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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

In Time of War

WARTIME is not a period when philosophy is exalted and impartiality of mind is in favour. Science has a more favoured position, because chemistry and other branches of science play so great a part in war's work of destruction. Even our Government awakens in a time of war to the importance of science if we would secure food and munitions, for without these things war cannot continue and we might be driven to peace from sheer exhaustion. So we cheerfully spend millions on science where in peacetime we should have boggled over spending thousands. Above all, a state of war is a bad time for impartiality of mind and for the scientific study of man in which colour and nationality play subordinate parts. When war rages, calmness of judgment runs the risk of being interpreted as lack of patriotism, and a form of patriotism flourishes that functions most actively in the direction of hatred of the other fellow. War seeks an immediate end and is impatient of the tendency to balance pros and cons. In wartime he who shouts the loudest may easily force into the background him who thinks deepest.

It is not, therefore, surprising that in the years that led up to the war a fresh lease of life was given to the hopelessly unscientific conception of "race." So far as Germany is concerned, the war is openly based on the belief in the existence of a superior Aryan race, a supposition which was invented little over a century ago in order to solve certain linguistic problems. It was on the theory of a superior race that Hitlerism was based. It was all very, very stupid, and although discarded by 99 per cent. of contemporary scientists it evidently has a place in the minds of others. We meet constantly such expressions as the British race, the Irish race, the Italian race and the German race from politicians and others, most of whom one might reasonably expect to be better informed. Of course, there are differences among peoples—differences of taste, dress, habits, opinions, colour, education and manners. But none of these things, nor all of them combined, give validity to the concept of "race."

Fools have always outnumbered philosophers, and will continue to do so no matter how much the level of each is raised. And between the fools and the philosophers there are those who wander in a

kind of an intellectual no-man's land, sojourning now with one and now with the other. Thus we have Mr. Duff Cooper, a member of the present Government, asserting that there is something in German human nature which marks them off from other people. And some of our important diplomatists write in much the same vein. It never strikes these creatures of the hour that by a judicious selection of facts one might find support for the thesis that we are a people who believe we are selected by God to rule others, and with a "racial" tendency to land-grabbing all over the globe. It is by this method that Goebbels and his kind have built up their case against this country. The picture is grotesque not because of what it says, but because of what it leaves unsaid. Starting with the Elizabethan period, one may easily draw a picture of a people composed of slave dealers, swashbuckling piratical adventurers, greedy traders, and oppressors of the less-developed peoples of the world. And yet we know that it was during the Elizabethan period that England became a "nest of singing birds," and that right through our history we have had a stream of philosophers, writers, poets, painters, musicians and scientists of whom any nation might be proud, side by side with greed, hypocrisy, faithlessness and disregard for human life, we have had their opposites in generous proportion. All who sailed the seas were not pirates, all who sought new and strange lands were not ruffianly marauders, and all at home were not mere devourers of helpless human beings.

The Absurdity of "Race"

The great lesson to be drawn from a scientific study of man is not that we are dealing with "races" with different fundamental qualities, but that always and everywhere man is the expression of his social history, and that without that social history he would not be even human. If we are to have any reasonable prospect of creating a new world we must realise that human nature is fundamentally one the world over, that it is changeable because of its identity, and while always the same in substance is susceptible to influences that may alter both its ideas and practices.

The absurdity of "race" was never more clearly shown than in the case of the United States. North America, with a white man's history of about three centuries, has been populated by British, French, Germans, Danes, Swedes, Dutch, Italians and many others. Each brought with them different traditions, a different language, different habits and a different outlook. Yet we see all these going through a process of amalgamation that would be more complete than it is had the invasions taken place at longer intervals. What becomes of the fixity of "race" here? What is the value of the present-day thoughtless slogan: "Once a German always a German"?

Our own history yields the same lesson. It is a curious fact that since the Norman Conquest we have never had a monarch of English descent. We have had them of French, Welsh, Scotch, Dutch, German origin, but not of English. The present reigning family is of nearly pure German origin. The first George could hardly speak English. Victoria took a German husband. And in addition we have

had from time to time a wave of settlers from the Continent. What has become of these peoples and their alleged racial qualities?

Of course, there are differences between peoples. Germans in the mass differ from Englishmen in the mass, and so forth. But the differences of character, of tastes, of propensities are no more than registrations of different social histories. "I can tell a German anywhere, or a Spaniard, or a Frenchman," says some wiseacre, to be followed by the stultifying qualification, "Of course, there are some one cannot place." Will someone explain what a German who does not look like a German really looks like? Nobody seems to know.

I would not have dwelt so long on this topic but for the consideration that success in the building of a new world will largely depend upon our attitude towards this question. The "once a German always a German" will get us nowhere. The new world, if it is to be built for the better, must be founded on the fundamental identity of human nature, while recognising that human nature is plastic, that man is the most adaptable animal on the face of the earth. He comes into the world the most helpless of any living thing. He has few "instincts"—a word that is a boon for the unscientific and a "godsend" for the foolish. Man is what his environment makes him, and very powerful factors—the decisive factors—in that environment are the traditions, the knowledge, the appetites, the ideals that he inherits from his predecessors, and which come to him in the forms of inventions and social institutions belonging to the community into which he is born. Bear these things in mind and we shall not forget the fundamental qualities of the human nature with which we have to deal.

