silently at the Bible afforded the oldest boys unholy joy. They hunted out and devoured obscene and sexual passages so plentiful in Holy Bible. Sundays gave no respite from the pressure to make the boy a good Churchman. Mornings there was Sunday School followed by Church. Afternoon Sunday School was relieved by the teachers' reading books to the scholars. These varied from mournful or sentimental piety to red-blooded adventure according to the teacher's taste.

One Sunday afternoon in each month the children

were marched to Church to see the Public Baptism of Infants; not so edifying as the parson imagined it. Annually occurred a Sunday School Treat. Before a three-mile railway journey prayers for safety were offered in Church, after which, headed by the Church banner, the children straggled in procession to the railway station. Each autumn was a Harvest Festival, when the children made offerings of fruit, flowers and vegetables at the afternoon service. At Christmas each Sunday School teacher gave a party to her Class. This was not so sanctimonious as other rituals.

Sunday evenings the boy accompanied his parents or other elders to Church. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd were not exclusive. They were Low Church, Evangelical, looking with tolerance upon Dissent. Occasionally they attended Chapels, usually the nearby Little Bethels, which saved a longer walk to Church. At home was a wheezy harmonium, which by furious pedalling could be made to groan out hymns while the family sang. For reading were Bible and Prayer Book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, periodical pabulum such as *Life of Faith*, *Church Evangelist*, Parish Magazines, and children's pious annuals.

Every Sunday afternoon a lady called and changed the Tract. These began brightly, even adventurously, but ended lugubriously moral or forbidding, full of lurid warning and Bible-texted threats. Small wonder that at fifteen years, emerging gasping from this Mississippi of religiosity Alberic Lloyd decided there was no God. Whereby he had acrimonious arguments with his mother, who was shocked and angry. His father showed more breadth and sympathy. He was a patient seeker after God. His son doubted if he ever found him.

For a short time, too old for Sunday School, Alberic Lloyd attended a Youths' Bible Class. He found it boring and dropped it. Likewise one attendance at a Men's Brotherhood and an Adult Bible Class sufficed.

Church-going continued, largely to fill up time, bridge the languors of Sabbath blankness. It served for meeting friends and flirting with girls.

A brainy youngster, Alberic Lloyd was not rewarded with a Scholarship, as is done now to enable such to have an easy time of leisurely study in their teens. Instead he was seized by the Church School Managers as raw material; a potential missionary for Anglicanism. He was apprenticed for three years to learn teaching under supervision of the Headmaster, and to study to qualify as a Certificated Teacher. During the former he was victim of much disguised bullying under pretence of instruction, and was involved in the observances of religion practised in School and Church. For the latter he had time off from teaching to read at a table in the corner of a classroom. In the winter half of the year he and another apprentice had lessons in evenings and before breakfast on summer mornings.

Mondays such lessons were devoted to Scripture, when the Headmaster's ill-tempered driving was most zestful to urge the two apprentices along the path of piety. Their weakness was in memorizing the Collect for the day before. One June Monday morning neither youths could say the Collect. In wrath Didaskalos shouted "Go home! I refuse to teach you anything!" Giving him no time to change his mind—which he would have done had they lingered—the two youths fled, amused, laughing aloud outside school. They filled the hour's lesson time by a walk along the hillside, beautiful in the morning sunshine, and peaceful, striking contrast to the rigours of school discipline.

Contemptuous of its spiritual value, but conforming to local social usage and to please his mother who thought it the correct thing, Alberic Lloyd was confirmed. Preparative classes under tuition of Vicar

and Curate were repetition of previous religious cramming. Prayers, hymns and blessings of the Confirmation ceremonial left Alberic as cold as the Bishop's hand placed on his head.

Two years running Alberic Lloyd and his friend sat for the Bishop's Scripture Examination. As there were book prizes both worked hard and secured them. Alberic's colleague remarked: "There's no exact knowledge needed. What you don't know of Bible and Prayer Book and Church History you make up—like parsons preaching." In their third year of apprenticeship the two Pupil-Teachers went to the local P.T. Centre. Alberic Lloyd enjoyed it. Though a poor apology for Secondary School its atmosphere was rational, devoted solely to secular subjects. It was a refuge from religiosity, a restoration of balance and sanity to his studies. "Otherwise," he explained in after years. "My education was that of a lay curate—or an attempt to make me a religious maniac."

It illustrated the fact that Dictators, demagogues, reformers and hot-gospellers alike regard teachers as useful tools in their propaganda.

Qualification as an Uncertificated Teacher led Alberic Lloyd to a town—in a Council School, to his delight. Here religious practices consisted of one hymn and the Lord's Prayer each morning, the minimum, but *still too much*.

A. R. WILLIAMS

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THEN—AND NOW

Sir,—Recently I read that the "Holy See begged that everything possible should be done for the civilians in Central Abyssinia." We are implored to save Italians from the vengeance of the long-suffering natives. I turn to contemporary accounts of the tortures inflicted by the Italians in 1936, and find the following: "Proofs are coming in of the use of all sorts of gas. The most commonly employed is iperite, which burns agonisingly. It raises a very big blister, often covering the whole face.

The victims of iperite run about shrieking in agony. The sight of their blisters has a demoralizing effect on the troops." But there were no protests from the Vatican then, God's Vicar regarded the heathen, as Lecky tells us the Catholic Church regards the animal world: "altogether external to the scheme of redemption, beyond the range of duty, and the belief that we have any kind of obligation to its members has never been inculcated—has never, I believe, been admitted by Catholic theologians."

EDGAR SYERS

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Newcastle (Bigg Market), 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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