

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN •

Vol. LXI.—No. 31

Sunday, August 3, 1941

Price Threepence

CONTENTS

Religion and the Forces—The Editor	349
Scientific Studies of Prehistoric Times—T. F. Palmer	350
Paradise Lost—George Wallace	352
Primitive Art and Religion—S. H.	353
Acid Drops	353
To Correspondents	355
Sugar Plums	355
The Logic of Immortality—F.	356
“The Kasidah”—George Prescott	357
Matters in Question—Ernest Shipp	358
Quo Vadis?	359
Sunday Lecture Notices	359

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Religion and the Forces

WE are pleased to record the fact that the summary which appeared several times in these columns concerning the rights of men joining any of the three Forces has been largely copied in provincial papers. It has not yet appeared in London newspapers, but that may be because they are better controlled. We have pointed out that any man joining the Army, Navy, or Air Force, has a legal right to describe himself as Atheist, Agnostic, Rationalist, or anything else, and no one, from Corporal to General, has the legal right to object. An attempt to do so is sheer impertinence. Also, if a man changes his opinions he has the right to have the declaration on his papers altered accordingly. An officer may, with religious fervour, enquire why . . . he wants to change his opinions? The answer “It is my wish” is quite enough. For that brief moment a mere soldier may do as he damned well likes. After that he becomes a mere regimental number again. We are glad to say that this right of the new recruit is now better recognised than it was during the past war, and we congratulate himself on having done something to bring this about.

But this is not all easy sailing. There are some rough seas the recruit may encounter, and some very unpleasant experiences he may have to face. Even the Airman may find a number of “pockets” that may prove troublesome. Recruits have every encouragement to tell a lie in reply to the question, “What religion?” I have had some very humorous accounts of the way in which the man at the registration table—or whatever the correct term may be—encourages a recruit to tell a lie where religion is concerned. There he sits, determined to secure a confession of religion at all costs. He holds out samples of the religions he has in stock, with an air of certainty that one of them will suit. When the obstinate recruit declines the lot, he appears to feel all the disappointment a shopkeeper has at not satisfying a customer. Worn out, the recruiting officer leans back and might well say with Gilbert’s Lord Chancellor, with alterations, after the refusal of all religions from High Church to the Salvation Army,

I’ve one for her and one for he,

I’ve one for him and one for she

But never, ah never, a one for ye,

and then wind up with a “what the blankety, blankety, blank do yer want?” And then, if the

recruit is sufficiently resistant, gather together his collection of gods, and like the Bedouin, wrap himself in whatever is available and slowly fade away.

Church Parades

In “Reynold’s News” for July 20 there is an interesting article by “Staff Reporter” dealing with compulsory Church parades in the army. The article is welcome, even though cautiously worded. He asks why do we have these church parades? Of course, there was a time when church parades were compulsory by law on the whole population. There were laws which made staying away from church a punishable offence. In some of the early States of America a favourite punishment—imported from England—was to put the offender in the stocks and encourage children to give to the man elderly vegetables and very soft fruit—at short range. Some of these Sunday Acts are still unrepealed, either here and in America. We are now a free people—with restrictions, but there are many areas in this country where no law can prevent us looking at the outside of a cinema on the Lord’s Day.

“Staff Reporter” says that he asked a number of serving officers and men in widely separated stations what they thought of church parades. They all agreed that they should be scrapped. He found this feeling so strong that both officers and men did their best to dodge the parade. Perhaps they were particularly anxious to prevent the men being crowded out. For instance, “Staff Reporter” found a major addressing officers in one big army depot, who finished his appeal with “Gentlemen it will be much appreciated if more of you will find it convenient to attend the church parade.” This made “Staff Reporter” enquire how many officers attended the parade. He was told about half a dozen. This meant six out of 350. Church parades are evidently not loved by officers. But if they live up to the officer tradition they will think they are very good things for the men.

It may be noted that there are two classes of government concerns where there is this desire to provide easy and plenty of religious entertainment, and where a compulsory march to religious service obtains. One is the Army, the other His Majesty’s prisons. There are other things they have in common. When a man goes before a recruiting officer one of the first questions is “What religion?” When he enters a prison he gets the same question. More remarkable still there is the same variety from which to choose in each case. There are many kinds of religion in prisons, and the regulations are so considerate that if the newcomer has a religion that is not already patronised by the prison inmates, a minister of the kind required may be brought from outside. To say to the prison official, when he asks the new visitor’s religion, “None” or “Atheist” is to bring the official to his feet with astonishment. There is one other feature common to both prisons and the army. In neither case do the people concerned cry out for more parsons.

The Trail of the Recruit

But let us follow our recruit with regard to religion. Sometimes when the recruit looks over the sergeant-major’s stock of gods he finds none to his liking. He says he is an Atheist, or a Freethinker. The astonished

official, shocked, retorts, just as the prison official would, "But you must have a religion." Obdurate, the recruit repeats his statement, and if he wishes to join the Air Force, is told that he certainly cannot do that. Perhaps the muddled and shocked mind of the official has some hazy idea that an Atheist 40,000 feet up is more offensive to "high heaven" than an Atheist on the ground. If the recruit persists and demands to see a superior officer the matter is usually soon settled. But occasionally the officer enters into a conversation with the recruit, advises him that it may tell against him in his military career, and I have had letters from recruits who have been handed over to a chaplain to talk with him. My sympathy then lies with the chaplain. Save for one consideration. Every chaplain in the British forces is an officer, receiving officer's salaries and enjoying officer's privileges—except that of fighting. And it is not easy to attack the religion of one's officer.

Let us suppose that all these difficulties are overcome. The Freethinking recruit has become the fully fledged soldier. A church parade is ordered; and every man must appear on parade. Says "Staff Reporter," at the rehearsal parade the sergeant usually calls out "Any — who don't want to go to Church fall out over here." The soldier has vindicated his rights as a man. He is to enjoy the sweets of liberty and while the rest are marched to Church he will be cleaning the lavatories, "scrubbing out company offices, tending the incinerator, sweeping the roads and washing down the mess. And he is enjoying these homely pastimes when the regiment marches back from church spick and span, and perhaps after enjoying a nap during the delivery of the sermon. The man who stayed behind is not regarded as a hero by the rest of his comrades, he is not looked up to with respect as one who in this war for freedom has vindicated the right of every man to have and express his opinions, he is just called a "bloody fool" for his troubling about whether religion is true or false.

It is said in defence of these tasks that are given to non-Church attendants that they are not a punishment but merely the performance of necessary work, and so falls to the lot of those who are available. Agreed that these jobs must be done, does it follow that those who are given the job do not regard it as a punishment? Do those who impose it regard it as no more than a necessary job of work, and not a reprimand for a soldier who is not only without religious belief but is honest enough to say so? My mail from men in the forces does not bear out that implication. Often I get apologetic letters from men who have professed some sort of religion in order to escape what *they* regard as a punishment; and in this matter it is the way the man who receives the burden—whether as a penalty or as necessary labour—that is all-important. I am quite sure that if some member of parliament had enough courage to imperil his "career," to give up all hope of either being reported or getting a government post, were to make public the opinion of soldiers about these fatigue duties, the result might lead to a re-arrangement of the whole plan.

"Staff Reporter" says that chaplains "don't like church parades," that may be so, but I do not recall anything like a general protest against them. I do know that many of the men, while regarding some of the chaplains as "good sort of chaps," strongly resent having religion thrust upon them—particularly when the conditions of retort are not the same for both sides. If men desire religious services and the country, as represented by the Government, has removed them from where they can have it, then the Government may well be justified in seeing that a religious service is made available. But attendance should be

neither compulsory, nor in such circumstances that are suspiciously like punishment for those who neither believe in religion nor wish for a religious service. If the talk of religious leaders in this country about the value and freedom of conscience was not sheer "blather," they would be the first to protest against the present arrangements.

And if the performance of those "necessary" jobs is not a disguised punishment, why is not the selection made *before* the men are ordered to parade and without any reference to religion? That would be a very simple reform.