War and the Civilian

However much I disagree with those who talk to us about "race," I agree that when this war is over a very close watch must be kept on the German people—and for some time. The younger generation will present the most difficult problem, for it is the youth of Germany that have been most affected by the Nazi poison. They have been taught there is no good life for Germans outside Nazism, which parallels the concerted Christian dirge that there is no salvation for man outside Jesus Christ. The likeness between Nazi and Christian principles is very striking, and both are disastrous when allowed complete expression. But the opportunity for another German rising must not be given.

On the other hand, we ought to be able to count on the helpful influence of those intellectuals who have left Germany for shelter in other countries. They represent the better brains and finer characters among the German people. They ought to play a very powerful part in recivilising German youth.

But if the conquerors are to gain they must give. If the ideals of Nazi Germany are to be completely reformed so must those of the Allies. America must beware of creating a huge professional military body always ready for war. Russia also, if it is to fit in with a beneficent "new order" that will prevent private war, will take steps to prohibit the maintenance of huge land and naval and air forces that can act as a threat to the world. As Russia has not the military traditions of other European countries, this should not be a very difficult task. Russians are not by tradition or tendency a military people. The military traditions of France will have received so great a shock that reform there should be easier than it would have been in other situations.

As to ourselves, we must also play our part in reducing the power and influence of our military tradition. If the Churches were in earnest—and

honest—they could help by removing from their buildings all military monuments and introducing in their stead monuments to men engaged in the arts and sciences of peace. But the association of the military hierarchy and the Church is too close for this easily to be done.

We shall deal later, and at length, with the Church and a reformed world. The social, political and financial aspects to be considered are greater and more important than many imagine.

Ruskin once said that women alone could act as a very powerful influence for peace if whenever war was declared they wore black, and continued to wear the clothes of mourning so long as the war lasted. The plan was never adopted, and, as a matter of fact, women have always exerted a strong pro-war influence on men.

There must be a resolve to place civil life in the foreground instead of the military element. At present, whenever we have a national celebration or commemoration, the military aspect is foremost. We shall not be thinking less of those of our kith and kin who have fallen in war if we take steps to prevent the inevitable brutalising consequences of armed conflict being cloaked and disguised in such a way that it appears as something glorious to the rising generation. We have one day of remembrance for the last war, with the monument in Whitehall to commemorate the fall of men who were drawn from all sections of society. The fighting Forces then, as now, were made up of men who were taken direct from the desk and from the factory, from the mine, from the commercial store, from the scientific laboratory and from a hundred and one peaceful and artistic pursuits. But none of these is represented at the annual assembly in Whitehall. It is a completely military parade, with a prominent advertisement of religion. The whole tendency of that commemoration is to excite in the rising generation admiration for the military life. It emphasises the lesson that if life is to be lived properly we must exalt the fighting Services.

I think the lesson for the rising generation should be in the other direction. And it should be twofold in character. The first is to recognise that when war is necessary it always means a step back in the scale of civilisation. There should be no exaggerated glorification of war. The resort to brute force may at times be necessary, but we should never forget that it is brute force, and brute force always lacks reason even though there may be found for it ample justification.

The second, and the greater, lesson is that in war, whether avoidable or unavoidable, whatever virtues attach to it, they have all been developed in peace and are squandered in war. The courage displayed by our airmen, soldiers and sailors, the sense of duty shown, the readiness to risk danger to the point of losing one's life, the sense of loyal obedience—whatever virtues are exhibited in war—are created in peace and wasted in war. There is no exception to the rule that an army long in the field deteriorates. That is why leave, rest, a return to the peace of civil life is necessary when men have been long in the fighting area. Militarism does not create human virtues; it squanders them as surely as a spendthrift squanders wealth. We need never be ashamed of our soldiers, but all of us ought to be ashamed of the conditions and causes that make wars necessary. War is an impeachment of the existing civilisation.

The Germany of the Kaiser boasted of its "mailed fist." Quite correctly we branded that as the boast of a bully. The existing Germany boasts of its enormous destructive power by the threat of which it hoped to conquer Europe. We branded that as the boast of a number of sadistic bullies. We have

got to kill the spirit that finds pride in that direction. But we also have got to get rid of the boast that any nation rules the seas or "owns" huge land areas. We must brand that as a peculiarly vicious type of exhibitionism. It excites resentment and rivalry.

One useful innovation made by Soviet Russia was publicly to recognise all kinds of labour, from the workshops to the laboratory, as offering material for public recognition and distribution in times of peace.

If we are to have a world peace it can only be achieved by each nation deliberately renouncing its power to declare war whenever it feels that its honour or its material interests are threatened. The "mailed fist" has always waited for an opportunity to use it, and the need for keeping soldiers in action has always been realised; so has the need for partial isolation from civilians. It used to be said that the many "little wars" we fought were good training, and it is a set rule not to permit regiments, in time of peace, to stay too long in the same area of their homeland.

It should hardly need demonstrating that no country would keep a huge army in being if it did not think that one day it would be used. There is now a very general agreement that war is no longer a national affair; it is an international matter. That alone should make it quite clear that a peace worth having must be international also.

CHAPMAN COHEN

(To be continued)

THE BLACK INTERNATIONAL AND THE NEW COUNTER-REFORMATION

UNHAPPILY, there are no straight lines in History. The dream of continuous uninterrupted progress—as held, for example, by some of the precursors of the French Revolution—is only a dream. To-day, indeed, it is fast becoming a nightmare! Just as there is no such thing as a hill which goes upwards for ever, so, equally, progress cannot be conceived without retrogression. After the golden dreams of the uninterrupted millennium so widely held in and by the then rising bourgeois culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, our present century of Fascism, spiritism and resurrected pseudo-astrology, represents an era of black reaction, of atavistic retrogression.

This is pre-eminently a "totalitarian" era. And in such an era we might expect the oldest "total" régime in existence to flourish in virtue of its vast experience. This is, pre-eminently, an era of counter-revolution, and who should take advantage of such an era better than the oldest and most experienced experts on counter-revolution to be found anywhere upon our planet? This is an international age—thanks, above all, to modern transport—and the most ancient and still most ubiquitous International on earth may be expected to profit by this state of things, to which its own magnificent organisation and instinctive understanding of "the psychology of reaction" so pre-eminently fit it. Is it necessary to add that we refer to the Roman Church, to the "Black International," to the Jesuit Company, which the great historian, Jules Michelet, long ago saluted as the very spirit of counter-revolution incarnate here upon earth?

The Roman theocracy was traditionally founded by a fisherman. Nor have the successors of the apochryphal "Peter" ever forgotten their alleged founder's art! Particularly as regards fishing in troubled waters! To their skill in this Lamarckian "science" of survival, the Popes owe their salvation from many a desperate situation in the course of the last 15 centuries; to its masterly application Rome owes both her present existence and her ability to stage that most dangerous and remarkable "come-back" which constitutes one of the most menacing features of our present age of counter-revolution, and to which our remaining paragraphs must now be directed.*

If the history of the Church indicates anything at all clearly it is these two things: firstly, that the Papacy has a memory beside the unrivalled tenacity of which that ascribed to the proverbial elephant fades into utter insignificance; secondly, that the Church—particularly since the advent of the Jesuits—excels in advancing under cover, in the strategy of turning movements. In our opinion, it is not possible, viewing the whole question in the very widest perspectives, to comprehend the present Counter-Reformation of the Roman Church—for such, in effect, we witness to-day—without taking these two attributes of the Catholic Church into the most careful consideration. In the mental processes of Rome, as in the fabled eternity upon which it (nominally) rests, time has not the present urgent significance that it has for us creatures of more ephemeral clay. From the watch-towers of the Vatican they take long views. In our opinion, the New Roman Empire—for such it is in reality beneath its transparent religious trappings—has one fundamental ambition, and one alone: to revive her medieval Empire over Europe and to extend it to regions which her Imperial prototypes, the Cæsars, never knew. Her "means" are modern—we shall return to these presently—but her "ends" are still the identical ends of the great medieval Popes, who dreamed of world domination: they are timeless—or rather, they are of every time.

Like the Supreme Deity in the Catholic pantheon, the historic purpose for which the Papacy exists is already definitive and finished—"The Pure Act"—if in thought only! The symbolic ritual of closing the mouth of each newly-created cardinal is, in this connection, significant. Each Prince of the Church learns from her Supreme Ruler the great secret that he must hand on, faithfully to his successors, the secret that specifically constitutes the Church as that which, in reality, it is: as a super-freemasonry; as the greatest of all secret societies; the most universal in its scope, the vastest in its claims; the most ubiquitous in its jurisdiction.

What is this secret? Or to view the self-same question in a broader framework; what, in reality, is the Roman Catholic Church? It is not—in essence, at least—a religion, a theology. Under Atheistic and Pagan Popes—under the Medici and Borgias of the Renaissance—it abated nothing of its activity. To attack its theology is to attack, at most, outworks. Does anyone acquainted with its *real* history think that the Church would close down if it ceased to believe in the Immaculate Conception? Or even that the Popes would lose any sleep over its loss! Similarly, it is not primarily a cultural institution. It has known and used impartially the high culture of the Renaissance and the gross barbarism of the Dark Ages. To be sure, our own generation has seen the cultured Latinist, Leo XIII., immediately succeeded by the primitive rustic, Pius X. (1903). If, following the eminent lead of Thomas Hobbes and Adolf Harnack, we style Rome as a political institution in essence, this also is only so in a very relative sense. Certainly, a Church, which at different stages of its historical existence, has created the theories of the Holy Roman Empire (ninth century) and the "Social Contract" (sixteenth century); which has ruled a Communist society (eighteenth century) in Paraguay, and which to-day rules a Fascist society in Portugal, the economic power of which was based on legal serfdom in medieval times, and yet which now makes the creation of a free peasant class its primary social objective in modern times; certainly such a political chameleon as the Roman Church has proved itself to be throughout the ages, cannot be styled "political" in any narrow party or academic sense of the term.