"Staff Reporter" closes his article by asking "What are the arguments in favour of these church parades?" and he replies, "Practically none. That much abused word 'discipline' would sum them all up." With that I agree. But it is a discipline in the wrong direction. It is a discipline that teaches men to place a higher value upon humbug than upon sincerity of purpose; it belongs to the same type of discipline against which we are fighting Germany. It does not teach men the truth of religion, but only its convenience to those who value ease more than intellectual dependence. And, after all, conscientious conviction in any direction is not such a common thing that any existing nation can afford to ignore it. To punish those who manifest it by making a declaration of opinion a thing that is rewarded by "fatigue duty" of an unpleasant character is subsidising hypocrisy.

I think there will be plenty of work to do even after Hitlerism has been killed, and when we are brought face to face with our own little Hitlers and his offshoots.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES OF PREHISTORIC TIMES

RATIONALISTS are almost invariably interested in the revelations of prehistoric archaeology. To the vast literature devoted to this fascinating subject, Mr. Grahame Clark has recently contributed another volume. This solid work, "Archæology and Society" (Methuen, 1939, 7s.), is provided with plates, illustrations and serviceable maps. It also embraces a considerable range of research into the known records of the past. The chapters concerning Discovery, Preservation, Excavation, Chronology and Interpretation form an excellent introduction to the serious study of the science, while that dealing with Archæology and Society is distinctly topical in character.

It seems quaint that the legend of man's special creation only a few thousand years ago was almost universally accepted until the publication of Darwin's devastating "Origin of Species" in 1859. Many educated men, certainly, entertained very grave suspicions of its validity. Still, the Biblical story was generally regarded as true. As our author reminds us, "The very year in which Darwin's book appeared, Prestwich and Evans paid that visit to Abbeville and Amiens, made famous by their acceptance before the Royal Society of the daring claim of Boucher de Perthes to have found flint implements of human workmanship in geological deposits of an age hitherto dismissed as incredible." In 1863, Lyell and Huxley publicly proclaimed the evolutionary doctrine, the latter declaring that "we must extend by long epochs the most liberal estimate that has yet been made of the Antiquity of Man."

It is striking that peoples who were striving to secure a place in the sun, as well as the rulers of totalitarian States, have manifested most marked advances in archæological research in recent decades. Great

activity in this direction has been displayed by the Baltic communities, at least while they retained their freedom from foreign domination. As an instance of this enterprising spirit, Clark mentions Moora's resplendent volume of 750 pages, "The Iron Age of Lettland," which, he assures us, "far transcends any work on any single phase of British prehistory; indeed, it belongs to a stage of research which has not often been reached anywhere in Europe. Finland is also turning out work of an enviably high standard which, devoid of conscious propaganda and bias, nevertheless serves to express . . . some of her finest national feelings. The Museum of Antiquities at Helsinki is something of which her people can feel proud without others feeling poorer."

During her brief national independence, Poland made substantial archæological progress, now unhappily suspended, and perhaps ended by German conquest. Again, the invaluable researches so generously fostered by President Masaryk in Czechoslovakia seem to have shared a similar fate. Even in Turkey, since the secularisation of the State, a new interest in the past has emerged. In China, prehistoric studies have received a very pronounced impetus, if under Western guidance. Dr. Davidson Black, Professor Gunnar Andersson, the Swedish antiquary, French Jesuits and others have all made important additions to archæological knowledge. But we must not overlook the assistance rendered by Chinese scientists themselves. The National Geological Survey of China and the official National Research Institute have afforded invaluable help, and excellent accounts of recent discoveries have appeared in Chinese publications. Moreover, native Chinese are, or were, being trained as investigators on an extensive scale. "Already," writes Grahame Clark, "there are many Chinese workers in the field, and some of them, of whom it is sufficient to mention Dr. W. C. Pei, collaborator in the discovery of Peking man and his associated culture, and Dr. Li Chi, excavator of the Bronze Age city of Anyang, have achieved world fame. It is recognised by the leaders of modern China, and not least by Chiang Kai-shek, that in the antiquity of her culture lies one of her greatest moral assets, at once a focus of national solidarity and a talisman of international sympathy."

Let us trust that China's territorial and cultural integrity will be long preserved, for the Chinese now favour a complete reversal of the isolationist policy so dear to ultra-conservative minds. Dread of disturbing and antagonising the spirits of the dead, and anxiety concerning the evil influences of excavation on the magical amenities of a given district long prevented archæological investigations. But now that a scientific outlook has spread, even among the peasantry, while many illicit traders in genuine but mostly spurious antiquities have been suppressed, it is to be inferred that, with the return of peace to their much-tried land, there is a fair prospect of a resumption of Chinese excavation on a more enhanced scale.

There has also been a marked revival in antiquarian inquiries in Eire. Clark somewhat unfavourably compares the official apathy of England with the solicitude evinced by the Free State authorities in archæology. Even in this, however, Irish enmity towards Britain is maintained. As Clark observes: "The importation of an Austrian to direct the National Museum of Antiquities, of Danish scientists to investigate the chronology of the peat bogs and raised beaches and Americans to carry out a series of key excavations, might appear at first sight a somewhat perverse manifestation of nationalism." Still, despite this screening antagonism, the Irish authorities have promoted the study and development of Hibernian

archæology. They protect ancient monuments and furnish facilities for training native assistants, finance excavations and archæological publications.

In the more despotic States science and statecraft are combined to serve the interests of the autocracy. In Russia archæological research has been conducted on a colossal scale. From the State Academy at Leningrad 40 expeditions have been annually despatched to every territory in the Soviet Union. The museum services, it is said, have been greatly improved and many new buildings have been opened to house collections, formerly private possessions, or those resulting from recent excavations. The exhibits are utilised for educational and propagandist purposes. In the "Museums Journal" for April, 1936, it is stated: "The museums, treasuries of innumerable monuments of material culture, representing the labour of hundreds of thousands of generations from primitive man to the builders of Socialism, should serve as centres of 'knowledge of the world in order to change it.' (Karl Marx.)"

It is, however, disconcerting to learn that several of the scientists whose researches have been so beneficial "have already been liquidated as the result of the Trotskyist-Bukharin purge." More recently, it appears, some who were dismissed from their posts have resumed their labours, and these include Professor Zhukov, "whose pen is again active in the cause of archæology."

The fasces and the swastika are both ancient emblems and, in Italy, Mussolini has persistently stressed the magnificence of Rome's past. So, immense sums have been spent for the restoration of the majestic monuments of Imperial days, but the prehistoric remains in which Italy is so rich have been neglected. Apparently, the most fruitful researches into the Peninsula's prehistoric remains are chiefly the work of foreign archæologists.

The real or imaginary pre-eminence of the Germans in earlier ages has been constantly proclaimed by the Nazi regime, and archæological activities have been stimulated to an unprecedented degree by the State. Professor Schneider, of Tübingen, states that: "The year 1933 witnessed the victory of an attitude towards the history of the culture of Germany which gave to the Germanic element of all that is German a significance previously unthought of. 'The best of what is German,' it was declared, 'is Germanic and must be found in purer form in early Germanic times.'"

The Reich has made liberal grants and provided greatly increased facilities in the Universities for prehistoric study and research. From personal experience, Clark concludes that, even if some scientists are induced to fabricate evidences congenial to the authorities, yet, prior to the present war, German research was, as a rule, "not more tainted with bias than it is elsewhere."

Still, Clark concedes that the situation is far from satisfactory, as the present exploitation of Teutonic pride and prejudice in the interests of nationalism constitutes a Chauvinistic relapse. "I use the word 'relapse' advisedly," he states, "because it has happened before."

In 1896, Gustav Kossinna advanced a theory which was then derided by his scientific colleagues. He asserted that the Germans were, and ever had been, a superior people ranking above all others in the world. Kossinna claimed that every improvement in civilised life resulted from the diffusion of Teutonic culture among less gifted races, together with the discoveries and inventions of German origin. Other contentions equally farcical were propounded by this first appointed Professor of German Prehistory in the University of

Berlin. By means of many unwarranted assumptions, he exalted the Indogermanic supermen to the skies. In their migrations, he said, they handed the torch of civilisation to all the inferior races they encountered. He seriously asserted that even in the New Stone Age there occurred "more than a dozen spreads of the megalith-Indogermans from the North over the whole of Central Europe as far as the Black Sea." Dispassionate study of prehistory, however, should, in Clark's opinion, "be sufficient in itself to cure the most rabid nationalist" of his arrogant assumptions of pre-eminence.