*(N.B.—We have not forgotten that Lamarck, the original promulgator of the theory of "Creative Evolution," was himself a pupil of the Jesuits. The eminent naturalist had, indeed, only to study the actual evolution of the famous Order in order to arrive at his theory of the giraffe, "which deliberately changed its colour and grew a long neck" in order to survive by conscious adaptation to the ever-changing milieu!! We may add that we accept the theory of Joseph Turmel that the Papacy, as the world-power we know it to-day, was founded, not by Peter, but in A.D. 378 by the Roman Emperor Gratian, who, in that year, constituted the previously provincial Bishop of Rome as "spiritual" ruler of the whole Western Empire. Cp. Joseph Turmel, "Histoire des Dogmes," vol. 4, "La Papauté.")

In the philosophy current in the Church since Thomas Aquinas "baptised" Aristotle into "Christ" in the thirteenth century, a sharp distinction is established between "substance" (essence) and "accidents" (appearances). Applying Roman teaching to Rome herself, we may distinguish sharply between her "substance" and her "accidents." And we can accurately state that, a religion in form, yet the Catholic Church is, in essence, something quite other. We think that we hit the nail on the head; that we come as near to a definition as is possible; that we find the chameleon as the "thing-in-itself" that it is beneath its multifarious colours; when we style the Papal Church as the supreme embodiment in all history of the Nietzschean theory of "the will to power." *The universal total power régime*: that is the Church of the legendary "Peter" and of the historical Hildebrand, of Dominic and his inquisitorial "Gestapo," and of Loyola and his Jesuit corps d'élite of ecclesiastical storm-troops, and equally of Leo XIII. and his (so-called) "Workers' Charter." *The living genius of Totalitarian rule*: that is the Catholic Church when we strip her religious "accidents" to the bare bone, to the underlying "substance."

Nor do the modern ephemeral imitators of these "spiritual" dictators fail to consult the oracles of the Vatican. (Was not Mons Vaticanus the Pagan "Mount of Prophecy"? And is not the Papal Chair itself reputed to be inscribed with the ritual formulas of Hercules, that patron deity of strong-armed gangsters!) Neither Mussolini, from the immemorably Papal Romagna, nor Hitler, from ultra-Catholic Munich, have failed to acknowledge their deep indebtedness to the most ancient Dynasty of Führers upon earth! To the prototype and historic exemplar of every subsequent "Fascist" régime. Indeed, both the medieval and the modern arts of repression and counter-revolution would much resemble "Hamlet" without the Prince of Denmark, if once the Papacy were to be omitted from the lists of age-long oppressors of "dangerous thoughts."

The Church of Rome is, then, not primarily a Church or sect, like any other, but is, rather, an institution perennially dedicated to power-politics in the very widest sense to which this term can be applied. From this fundamental characteristic there follows a consequence of the first importance. For if we concede that the real purpose of the Church is not to save souls, but to dominate minds (and bodies); to rule this world rather than to reach another; then it is self-evident that, to subserve this constant aim in a world of rapid change, the Roman technique of power must change repeatedly in accordance with the changing nature of the times. "Pure Acts" have no place on this impure earth. Overmuch consistency, if a "fool's virtue," is an evolutionary vice. He who says "Time," therewith says "change." It is only in heaven that assets can remain "frozen" for ever, only in the timeless realm of art that anyone or anything can remain forever unchanged: "semper eadem"—"forever the same"—a motto bequeathed to the ecclesiastical polity by the stagnant Past. The "Infallible" Church is nowhere more infallible than in her realisation of her own fallibility! Hence, instead of the traditional slogan of Vincent Lerins (fifth century), "always, everywhere, and by all," as the unerring test of any disputed doctrine, the present ideology of the "developing" Catholicism of the Modern Age is that of Cardinal Newman: "To live, is to change; to be perfect is to have changed often" (cp. J. H. Newman, "Development of Christian Doctrine," p. 40).

F. A. RIDLEY.

(To be continued)

WHEN RUSSIA WAS "HOLY"

SCARCITY of food, spiritual and material, has for long ages been the condition of the Russian peasantry, and the direct outcome of corrosive action of two institutions which, cancer-like, absorb the life-giving juices and deaden the moral energies of the nation. These powerful solvents are Autocracy, which gnaws away the substance and sucks up the life-blood of its subjects, and Orthodoxy, which blots out the conscience and palsies the souls of its children. . . .

No number of square miles of fertile black loam soil, no vast regions flowing with milk and honey, could save from poverty and wretchedness a people thus led astray,

blinded and brutalised till it has lost the faculty of distinguishing between evil and good, and can scarcely tell its right hand from its left. . . . It cannot excite our surprise, therefore, to learn that that worst of all known scourges, famine, which is a very rare visitant in modern civilised countries . . . is chronic in Russia.

. . . Famine in Russia is periodical like the snows, or rather it is perennial like the Siberian plague. . . . Not a year ever elapses in which extreme distress in some province or provinces of the Empire does not assume the dimensions of a famine, while rarely a decade passes away in which the local calamity does not ripen into the national calamity.