T. F. PALMER

PARADISE LOST

"Adam lost Paradise—eternal tale
Repeated in the lives of all his sons."

Life Drama, Alex. Smith.

The word *Paradise* does not appear in the Old Testament. In the New Testament it occurs three times—Luke xxiii., 43; 2 Cor. xii. 3-4; Rev. i. 7.

Paradise is generally used to mean heaven—the home of the blest.

Of Aryan origin, it specially refers to the tree-studded parks around Persian Palaces, and the LXX. applies the Greek word *Paradisos* to the Garden of Eden.

In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the Garden of Eden represents Paradise.

His aim in this great poem to—

"Assert Eternal Providence

And justify the ways of God to man,"

only succeeds in making confusion worse confounded. Surely Milton, an admirer of Paul, should have known that "The ways of God are past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

His main theme, The Fall of man, is prefaced by the Fall of Lucifer, and of one-third of the angels.

A war in Heaven is common to many great religions. Heaven with its large heavenly armoury; and "myriads held in readiness, harness'd at hand, Celestial equipage," seems to have been an armed camp from the beginning. The decreed revolt of Lucifer rendering such preparations necessary.

Lucifer, the one really great character in this book, the centre of attraction, was created a perfect creature—a star of Heaven!—perfect in all his ways from the day he was created till iniquity was found in him (Ezek. xxviii. 14-15).

After his fall he became known as the Devil, Satan, the Prince of Darkness, His Infernal Majesty, the Prince of this World, etc.

What a tame, sackless, creature the Eternal Father seems when compared with His Satanic Majesty—

"High on a throne of royal state—

Satan exalted sat, by merit raised

To that bad eminence."

(Satan was a democrat. To him there could be no good eminence.)

"Inhabitant of heaven and heavenly-born," by "Transcendant glory crowned above his fellows;" his first thought—

"that liberty and heaven

To heavenly souls had been all one;"

"The tyranny of heaven," a divine dictatorship, aroused a spirit of rebellion in him, and in one third of heaven's sons who, under his leadership, demanded

"Enjoyment of our right as gods."

For thus rebelling Satan was charged—

"He trusted to have equalled the Most High."

God, in the beginning—

"Dove-like sats't brooding on the vast abyss,

And madest it pregnant."

He made all perfect, but free to fall—

"And freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell."

Of the rebels he says—

"They themselves decreed

Their own revolt, not I, if I foreknew,

Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,

Which had no less proved certain unforeknown."

He could, God-like, make the worse appear the better reason!

God, meant not to destroy, but root the rebels out of heaven. So, war was declared, heaven placed on a war footing, the Celestial armoury ransacked for shields, helms, and spears; "Chariots winged for the armoury of God; where stand of old, Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged against a solemn day, harness'd at hand, Celestial equipage."

The dogs of war let loose. Satan in his onslaught released—

Chain'd thunderbolts and hail

Of iron globes; which on their victor host

Levell'd with such impetuous fury smote,

That, whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,

Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell,

By thousands, angel on archangel roll'd."

Michael met this attack by uprooting hills and promontories and throwing them at, for a moment disconcerting, the rebels, but they did likewise—

"To like arms betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore; so hills amid the air encountered hills, hurled to and fro with jaculation dire;" . . . and now all heaven had gone to wrack (after two days fighting) had the Almighty Father, where he sat, observing all, not given supreme command to his Son . . .

"Before him Power Divine his way prepared;

At his command the uprooted hills retired

Each to his place;

In his right hand grasping ten thousand thunders

Which he sent before him

All resistance was overthrown

And crystal wall of heaven; which opening wide,

Roll'd inward, and a spacious gap disclosed

Into the wasteful deep:

headlong themselves they threw

Down from the verge of heaven; eternal wrath

Burn't them to the bottomless pit."

Satan and his rebel host thus safely! disposed of in a Bottomless! Pit, the Eternal Father, to supplement his diminished following, made a new world and man after his own image giving him commands to keep, though he had designed him to break them; and putting angelic guards to prevent the evil one from getting into Paradise, knowing, he admits, that they couldn't keep Satan out of it. Then, man having fallen, he cursed him for doing so, and the serpent for tempting him, but lets the devil go free. Says Satan—

"Me he has not judged, but the brute serpent

in whose shape man I deceived" . . . and, he . . .

"hath given up both his beloved man and

all his world, to sin and death a prey."

Paradise Lost is a remarkable poem. The character of the devil, his speeches and soliloquies, notably that in Book iv.—Satan's invocation to the Sun—make of it a work to be treasured.

God is pitiless! not so Satan, who on first seeing Adam and Eve exclaims—

"Oh hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold!

"Conquering this new world, compels me now

"To do what else, though damn'd, I should abhor."

Poor Eve!

"The spirit of love,

Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,

In every gesture, dignity and love."

After debating their outlook with Adam, she, with a fine contempt of life and pleasure, suggests that they either commit suicide—"Let us seek death," or "childless remain."

And Adam asks the affable archangel Raphael some significant questions, which he diplomatically answers. Here follow six of them—

(1) Did I request the maker from my clay to mould me into man?

(2) Is God's wrath infinite also?

(3) Why should all mankind for one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemned?

(4) Why hate in heaven, and war, so near to peace of God in bliss?

(5) What moved the creator (after an eternity of idleness!) to make all these things?

(6) How human life began?

In *Paradise Regained*, Satan carries the Son of God to the pinnacle of the Temple, to a mountain top, and shows him all the Kingdoms of the, then, flat world! As a matter of fact God carries his beloved son in his everlasting arms. The Satan story, like the poem, is an absurdity.

The Theologian can have but one god only! Good and evil, light and darkness, everything can only be attributed to him.

"I make peace, and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things" (Isa. xlv. 7). If further proof be needed, note the reference to "the good spirit of God" in Neh. ix. 20 and to the evil spirit of God in 1 Sam. xvi. 14-16, and xviii. 10.

Christianity is said to owe its existence more to Paul's *Epistles* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* than to Christ.

I know not whether Paul and Milton would have met with Christ's approval.

For babes and sucklings he had a great regard.

But even babes and sucklings, to-day, have become heretical, and I'm afraid he would not champion them further, e.g. :—

"There is no god, the youngster thinks,

Or really if there may be,

He surely did not mean a man

Always to be a baby."

—(CLOUGH.)

GEORGE WALLACE.

PRIMITIVE ART AND RELIGION

ONE of the most interesting problems which faces the student to-day is a joint matter for the art critic and the anthropologist—it is the matter of the relationship of art in primitive communities to the general religious and cultural progress of those communities. It seems to have been more or less accepted by many superficial observers that the art of primitive peoples is necessarily as elementary as their religious outlook or their morals—though actually neither the morals nor the religion of such communities is as simple as on the surface it might appear.

Now, in a sixpenny "Pelican" book entitled "Primitive Art," Dr. L. Adam presents for the first time a general review of the artistic impulse as it is manifested among supposedly non-civilised races and nations. Dr. Adam makes the very interesting point (of special importance to

Freethinkers) that the vitality of much so-called savage art derives from its root in a religion which was generally understood and genuinely believed. Possibly the undoubted efflorescence of medieval religious art (especially architecture) may similarly be attributed to the general and, on the whole, genuine belief in the tenets of Roman Catholicism.

With the slow decay, now rapidly accelerating, of religion in general, this vitality seems to have left art as a rule; only such noted and notable exceptions as Epstein, who go back to the primitive for their inspiration, seem to show that tremendous driving force which the best "savage" art of hundreds of thousands of years ago possessed. The rather pernicious anaemia which seems to have affected the artists of recent years is thus seen to be not unconnected with religious decline.

This, of course, is not to accept the claim of some religious critics that all the arts are religious in basis. If humanity can acquire the same enthusiasm for some great secular end as was formerly shown for religion, then a new art will arrive which produces as vital work as the paintings on the Altamira caves 20,000 years ago.

Another point should be noted in this connection. Dr. Adam points out that, whereas religion probably provided the original impulse from which primitive art derived, as soon as religion became firmly fixed in the seat of power, then art began to become stereotyped and stale. In other words, even the more mobile religion of the savage tends to crystallise art along static lines, with the result that the art deriving from it becomes the victim of a paralysing uniformity. The art forms of ancient Egypt provide perhaps the best-known example of this.

The critic of the arts, therefore, has an exceedingly interesting, though exceedingly difficult, task when he considers the art of primitive peoples. And his findings, like the findings of all other specialists, have to be submitted to very close scrutiny. But Freethinkers will be the first to agree that the art of primitive men and women, because on the whole less inhibited by tradition and custom, merits the closest attention of all who are interested in artistic expression.

S. H.

ACID DROPS

WE cannot congratulate Mr. Morrison on his handling of the "Daily Worker" business. First of all, there was the glaring blunder of suppressing a paper without stating the exact nature of the offence and without open legal proceedings. If we had not been fighting a war for freedom, that would have been called an act of sheer tyranny. Now that the Communists have turned right about face and discovered that what yesterday they denounced as a mere Capitalistic war is really one for freedom—merely because Russia has been attacked—Mr. Morrison says he cannot give permission for the "Daily Worker" to reappear unless he has guarantees that they will not act so as to sabotage the war. Well, those concerned have given a promise. It would seem proper that Mr. Morrison should now say just what guarantees he requires. The law does not exist to satisfy his unexplained ideas of justice. The suppression of a newspaper without the public statement of a specific offence is no light matter. That way tyranny lies.

Freethinkers will not easily forget Cardinal Hinsley with his lies concerning the International Freethought Congress held in London, his attempts to get it stopped; the lie that it had been ordered and paid for by Russia. The Cardinal is a very good Catholic. We do not for a moment question that. These things should be borne in mind when the "Peace" arrives.

Many of our readers may recall the statement of Roman Catholic leaders in Liverpool that the children should be bombed in Liverpool rather than find safety in areas where provision was not made for their getting the right brand of religious teaching. We must admit the sincerity of the opinion. It runs on the true lines of Christian philosophy. If the teaching that the one important thing in this world is to get ready for the next, and if the Roman Church is

correct in its teaching that it is only those who bear the brand of the Church who may safely count on being "saved," then it is better to be bombed as a Roman Catholic than find safety and have one's faith in the "true Church" shattered. The Roman Church is generally logical enough in its deductions—it is its premises that are rotten.

Now the trouble appears to have broken out again. Forty thousand children have been "evacuated" (horrible word, with disagreeable connotations), and a large proportion are of Roman Catholic parents. But Dr. Downey, the R.C. Archbishop of Liverpool (it should be "Archbishop of Roman Catholics in Liverpool," since he has no greater legal right to call himself Archbishop of Liverpool than we have), finds his professional interests threatened by the fact that adequate means for Roman Catholic teaching is not provided. But surely the Church of so many miracles ought to be able to so arrange things that the children would not lose their faith during a few months away from the iron rule of the priest. Or does Dr. Downey fear that, once removed from the watchful eyes of the priest, even children of ten or twelve years of age may find out the truth concerning Christian religion?

After all, the Roman Church is not alone in this matter. Every branch of the Church—indeed, every branch of religion in a civilised country—are in fear lest children find out things concerning them. There is a good example of this in the policy of the B.B.C. Long ago, when it started its "Children's Hour," it gave sketches of historical scenes, or nature talks, or fairy tales that were interesting enough. Now, of late, the "Hour" or half-hour, usually ends with something from the New Testament, or even a semi-prayer. These stories are related as though they were full established historic events, although most of them could not be stated in that manner before adults. But in the art of taking advantage of the inability of an audience to criticise what is being said, Christian teachers are adepts.

The other day we just caught the end of the talk to children and heard children advised to pray to God to make them love him. Now we can understand the importance—to God—of children loving him, for without that love and belief, or even fear and belief, the Christian God will be "taken for a ride" and disappear, as so many other gods have disappeared. But why should children pray to God, not for God to love them, but to make children love God? We can, we repeat, understand why this is important to God, but to the children—?

It reminds one of a story current during the American Civil War. A preacher had been warned concerning the free way in which he was criticising the government. So on a certain date the preacher laid the matter before God. "Oh God," he prayed, "we pray thee that thou wilt guard against thinking disrespectfully of our leaders. And, oh God, we pray that thou wilt so help them that they will not act so that we cannot help doing so."

The Assistant Bishop of Guildford says he has "read of the wave of desire among the younger generation for religion, but coming into contact with many young people in hospitals he could not say that he found a ripple of that wave." We congratulate the Bishop on speaking the truth. We have in mind the last war when the clergy worked to a plan which they thought might help the Churches. The late Bishop of London, with others, visited the Army in France and told the men how at home there had been a wave of religion sweeping over the people. Then he came home and told us what a wave of religion was sweeping over the troops. The idea was to play one against the other. But the trick failed, and we came out of the war with less genuine religion than was current when the war began.

How satisfying to a Christian speaker are mere words. Here, for example, is one who tells a gasping world that "the Christian conception of economics is the just sharing of the things which God has provided." Well, if man had to depend only upon what God provided, mankind would never have emerged from the animal stage. It reminds one

of the story of the parson who said to a man who had created a beautiful garden, "You have to thank the Lord for such a beautiful garden." "Well," replied the man, "maybe, but you should see what a holy mess it was as God left it."

As to the just share of what exists, that is mere wind. What is a just share? We have no doubt but that the Duke of Bedford and the Duke of Norfolk believe that they have no more than a just share of the land. The agriculturalist would have a different opinion. Every employer believes that he is taking a just share of the business he owns. The workman is apt to also have a different conviction. The whole problem is—what is a just share? There has never been very much dissension concerning the right of every man to have a just share of things. All the trouble comes in determining what is just. It is astonishing how these windy pulpit phrases satisfy folk.

We are inclined to feel some pity for the Roman Catholic Church. That Church prides itself on its unity, which reminds us of the man who, dinner or no dinner, dined at seven. So the papal policy will have union of thought and action no matter how much they differ. In Rome the Pope blesses the action of Italy sending troops to fight the Russians—and that at least is one of the humorous things connected with the war. In England, through the mouth of Cardinal Hinsley, who raved some of the healthiest lies about Russia, we have professed wishes for the conquest of the Germans by Russia. And in Spain the Pope has to favour his "dear son" Franco, who also is ready to wage war against Russia. Yet the Papacy is quite consistent—to the rule that it will back anything and sanction anything that will help the Roman Church.

Father D'Arcy gave a pathetic account the other day on the wireless of the persecution of Roman Catholics under Hitler—without uttering one word about the much worse persecution of Jews and of opponents of Nazism. Of course, making Jews suffer is only what they deserve, as they have deliberately rejected the "Saviour," and God—who is "love"—has seen that they have had a hell of a time since. But Fr. D'Arcy simply cannot understand why God, together with Jesus and Mary, has never lifted a finger to save the all-believing Romans from persecution. They believe without question the Mass, Sacraments, in Relics and the Devil—and yet neither "our Lord" nor "our Lady" has lifted a finger for any Roman Catholic in Germany or Poland. And Fr. D'Arcy could not find a single word in explanation of this remarkable paradox. Nor could he explain why it was Hitler the Catholic who had instituted and inspired the savage persecution. Yet the explanation is quite simple. There is no room in the Reich for two dictatorships. Hitler's is the only name by which one can now be saved in Germany—and so Romanism must go. If Romanism held complete power, everything anti-Roman would be cleared out. Same medicine—a difference in colour only.

The "Universe" thinks it is high time for "Catholic Action"—another of these religious "armies"—to take action among women war workers. It appears that, in spite of all these legions, "leakage among young people since the last war since the last war has been notoriously very large." The "approach" to women war workers is, however, "much more difficult" than it is with young men, "partly because the clergy meet them less and partly because many women who have left their homes for war work are temperamentally less inclined towards religion" than those who stay at home. But this is surely very strange? In the first place, we always understood religion was ingrained in human nature and, if properly taught, it was invincible against infidelity. Secondly, are we to understand that directly a girl leaves home where she was incurably religious, and begins to work, she loses this religion in almost a day? Frankly, we don't believe it. The truth really is that as soon as young Catholics can get away from the influence of priest and nun, they realise that the most useless trappings in human life are religions of any kind.