. . . Travelling some five or six years ago through a vast district affected by the famine of the *golodovoka* (little hunger, or local famine, as opposed to the *golod*, or national famine), I found myself unexpectedly behind the scenes of the lowest theatre of human existence which it is possible to conceive. Multiplying by an enormous figure the sights to be seen in the lugubrious wards of a typhus hospital, and intensifying the horror they inspire by substituting hunger for disease, criminal neglect for inevitable fate, one may form some idea of a state of things which should have produced an outburst of resistance sufficient to sweep away the system that brought it forth. Kazan was then the centre of the famine-stricken district, and the country folk round about journey hundreds of miles on foot, dragging themselves feebly along in search of food and finding only graves. . . . In 1887-1888, when the abundance of the harvest generally seemed to partake of the nature of the miraculous, the distress in certain districts was to the full as intense and disastrous as at present (1892). In many villages the people are absolutely destitute of food, run the accounts published at the time. . . . Last year there was another partial famine of considerable proportions, scarcely noticed by the foreign Press, the progress of which was marked by the usual concomitants; merciful homicide, arson, suicide, dirt-bread, typhus and death.

. . . 1891 is a leap year in the annals of distress; the famine extends over a much larger area . . . the district affected extends from Odessa, on the shores of the Black Sea, through little Russia, athwart the black loam country, famous for its fabulous fertility, straight through the region watered by the Volga, across the Urals, until it reaches Tobolsk; in other words, it covers a tract of land 3,000 miles long and from 500 to 1,000 miles broad, which supports a population of forty millions.

. . . Having sold all they possess and petitioned and prayed in vain (the peasants) nailed up their huts and took to roaming about the country in bands, seeking food or work and finding none. . . . In one district of Smolensk over 37,000 hungry helots cut their moorings; 50,000 more in another district made ready to set out for China, which they fancifully pictured to themselves as a paradise. . . . Most of these wandering advertisements of squalor were suffering from dysentery, scurvy and other more horrible diseases, some of which had never been witnessed before. Their eyelids were swollen to monstrous dimensions, their faces pinched and withered, and their whole persons shrivelled from the likeness of aught human into horrible ghosts and shadows.

In November (1891) the local governments of Vyatka, Toola, Kerson and Tavrida, which it was hoped would prove self-supporting, were added to the list of famine-stricken provinces, and the number of actually destitute was calculated at thirty millions of men, women and children.

The sufferings of these creatures . . . were horrible in the extreme. The first pinch of hunger was felt in July. . . . Then came the period of hunger-bread, one of the most horrible forms of torture to which fathers and mothers of families could be subjected. To the rye-flour were added bran, powdered bark, pulp, ground acorns, goosefoot and various plants, weeds and refuse. . . . Many families eat nothing for 48 hours at a stretch, and then break their fast, some eating the leaves of young birches, other rib grass. Hunger-typhus, hunger pure and simple, poisoning, suicide and murder, committed in pure pity for children and wives, marked the famine. . . . Six men fell ill one day and were found to have been poisoned by the stuff they called bread. . . . A horse to whom a little of it was given sickened, and two hens who swallowed some died almost immediately.

The condition of the children would bring tears to the eyes of the most phlegmatic. Thousands of them were encamped near Ufa, in November, clothed in rags, sleeping in the open air, exposed to the snow and cold, without a roof over their heads or a warm coat to their backs. A poor woman in the Government of Voronezh went about begging alms six days after she had given birth to a child. The child was in her arms. In a few hours it was dead and she herself had the greatest difficulty in getting back to her cheerless hovel, where she lay down on the earthen floor and gave up the ghost. . . . And while these tragedies were being enacted the Government was publishing accounts of the flourishing state of its finances, and boasting of the vast sums in gold that were lying unproductive in the coffers of the Treasury. . . .

For anything equal to this horrid entanglement of cruelty, cynicism, immorality and suffering which has been brought into such strong relief by the famine of 1891, it would be necessary to hark back to the history of the Spartans and their helots, or to the annals of the Egyptians and their Hebrews in the days of the new king that knew not Joseph. Certainly since Christianity was first preached, nothing to match it has been seen on earth. Myriads of human beings work like machines in order to raise 900 millions of roubles, which they forthwith pay into the Imperial Treasury, returning penniless to their families, to undergo the pangs of hunger, and possibly the pains of death. . . . The merchants and nobles who live on their labours lacerate the backs of the suffering and strip the bodies of the dying of the rags that scarcely cover their nakedness; the Government throttles the writhing wretches, exclaiming: "Die if you will, but pay me my pound of flesh." . . . The Church stretches forth her hand to curse and ruin hundreds of thousands of the most thriving farmers in the land, because they will insist on reading the Sermon on the Mount; soldiers shoot down their brothers who rise to protest; the police flog to death desperate wretches who steal a few bushels of the corn they have raised; special churchyards are set apart for, and speedily filled with the bodies of those whom want and hunger and misery have cut down; the prayers of the women and the moans of helpless children who have filled their little stomachs with clay and rags, pierce the ears and wring the hearts of the most callous, and combine to make up a picture, the like of which was never seen since peace on earth, to men goodwill, was announced 2,000 years ago.

"Russian Characteristics" (1892), by E. J. Dillon (Professor of Comparative Philology in the University of Kharkoff, Private Adviser to Count Witte, 1903-1914, Russian Correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph," 1886-1914), pp. 557-604.

Pascal was fully persuaded that miracles were still performed in this world. One of his nieces was afflicted for three and a-half years with a fistula in the tear gland of one of her eyes which the most eminent surgeons of Paris pronounced incurable. The mother of the child, acting on the advice of Pascal, took her to a church where was preserved what was called "the holy thorn"—that is, one of the thorns of Christ's crown of thorns. The fistula was then so bad that matter ran from it, not only through the eye, but from the nose and mouth. "Nevertheless," she says, "the child was cured in a moment, by the touch of the holy thorn."—"LIFE OF PASCAL."

In the Middle Ages the state of society was widely different. Rarely and with great difficulty did the wrongs of individuals come to the knowledge of the public. A man might be illegally confined during many months in the castle of Carlisle or Norwich, and no whisper of the transaction might reach London. It is highly probable that the rack had been many years in use before the great majority of the nation had the least suspicion that it was ever employed. Nor were our ancestors by any means so much alive as we are to the importance of maintaining great general rules. We have been taught by long experience that we cannot, without danger, suffer any breach of the Constitution to pass unnoticed.—MACAULAY.

ACID DROPS

PARLIAMENT has been spending some of its time in discussing the Buchmanite Oxford Group. Mr. Bevin has refused to recognise them as a religious body in the legal sense, and therefore its "evangelists" are not liable to reservation and therefore must answer the "call-up." The Oxford Group has always been suspect. First by psychologists, who recognised in much of the movement a very ugly form of exhibitionism, and secondly, were politically suspicious as to what part the Buchmanites played in backing up Hitlerism. Of course, the overwhelming majority of them would be just of the common religious type that are easily recognisable. But Buchman himself, who always had plenty of funds, once publicly thanked God for Hitler, many of his followers belonged to Fascist groups that were playing Germany's game, and in America Buchmanites have been charged with spending large sums of money on pro-Hitler propaganda. So there was naturally a deal of feeling in the matter.

The matter was discussed in the House of Lords, and Lord Elton, one of those B.B.C. speakers who spends an occasional twenty minutes in carefully saying nothing of much importance, thought that the refusal to free the self-styled evangelists from military service, indicated "the Government's indifference to the spiritual and moral aspects of the war." That is, of course, Lord Elton's amiable way of saying nothing as though it were of profound importance. But what is good enough for the B.B.C. should not be good enough for a legislative assembly. The real issue was, did these people come under the Act? It was a legal question, and religion was quite out of place. But we wonder how many of the people who backed the Buchmanites would support a Bill for the abolition of the blasphemy laws? Not many, we fancy, but they still prate about liberty and freedom of thought. They do not know its meaning, or if they do, they care little for its application. Or these men might ask themselves why should ministers of religion be relieved of what has become a common public duty because they happen to be preachers of religion? Is that an example of equality in which these men profess to believe? And is there any difference between the country that gives religion privileges and the country that inflicts hardship because of religion? We fail to see any in either, or any difference in principle in the two situations. To punish for the holding of an opinion, and to give privileges for holding opinion, are not different policies—they are the same policy expressed now here and now there.

An interesting article appears in the "British Weekly," an organ of Presbyterianism, for October. It is written by Mr. James Maynard; title, "Religion Under Soviet Rule." We fancy Mr. Maynard does not realise the significance of what he writes. He says, "Christians were given to believe that Russia had cast out religion and persecuted the few believers. Christians in most countries had read that churches were desecrated, anti-religious museums opened, and Atheistic propaganda enforced," etc. "But the crowded churches in Moscow revealed the enlightening facts." Russia was not all Atheist. No sensible person believed it was, although we once sat and listened while a speaker told us Russia was a nation of 130,000,000 Atheists. Atheism does not grow in that hothouse fashion, and no one who had a sane conception of the nature of social evolution could ever have imagined that because the Government of Soviet Russia was made up chiefly of Atheists that the whole of Russia was Atheistic.

What Mr. Maynard might have told his fellow Christians is that the lies about Russia were manufactured by Christians, circulated by Christians, and the lie would have continued until to-day had not circumstances made it impossible. But up to date, there is not a single Christian leader who has had the moral courage to confess the untruthfulness of the reports. That is in the true line of Christian tradition. Tell a lie so long as it is possible, but when found out, just drop it.

Mr. Maynard is, however, frank enough to give a thumbnail picture of pre-Soviet Russia which proves that the Russian Church was always on the side of persecution and against the people. Even in the civil war that followed the revolution it was the Church that sided with the "Whites," led by the unscrupulous adventurers that received encouragement from the British Government of the day. We have paid heavily for that since.

One final quotation from Mr. Maynard is worth remembering. It runs:—

"As the Soviet Government grew stronger and felt it had broken the counter-revolutionary character of the Russian Church, it relaxed its restrictions on priests and believers and became quite tolerant in its attitude to religion.