"THE FREETHINKER"

2 and 3, Furnival Street, Holborn,
Telephone No.: Holborn 2601. London, E.C.4.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. M. MOSLEY.—Thanks for book; it reached its destination safely. Sorry we cannot say when we shall be able to visit Nottingham again. Much will depend upon the general state of affairs. At present we have our hands more than full.

A. HANSON.—As you will have seen, we had already dealt with the subject. Any book that is worth reading is suitable for review in these columns, but the review must be brief. There is a paper shortage which grows more acute.

MR. AND MRS. POTTER.—Thanks for copies of "The Freethinker." We have the missing issues for 1941.

E. J. FORD.—We can only reply that we have no recollection of debating in Burslem with a clergyman. In fact, we have no recollection of ever having been in the town. If you would give a date we could settle the matter.

G. G. REPTON.—Sorry, but we cannot furnish you with the address required. We have not heard of W. Repton for some time. The copies of "The Freethinker" are being sent as requested. A considerable number of copies are being sent to men in the Armed Forces.

A. GREGORY.—Will you please let us know the title of the article about which you write.

"G. S. M."—See "Sugar Plums."

WAR DAMAGE FUND.—Wm. Riggs, 10s.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2-3, Furnival Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection 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, 17s.; half-year, 8s. 6d.; three months, 4s. 6d.

Lecture notices must reach 2 and 3, Furnival Street, Holborn, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Monday, or they will not be inserted.

SUGAR PLUMS

THANKS to those who have sent us copies of "The Freethinker" from January 1, 1941, to the beginning of July. We have now all we require for office purposes. We shall be glad to hear from those who are able to offer, at moderate prices, early Freethought literature, say from the time of Paine onward. We should like to replace, so far as we can, the books that were destroyed.

Two more of the "Pamphlets for the People" are now ready. These are "Agnosticism—Or" and "Atheism." The two are really one, but are divided to fit in with the scheme of this series. They should both be of use to all Freethinkers and prove enlightening to others. Each pamphlet runs to 16 pages. Price 2d. each, by post 5d.

The Medicine Man does not differ in essentials whether we take him as he is to-day in civilised or uncivilised societies, or as he existed a couple of thousand years ago. Here, for instance, is the picture of the clan as drawn by Plato:—

"There are the quacks and diviners who peddle their wares to the rich and make them believe that these cheapjacks possess powers, procured from the gods by sacrifices and incantations, for healing with diversions and festivities any sin that has been committed either by oneself or by one's forbears. Conversely, supposing that one wishes to plague an enemy, they pretend to the command of corresponding powers for inflicting injuries. . . . This they claim to do by inducing the gods to minister to their purposes, and so they

produce a host of books purporting to have been written by Musaeus and Orpheus. . . . They follow these books in their hocus-pocus, and they persuade even governments, as well as private people, that a release and purification from sin can be obtained by means of sacrifices and agreeable child's play. They further maintain that these 'rites' are as efficient for the dead as they are for the living. 'Rites' liberate us from the torments of the world beyond the grave, while a dreadful fate awaits us if we neglect here and now to make sacrifices."

This is taken from the "Republic." It will be noted that there is little difference between these representatives of the gods, whether we take them in a forest clearing, in antiquity, in a modern cathedral, or in the pulpit provided by the B.B.C. And as they are the same through all time, the folly of large sections of the people remains the same also. It is a nice question as to how far one breeds the other.

What a change! After all the opposition to this "Christian country" having real friendly relations with "Atheistic Russia," the Archbishop of Canterbury writes in his Diocesan Gazette: "We must wish every success to the valiant Russian armies and be ready to give them every possible help." It is noticeable that the Archbishop does not ask for the *prayers* of the people for a Russian success: they can go no further than to express a mere wish. As one of the authors of the elaborate religious lie that we were fighting for the preservation of Christianity, it would be rather too much to ask his followers to petition God to help Atheistic Russia to victory. On the other hand, if the Russians do score a tactical success, Dr. Lang can hardly claim that God helps those who deserve it, whether they pray to God or not. That would be to take up the Freethought teaching that, other things equal, it doesn't matter to the value of a brass button whether there is a God or not. Things will be what they are. Results will follow action. A man with a God but no gun will stand a poor chance against a man with a gun and no God. We cannot say that the Archbishop does not see this—but he cannot, of course, say it.

Having had his spasm of common sense, the Archbishop proper comes to the front and returns to his customary religious nonsense. He says: "Russia's defence of her own land may lead to a revival of religion, always deep in the heart of the Russian people." Of course, pre-revolutionary Russia was predominantly religious. Not 20 per cent. of Russians could read or write, and they were encouraged to drunkenness and vice to keep them from behaving intelligently regarding secular affairs. The conditions of ignorance and misery of the Russian people were directly connected with their government and their religion. Some 30 years back we wrote a series of articles dealing with the way in which the religious government of Russia robbed and degraded the people over whom it reigned. And it was with that Russia we, as a Christian people, could be friendly and tolerant. The change came when Russia threw its gods and its Czar on one side and tried to carve out a new and better land. And with all its faults the new Russia is better than the old one. There was one great thing the revolutionists had in their favour. Any change at all was bound to be for the better.

And the attitude of our Christian rulers? Well, we have space now for but one illustration. Sir Samuel Hoare, a man who did what he could to prevent the Spanish revolution being a success, wrote about 1930 a book called "The Seventh Seal." (We think we have the title exactly, but the greater number of our books are not to hand for verification.) Hoare was then in the Diplomatic Service, and was in Russia at the time, or soon after, the revolution. He shed tears over the Russian royalty and aristocracy. Every one of them appears to have been a perfect lady or a perfect gentleman. But of the millions of the Russian people who had seen their daughters and wives insulted, assaulted; the millions of men and women who were kept on a degraded mental, moral and physical level—of these, not a word of sympathy. Not the slightest recognition that the dynasty was paying the penalty of their centuries of misrule, greed and brutality. The brutalisation of

a *people* did not appeal to Sir Samuel Hoare. But a royal family had been killed. That was the unforgivable sin! In his conduct Sir Samuel Hoare stood for a type.

The only retort is the one Paine gave to Burke when he shut his eyes to the similar state of the French *people*, but thundered his indignation at the death of a king and queen: "You pity the plumage but forget the dying bird!"

The Archbishop says: "It is significant that on the outbreak of war thousands flocked to the churches for prayer." The implication is that these thousands could not go to church before the war. That Christians could not go to church in Russia was one of the religious lies assiduously circulated in this country. The majority of Russian people are religious—they always have been. They could always go to church. Freethought is not born in a day, and it was only fools who could talk of Russia as being an Atheistic nation. They may be that in time; they are not that yet. But the Government is Atheistic in its personnel. It has not helped religion with subsidies and laws. It has even acted in the other direction. That, too, anyone but a fool would have expected. Intolerance, like religion—of which it is an ingredient—cannot be outlived in a generation. But religion in Russia is much weaker than it was, and it must grow still weaker. For one may *keep* a people without either education or personal self-respect. But let them taste either, and a new appetite is created. Give them both, and the inevitable decay of religion sets in.

There will be no religious revival in Russia—short of its complete subjugation by Germany. And whether Russia secures a military victory over Germany or not, it has given its help to us. What we have to be on guard against is the attempt that will be made when the war is over to weaken the bonds between this country and Russia. Religious and other forces will be at work against the "godless government." Russia will not be more religious after the war than it was before, and if we Freethinkers make what use we should of the situation, Freethought in this country will be much stronger. We wish we were 20 years younger, so that we might witness the new advance.

We have had many inquiries concerning our contributor "Mimnermus." We cannot say more than that the last letter we had from him did not point to any improvement in his health, but he gave us no address to which we could write and we are unable to get into touch with him. But on the suggestion of two of our readers, we intend reprinting some of his earlier articles. We are sure they will be welcomed by new readers, and old ones may find them still interesting. We know of no reason why he should not write to us.

For both those who are alive to the machinations of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as for those who ought to be alive to the dangers it presents to a people who really desire to be free, we commend "No Friend of Democracy," by Edith Moore, with a foreword by Joseph McCabe. The work is a study of Roman Catholic politics and the influence of the Roman Church on both the present war and the growth of Fascism. It is a collection of statements by Roman Catholics, from the Pope downwards, which indicate the manner in which the Church fishes in muddy waters with but one motive—the advancement of the power of the Church. The quotations are all dated—which enhances their value. Price 1s. Can be obtained from 57, Dollis Road, Church End, Finchley, or may be obtained from "The Freethinker" office.

There seems something in the following excerpt from Mr. H. Stafford Handforth's "Conquest of Thought":—

"A modern townsman appears at first sight to have a livelier mentality than that of a countryman, but on examination it is found to be, not power of thought, power to cope with a problem, but merely the power of reproducing a mass of phrases, slogans, names and tricks of speech, which have been acquired by passive receptivity. Consequently, the lives of the town-bred masses, viewed from the outside, are devoid of all rich and varied human interest, because the thoughts and characters of the people are really atrophied."

Take the smart cockney of, say thirteen, and compare him with the small provincial town youth, and you will see a "smartness" that the latter has not. Take the same two at 20 years of age, and one will find that the mental growth has been usually better with the small townsman.

THE LOGIC OF IMMORTALITY

NO logical discussion of any subject is possible unless the major premise is agreed to. In what follows it is assumed that both **time** and **space** are admitted to be infinite and, therefore, **eternal**. Anything eternal can have neither beginning nor end. Conversely, anything that had a beginning must come to an end; and anything that is destined to come to an end must have had a beginning. Too many forget that **eternity** extends both ways, and they look only forward.

It being admitted that Time and Space are infinite and eternal, other things must fit into the picture, which otherwise represents nothing but a vacuum.

The Material Universe must be as infinite and eternal as Space and Time. Every young man who has been to college knows that the 90 or more elements of which this Universe is composed can be scientifically demonstrated as absolutely indestructible. The endless variety of "forms" in which these elements may be assembled had a beginning, and those forms can be destroyed and come to an end—whether they be suns and planets, or oak trees and ants. But the individual "elements" are simply redistributed as solids, liquids or gases; to take part in endless new formations. The water one boils away in a kettle is not destroyed. It is merely separated into two elements, oxygen and hydrogen. It should be obvious that if these fundamental elements could be actually destroyed and become as nothing, the entire Material Universe would have disappeared long ago.

Those who believe the Universe was "created" at some epoch in the history of the past—no matter how remote—are confronted with the very embarrassing question: What was in the **infinity** of Space during the **eternity** before that creation? If the answer is "Nothing," that nothingness must include any supposed Creator.

There is undoubtedly, as pointed out by Buddha many hundred years ago, some mysterious **force**, so far undiscovered, that keeps the elements of the Material Universe in perpetual motion. We call this "**Life**." As this force must have been co-existent with the Material Universe upon which it acts, it must be equally infinite and eternal without beginning or end.

This leads us to consider another matter, intimately associated with Life, which is the **Mind**. It is obviously impossible to conceive a Material Universe without a conscious Mind to perceive it; therefore, this consciousness must have been co-existent with the Material perceived throughout the Eternity of the past. Mind is therefore obviously a fourth Infinity in the economy of the Universe.

In its earliest years the mind of the child is no better than that of the most primitive savage that ever roamed the earth. But with the progress from simple consciousness (the recognition of something outside itself, if only something to eat) to self-consciousness—the ability to realise itself—the Mind assumes supreme importance. In its ultimate and complete development, somewhere in the Universe, it must be familiar with the profoundest secrets of the Cosmos. But Life, or the Supreme Force, still remains to us as great a mystery as electricity. We see only their effects.

The present state of human knowledge roughly divides Life into two parts—animal and vegetable. A human being is physically an animal, the only factual difference from other animals being the use of a spoken language, to which all other differences may be traced. During life an animal enjoys the use of some part of the Universal Mind, much as it does some part of the surrounding atmosphere which is continually passing through its lungs.

Some unidentified person in some part of the Earth during the past few thousand years, must have been the first to conceive the idea that the part of the Mind that he enjoyed was his special private property. To-day every

convert to this belief calls it his "Soul," and regards it as his individual and immortal possession. This idea seems to have gradually spread through many parts of the world, but is still far from being generally accepted. There are some hundred millions in Asia that never heard of it, and more scattered millions of highly intelligent beings who don't believe it.

No matter how widely this belief in an individual and immortal soul may be adopted, it is nothing but what one believes because **one has been told it** by someone else, who in turn has been told it, unsupported by any facts. Therefore it must be classed as a superstition; which is the subjection of the mind of man, in the things of Nature, to that for subjection to which there is no warrant in Nature's own testimony.

The individual possession of a part of the Mind called the Soul, for the Eternity of the future, carries with it the assumption that it has always been the private Soul of that individual during the Eternity of the past, or it is not immortal, as **Eternity** has no beginning. If it is true that these Immortal Souls have always existed, the Souls of every human being that will ever be born on the earth must be already in existence, and have been, throughout the **Eternity** of the past—waiting for the future owners, who **must** come and get them.

Is this Fatalism; or Predestination; or just plain Superstition?

Nature teaches us that when life leaves the body, the brain dies with it, and cannot possibly have any further use for the Mind, or the Mind for it; any more than the lungs have for the atmosphere. Neither of these organs are any more eternal than the stomach. It is quite possible that some part of the Omniscience of the Universal Mind may filter through to us during our human life. This might explain the so-called "hunches" or inspirations that come to some of us and lead us to such marvellous discoveries and inventions. Ideas may be passing over us every day, but our little receiving set, the human brain, is not yet strong enough or properly attuned to catch them.

This thesis is nothing but a suggestion, something for a reader to ponder in a leisure hour. While I regard its logic as unanswerable, I am told that is because I have no "spiritual insight," which seems to be just another convenient term for Superstition. The benefits I have personally derived from these views of Immortality, and which many friends have shared with me, are twofold. There is no longer the slightest fear of death, or the dread of being condemned to an **Eternal** future existence that promises nothing but endless monotony, which is—to me—appalling even to contemplate.

F.

"THE KASIDAH"

THE merits of this book of verse by Sir Richard Burton have been rather overshadowed by the popularity of the "Rubaiyat" of Omar Khayyam, to which it is rather similar in theme. To many, however, "The Kasidah," by reason of its fuller philosophy, has a much greater appeal; and, once you are familiar with the rhythm of the "couplet form" of the verses, you find they lack nothing in the poetical sense.

The author, Sir Richard Burton, is one of the strangest figures in literature—linguist, poet, scholar, traveller, author and, above all, Freethinker, he is probably best known for his "Arabian Nights," which, without doubt, show to full advantage his marvellous knowledge of Eastern Lore. His extensive travels in the East have been set out in various books, and anyone interested in travel would do well to study some of his work; he was the first European to visit Mecca as one of the "Faithful," and his description of this journey is extremely colourful and interesting.

Many of the couplets are poetry in the purest sense, and instance this description of the dawn of an Arab day:—

The horses neigh, the camels groan,
The torches gleam, the cressets flare;
The town of canvas falls, and man,
With din and dint, invadeth air:

The Golden Gates swing right and left;
Up springs the Sun with flamy brow;
The dew-cloud melts in gush of light;
Brown Earth is bathed in morning glow.

It is, however, the scepticism which runs through the work which will interest the Freethinker, and many of the jibes at Idealism are both amusing and instructive:—

How Life is dim, unreal, vain,
Like scenes that round the drunkard reel;
How "Being" meaneth not to be;
To see and hear, smell, taste and feel.

A drop in Ocean's boundless tide,
Unfathom'd waste of agony;
Where millions live their horrid lives
By making other millions die.

"Design" also comes in for a touch of the author's deadly lash:—

Dost not, O Maker, blush to hear,
Amid the storm of tears and blood,
Man say Thy mercy made what is,
And saw the made and said 'twas good?