"This feeling was expressed in the new Constitution drawn up in 1936, in which all traces of anti-clericalism are completely eliminated. Under it, for the first time, priests have the right to vote and be elected to the Supreme Soviet (Parliament). Freedom of worship is guaranteed in Article 124 of the Constitution, which reads: 'In order to ensure freedom of conscience, the Church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the State, and the school from the Church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognised for all citizens.'

"In Russia to-day the Orthodox Church is represented by two movements, the Old Church and the New Church. The first is headed by Metropolitan Sergey, Acting Patriarch, and the second by the First Hierarch, Metropolitan Vitaliy. They both have their own buildings in Moscow. The supreme authority of these Churches are 28 Metropolitans and Bishops.

"Despite the number of churches closed, there are still 8,338 churches, synagogues and mosques in the Soviet Union, with 58,442 ministers and 30,000 religious communities with 20 or more members. All these worshippers can freely practice, baptise their children, keep ikons in their homes, celebrate religious festivals and elect leaders of the religious communities.

"Buildings for religious purposes are provided free of charge and exempt from the usual taxes by the Soviet Government. Anyone who tries to violate the rights of believers by offending their feelings and jeering at their beliefs is severely punished in Soviet courts."

In connection with the above, we may note the following from the "Daily Mail." That has not the candour of Mr. Maynard, or of the "British Weekly." The "Daily Mail" prints an article in its issue for October 3 with a spreading headline, "Stalin May Free the Churches." The aim is probably to cover the lies which it published for years by pretending that the state of things that now exists in Russia has been brought about by pressure from the U.S.A. It says that Stalin may open an era of freedom for worship. That is a cowardly way of letting its readers know that the old lies had better be dropped—at least for the moment. Some of the earlier files of the "Daily Mail" would now be interesting reading.

In a B.B.C. talk on "the Bible and Broadcasting House," by Canon A. Deane recently, the speaker commenced by saying that such talks always brought him "an enormous amount of correspondence" from all sorts of people—"cottagers, judges, cooks and even an occasional Cabinet Minister." The only fly in the ointment was that the letters he received, though showing that "the Bible had not lost its traditional hold on the affections of the English people," yet "rarely provide evidence of a close acquaintance with the Bible or an intelligent understanding of it"! The Canon might well have pointed out that it is because so many do not understand the Bible that they believe it. But Canon Deane cannot have it both ways. He cannot get people to both believe and understand. The law runs, "Blessed are ye that believe"—not blessed are ye who understand.

Naturally, Canon Deane put in his own special protest against the B.B.C.—he was jealous, he said, that it should occupy itself with religious themes of a secondary type rather than with the Bible, and particularly with "our Lord" and the Bible, the aim being to "make people realise the presence and power of Jesus Christ"; and he particularly objected to talks on the Old Testament "which deferred any mention of our Lord until a later stage." The Canon did not, however, make it clear exactly where Jesus came into the Old Testament, unless he meant in the chapter headings, which were added by the English translators, and as a rule had no more to do with the context than parachutes. He made also one other point. He strongly deprecated any humour when dealing with the Bible, and wanted absolute "reverence in all the talks." Canon Deane is living in the wrong age; he ought to have been contemporary with the Church Fathers, whose mixture of piety, ignorance, superstition and credulity would have just suited him. And particularly their complete absence of humour.

The very religious recruits in the Army have been coming up against what the "Church Times" calls a nasty business. It appears that the medical officer gives talks as part of the routine training and, of course, has had to deal with venereal disease and how to avoid it. Instead of insisting that the recruit should accept Jesus and use "self-control," the M.O. told the recruits always to carry contraceptives which, "beside preventing unwanted births, are a safeguard against the contraction of syphilis." Christian teaching "was wholly ignored." This is truly awful—contraceptives against Christianity! And the worst of it is, as the "Church Times" most pathetically wails, the recruit's attitude is likely to be, "the M.O. said it was all right, and he ought to know."

Dudley, in the Black Country, has adopted Sunday cinemas. So also has Wanstead, a suburb of London. Stockport has decided against any such innovation in one of the dullest and gloomiest towns in Lancashire. Yet, if there is one place in England that needs brightening up, it is Stockport. To be in Stockport on a dull day is a fine introduction and incentive to suicide. But the Christians of Stockport, for the present, are against any brightening up. And bigotry has determined that if Christians cannot have brightness on Sunday, neither shall anybody else.

The Dean of St. Paul's says that the present world crisis is the breakdown of Christian civilisation. Well, well, when will men stop repeating such nonsensical slogans! The breakdown of Christian civilisation was at the close of the Dark Ages. We should like to hear from the Dean when, after that, there existed a *Christian civilisation*, and what are the characteristics of a Christian civilisation? We do not expect he will give us the information. He prefers making statements in papers or in places where no real reply would be allowed and no contradiction is permitted. It is a cowardly policy, but it is one of the things that Christianity has made permissible.

There was, for instance, that famous Dean of St. Paul's, Sydney Smith. When the question of putting wood paving round the Cathedral arose his parsonic colleagues said it could not be done—there were many obstacles in the way, etc., etc. "Not at all," said Sydney Smith. "We must get the wood, and you gentlemen have only to put your heads together and we shall soon have all we require."