The marvel is that man can smile
Dreaming his ghostly, ghastly dream:
Better the heedless atomy that buzzes
In the morning beam!

Poets are usually shy when it comes to expressing really robust thoughts. Not so Burton; to use a well-worn expression, "he calls a spade a spade."

There is no God, no man-made God;
A bigger, stronger crueller man;
Black phantom of our baby-fears,
Ere Thought, the life of Life began.

His treatment to the problem of regression:—

Who made your Maker? If self-made
Why fare so far to fare the worse?
Sufficeth not a world of worlds,
A self-made chain of universe?

And of another well-known Theistical inconsistency:—

You bring down Heaven to vulgar Earth;
Your Maker like yourself you make,
You quake to own a reign of Law,
You pray the Law its laws to break;

Almost every phase of religion receives his attention—the morbid side of Christianity for example:—

Yea, Pan is dead, the Nazarene came,
And seized his seat beneath the sun,
The votary of the Riddle-god,
Whose one is three and three is one;
Whose sadd'ning creed of herited Sin
Spilt o'er the world its cold, grey spell;
In every vista showed a grave,
And neath the grave the glare of Hell;

The philosophy of Burton has been compared to the monism of Goethe and Haeckel and, throughout the volume, sings of the Unity of all Nature:—

No break the chain of Being bears;
All things began in unity;
And lie the links in regular line,
Though haply none the sequence see.

Almost Shakespearean in their touch are the following verses:—

Do what thy manhood bids thee do,
From none but self expect applause:
He noblest lives and noblest dies
Who makes and keeps his self-made laws.

With ignor'nce wage eternal war,
To know thyself for ever strain,
Thine ignorance of thine ignorance
Is thy fiercest foe, thy deadliest bane;

That blunts thy sense and dulls thy taste;
That deafs thine ears, and blinds thine eyes;
Creates the thing that never was,
The Thing that ever is defies.

Sentiments which, in these troubled times, are forgotten amid the welter of manufactured opinion.

A fitting close is Burton's own last lines:—

In days to come, days slow to dawn,
When Wisdom deigns to dwell with men,
These echoes of a voice long stilled
Haply shall wake responsive strain:
Wend now thy way with brow serene,
Fear not thy humble tale to tell:
The whispers of the desert wind;
The tinkling of the camel's bell.

GEORGE PRESCOTT

MATTERS IN QUESTION

An Answer to Will Kent

(WE have received the following in reply to an open letter to a Christian friend, by Mr. W. Kent, published in "The Freethinker" for June 29.—EDITOR.)

Dear Will,—

I did not imagine when I wrote to you on the subject of "The Freethinker" that you would do me the honour of a public reply, else perhaps I should have expressed myself in more carefully chosen words. I should not have been guilty of such commonplaces as "donkey's years" had I known it was going to be gibbeted in a periodical, but since the Editor permits you the use of the word "kybosh," my own offence cannot have been too heinous.

But to address myself to the points at issue, I am with your Editor entirely when he says that "much may be understood in explaining the rise of any creed or philosophy by an examination of the conditions under which it arose." Hence my putting a date to the philosophy of "The Freethinker." I erred only on the side of modernity. Actually I should have said "1859-ish"—the date, I believe, of the publication of the "Origin of Species," the Annus Mirabilis of the Freethinking world.

This, in fact, brings me to one of my chief objections to Atheism. It is a static creed. You yourself admit this. Of course I do not believe as my parents and grandparents believed. Man's sense of God is a deepening and broadening one. The man who wrote the Book of Isaiah had a far greater vision of God than the one who wrote the Books of the Judges. Moreover, we live in an age when it is not the beliefs of the great men, but the beliefs of numbers of men, that matter, and in spite of the present retrogression (brought about, I believe, very largely by a loss of the sense of God on the part of men), man's sense of the presence of God in the world will go forward.

"Make no more giants, God! but elevate the race at once!"

It is not a piece of use your trying to pin me down to beliefs held by our grandparents. I have no use for them. But a sense of the presence and purpose of God in the world is an ever increasing one, both for myself and, when the present wave of paganism has passed, for the mass of mankind.

"The Christian soldier scientists increased from one to three," you say (Lodge, plus Eddington and Jeans). But, my dear Will, it is not the addition of two and one that matters; what matters is the complete change towards religion on the part of science itself. "As to Jeans and Eddington, they are supposed to put the 'kybosh' on materialism," you say. I doubt very much whether Jeans or Eddington would lay that flattering unction to their souls.

No, material itself seems to be dynamic, a thing of forces and tensions rather than the old cannon-ball universe of the Victorian past.

You would like to know, you write, what is the Christian quarrel with the matter. There is none so far as I am concerned, nor do I subscribe to the idea of man as a "nasty piece of goods." I believe man to be a fine fellow as he stands, going amazingly wrong, as the present situation proves, but capable of great things nevertheless, and as to being fastidious about matter, as one who has given a good deal of attention to art, I think matter in most of its manifestations is magnificent. Do not accuse me of holding ideas which I do not hold, for the purpose of knocking them down. It is too easy.

I am still of opinion that "The Freethinker" is very often unnecessarily abusive. There is a vast difference between a "satirical sallie" and personal abuse of those with whom one disagrees. To call a man a fool because he holds a different view from oneself is to descend to the policy of the pothouse.

You would like to know what my God does in his disassociation from war—all part of the larger question of wrongdoing. War and every evil is in the world against the will of God. God is not to be confused with the god of the African witch doctor, who cures all evil by the wave of a wand. God's ways are the ways of love and sacrifice—not the way of the tank and the bombing plane. That is where official Christianity is wrong at the present moment. Man has got to learn the will of God—not have it thrust upon him.

You ask, "Do you consider the Atheist case . . . should never be permitted print?" I thought I had made it clear in my letter to you that I was anxious that it should be printed—and printed well. I admit the comparative freedom of "The Freethinker" so far as the influence of priest, holy book, authority, advertiser, financier, are concerned, and you are to be congratulated upon this. To overthrow one dogma and fall foul of another is not, however, to be free, and that I am afraid is the Atheist's case. Also it gives me pause when the Freethinker, failing to see the light for himself, denies that others have seen it and, moreover, insists that his own darkness is light, whereas I feel that it is at best, in the words of the poet who you so much admire:—

"Not light, but rather darkness visible."

After all of which, I remain,

Yours as ever,

ERNEST SHIPP

HOW TO GET TO HEAVEN—AND WEAR A CROWN OF GLORY!

St. Julian Points the Way

"He that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, and how he may please the Lord."

"He that is married, careth for the things of the World and how he may please his wife."

(Corinthians, VII.)

When St. Julian was 18 years of age his parents urged him to marry, and he requested to be allowed seven days to think the matter over.

He spent those days of grace in fasting and prayer, and on the seventh day Christ appeared to him and Christ said: "Fear not, Julian, to take thyself a wife, for as Virgin ye shall serve me."

So Julian married Basilissa—and when they entered the bridal chamber they smelled the odour of roses and lilies and, clasping hands, they vowed to serve the Lord in Virgin chastity.

Then the chamber was filled with celestial light, and Jesus with Mary and many saints were there, and they placed on the heads of Julian and Basilissa crowns of flowers and Jesus said:—

"Julian! Thou hast conquered! I have reserved for thee a crown of glory, for I say unto you, that those that have forsaken Brethren, or Sisters, or Father or Mother or Wife or Children in My name's sake shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life."

From the French Catholic book "Flowers of Paradise." St. Julian points the way!

Forsake your old mother, abandon your wife and children, in Jesus' name and your reward is Everlasting Life and a "crown of glory."

WHAT A RELIGION!

H. J. HAYWARD

CORRESPONDENCE

RELIGION AND THE FORCES

Sir,—I am a member of the Durham University Air Squadron and am at present taking part in an intensive training course at the College of the Venerable Bede, Durham. I am an Atheist, and although I have told the adjutant so, I have been ordered to attend church parades and to enter the church. As this order is contrary to the decision of the Air Council announced in your paper (with regard to regular airmen), I would be obliged if you would request a ruling from the Air Council as to whether this also applies to members of University Air Squadrons.

As disobedience to orders would result in my expulsion from the air squadron, I have been forced to obey this order. I would be obliged if you would publish this letter in order that I might register my protest against what I regard as unjustifiable oppression.—Yours, etc.,

KENNETH SPINK.

(A man serving in the Forces must obey the order to parade, whatever be its purpose. But he is not compelled to take part in any religious service in which he does not believe. He should see to it that he is registered so as to make plain his position. If by some misunderstanding he has been induced to declare himself as belonging to any religious sect, or of holding religious opinions that he does not hold, he should apply to his superior officer to have the necessary alteration made.—EDITOR.)

QUO VADIS?

ONE of the strangest inconsistencies on record is the inconsistency which Conservatives on the one part, and "Left Wingers" on the other part, have adopted towards, respectively, the Irish Question and the Spanish Civil War.

Thus, if I were to say that the Spanish Republic was fighting for the rights and liberties of the human mind and that the Spanish Republic represented the best and most enlightened Government which Spain ever possessed in all its history, whilst the rebels under "General" Franco were fighting to re-establish the Inquisition with all its horrors (as they have now succeeded in doing).

If I were to point out that, in Franco's dungeons men are at this very moment tortured with hot irons and (an innovation on Torquemada) by having their genital organs pulled out by strings attached thereto.

If I were to mention that, on one occasion, a ship on which I was employed called at Teneriffe and, on leaving port, we found we had a stowaway on board who had just escaped from one of Franco's dungeons. His back had been seared with hot irons and he had been condemned to be executed the following day.

If I were to point out that the whole Spanish War was an effort on the part of the Unholy Church to regain its lost territory, and on the part of Germany and Italy to gain control of the Mediterranean, and that it meant that Britain and France would be then completely ringed with hostile Fascist Powers (Ireland, Fascist Spain and Portugal, Italy and Germany). If, in short, I were to talk like that, then a Left Winger would say: "Good boy! You are on the side of Light and Liberty and Progress!" while a Conservative would say I was "one of those awful Reds"!

But if I adopted exactly the same sentiments towards the Irish question, if I were to say that Home Rule is, in one single word, Rome Rule, and that Ireland's only object in desiring independence is simply to have a "breeding ground" for priests, from whom specially trained clericalist missionaries can go forth to infect the rest of the world with the foul pollution of their poisonous superstition—much as a swamp breeds mosquitoes which infect the surrounding districts with malaria; if I were to point out that the average Romanist Irishman does not care two hoots about his country, considered as a country, except in so far as it may serve as a jumping-off ground for the enemies of Protestant England. If I were to express the opinion that, of course, Britain should have gone ahead with the Black-and-Tan war and crushed the Sinn Fein murder gang

utterly then a Conservative would say: "Good boy! You are a loyal subject of your Sovereign and his Empire! You are helping to keep the British Flag flying in a hostile rebel land!" whilst a "Liberal" or any other Left Winger would say that such sentiments were "grinding down the poor, hospitable, good-natured Irish," that I was an advocate of the "tyrant landlords who turn the poor tenants out to starve on the side of the road"—and all that similar line of clap-trap—and that I was "an Orange hooligan!"

Even on the ship which I have just referred to I once, at table, mentioned to the captain that in view of our own Imperial interests we should interfere on the side of the friendly, civilised Republican Government of Spain in their gallant and heroic struggle against Franco's savages (who would certainly endeavour to take Gibraltar sooner or later), and the captain, an irascible, little, red-haired Welshman, snapped at me, "Ah! to hell with it!"—perhaps he thinks differently now (more especially since several of that company's ships have been sunk by the submarines of those very same Fascists)!

See my article in the "Protestant Times," September 10, 1936, on the Spanish War, and a letter sent to the "Protestant Times," September 19, 1936, by a writer (utterly unknown to me), which strongly approved of the sentiments I expressed in that article.

See also an excellent article in the "News-Chronicle," July 18, 1940, wherein it is pointed out that many of those who lauded Franco, that saviour of civilisation, have now seen plenty of reason for changing their tune!

In short, erstwhile "Reds" have now become patriots, and the erstwhile Conservatives have become traitors.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

Outdoor

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.0, Mr. L. EBURY. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.0, Mr. L. EBURY.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 7.30, Thursday, Mr. E. C. SAPHIN. Sunday, 6.0, a Lecture.

COUNTRY

Blyth (The Fountain), Monday, August 4: 7, Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON.

Chester-le-Street (Bridge End), Saturday, August 2: 7-30, Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON.

North Shields (Harbour View), Tuesday, August 5: 7, Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON.

Stockton (The Cross), Wednesday, August 6: 7, Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON.

Newcastle (Bigg Market), Sunday, August 3: 7, Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON.

Kingston and District N.S.S. Branch (Market Place, 7-30: Mr. J. W. BARKER.

From the daily papers of July 3 we learn that the Southern Military Command has placed a ban on Army officers attending the Pavilion ballroom at Bournemouth. The Public Relations Officer explains that "the ballroom is so congested that frequently officers and N.C.O.s have to share the same table. In some dances, such as 'Paul Jones,' an officer might have to take his partner back to the table where N.C.O.s and other ranks are sitting." We ought to "thank whatever gods there be" that in the midst of a world war we should be pleased that our military command are alive to the contaminating influence of such an association and its consequences. We are fighting the battle of the democracies. The ballroom, by the way, has accommodation for 500 dancers and table space for 700. Might we suggest that the situation might be well met by compelling officers to wear gas-masks? We are all equal in the sight of God, but not in the sight of a military officer.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President - - - CHAPMAN COHEN
 General Secretary - R. H. ROSETTI
 2 & 3, Furnival Street, Holborn, London, E.C.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name

Address

Occupation

Dated this day of 19.....

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

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

Pamphlets for the People

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

A series designed to present the Freethought point of view in relation to important positions and questions.

Agnosticism or . . . ?

Atheism.

Thou Shalt not Suffer a Witch to Live.

Freethought and the Child.

Christianity and Slavery.

Price 2d.

Postage 1d.

All that is left from the Blitz

Almost an Autobiography

By CHAPMAN COHEN

This is not an ordinary autobiography. It sums up the experience of 50 years in the Freethought Movement as writer and lecturer. It is of interest to both religious and non-religious readers. It is both a criticism and appraisal of life. A limited number only have been saved from the "blitz," thanks to their being in another building.

With Five Plates. Price 6s. (postage 5d.); or of all newsagents and booksellers.

SPAIN AND THE CHURCH, by Chapman Cohen.
 Price 1d.; postage 1d.

THE AGE OF REASON, by Thomas Paine. With portrait, and 44-page introduction by Chapman Cohen. Complete edition. Price 6d.; postage 2½d.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH, by Colonel Ingersoll. Price 1d.; postage 1d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? by Colonel Ingersoll.
 Price 1d.; postage 1d.

HENRY HETHERINGTON, by A. G. Barker.
 Price 6d.; postage 1d.

PETER ANNET, by Ella Twynam. Price 2d.; postage 1d.

The following are re-binding. Orders will be discharged as early as possible.

BIBLE ROMANCES, by G. W. Foote. Shows one of the finest of Freethinking writers at his best.
 Price 2s. 6d.; postage 3d.

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING, by Chapman Cohen. First, second, third and fourth series. A series of special articles contributed by the author to the "Freethinker." Price 2s. 6d.; postage 2½d.
 The four volumes, 10s. post free.

A GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT, by Chapman Cohen. An outline of the philosophy of Freethinking. The author at his best. Price 3s. 6d.; postage 4d.

THEISM AND ATHEISM, by Chapman Cohen.
 Price 3s. 6d.; postage 2½d.

BRADLAUGH AND INGERSOLL. A sketch and evaluation of the two greatest Freethinkers of their time. By Chapman Cohen. Portraits.
 Price 2s. 6d.; postage 3d.

INFIDEL DEATHBEDS. The last moments of famous Freethinkers. By G. W. Foote and A. D. McLaren. Price 2s.; postage 3d.

THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH, by Chapman Cohen. Price 2s. 6d.; postage 1d.

THE PIONEER PRESS

2 & 3, Furnival St., Holborn, London, E.C.