Canon Marriot, addressing a Churchman's Club, told his audience, "We have a religion that gets things done." We wonder whether this was his way of saying that Christianity is a religion that gets the people "done"? Some of the clergy have been wits as well as preachers.

The Netherlands divide with England the glory of having planted the first colonies in the United States; they also divide the glory of having set the examples of public freedom. If England gave our fathers the idea of popular representation, the United Provinces were their model of a federal union.—BANCROFT.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS

- WAR DAMAGE FUND.—L. A. Warman, 3s. 8d.
- T. MOSLEY.—Thanks for suggestions. Will bear them in mind. Pleased to have your opinion that the "Pamphlets for the People" make excellent propaganda material. Naturally, we agree. At any rate, they were intended for that purpose.
- J. PHILLIPS.—Received and shall appear.
- J. BURGESS.—Stockport ought to be ashamed of itself. Anything, even the idea of somewhere one could go to get out of its depressingly dull streets should be acceptable. The only good things about these Sabbatarian bigots is that they help sensible people to appreciate their departure. What will they do if, when they get to heaven, they find the angels blowing trumpets and clashing cymbals on Sunday! We understand that the angels have a seven-day job.
- F. WARBURTON.—Thanks for securing new subscriber. We have heard from him. There is another waiting "round the corner."
- J. HUMPHREY.—Shall be very pleased to have that issue of "The Freethinker." It is very good of you to offer it.
- C. F. BUDGE.—Many thanks for addresses of likely new readers: papers being sent as requested.
- J. COLLINS.—There are two books by Joseph Wheless: "Is it God's Word?"—an examination of the Bible (1926; \$3)—and "Forgery in Christianity" (1930; \$4). They are each large books and published, we think at about \$3. They are published by Alfred Knopf, New York and London.
- H. ALLOWAY.—We are reprinting some of the books and pamphlets that were destroyed in the German raid as rapidly as we can. But there are two great obstacles to overcome—shortage of paper and excessive cost of printing. But we are doing our best.
- E. HARRISON.—Why not ask your preacher what would be his attitude if he heard for the first time to-day of the cardinal and essential miracles on which Christianity rests? Would he accept them or reject them? The conclusion is obvious.
- C. L. GREEN.—See reply to H. Alloway, above. The "Bible Handbook" is one of the things that will be reprinted as early as possible. But that will be a particularly expensive bit of printing, and to charge a commercial price would limit its sales.
- "T. M."—Mr. Cohen will not be lecturing very much this season. Apart from the extra work he has to do, he is not getting younger, and to spend two days travelling and one day lecturing makes a hole in a week. If a suitable hall could be obtained, he might try a few lectures in London.
- E. D. SIDE.—Thanks. Will make a useful paragraph. Hope you are keeping well.

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

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS

THERE was a good audience at Leicester on Sunday last in the Secular Hall, Leicester, for the opening of the winter session. Mr. Cohen was in good form, and his rather lengthy lecture was listened to with obvious interest. Mr. Hassell, the President of the Society, took the chair and made a strong appeal for support in its work.

There are many reasons for reading a book. One may read merely to pass away the time, or for the pleasure of understanding, for the aesthetic pleasure that is given by the mere massing of marshalled words and balanced phrases, for the intellectual satisfaction with which one watches an argument built up step by step until it ends in a triumphant conclusion that remains with one as an abiding gift, or for the mere acquisition of knowledge with no other purpose in view than that of making one's store of learning greater and still greater, or because of restlessness of body, when one seeks a book, as one does a mild narcotic, hopeful that it will create a passivity of body that will induce its "spiritual" counterpart, peacefulness of mind. All these provide a justification for reading. But reading finds no justification for the one who reads mainly to gratify his own prejudices and counts a book as good or bad as it does or does not add strength to his own ill-digested knowledge. That man puts a good book to an evil use, for he will permit it to do naught save to strengthen his own distorted views.

There is a great deal more of it, but the reader has the policy of the Roman Church with regard to writing and reading. For the great evil lies not with those who write, but with those who read. English readers are not sufficiently alive to the fact that upon the Index of the Roman Church, prohibiting Roman Catholics reading them, are some of the greatest writers of modern times. We have often intended to publish a list of the books that Roman Catholics have been forbidden to read during the past couple of centuries. Some of the greatest in poetry, science, philosophy and general literature are on this list. When we have time we will publish a selection.

We agree with Mr. Brenden Bracken, the Minister of Information, although we might with truth say that he agrees with us, for ever since Hitler came well up on the horizon we have been stressing the fact that he is a mere figurehead—a catspaw for those who are behind him. It is the men behind him that have the brains and the calculated brutality. He is just—nothing. Mr. Bracken takes the same view, and adds that "Hitler is only the scum on the surface of the water." We agree.

All the same, something more is required for the understanding of his position in Germany. There arises periods in the history of a people, as of individuals, when patience has reached its breaking point, when the outlook is black, the future without hope. There are two such periods in French history—that of Joan of Arc, and that of the great Revolution of 1789. There was one in Germany after the last war. The causes here need not detain us, but the German people felt themselves helpless and hopeless. They had nothing to lose and not very much to gain. A people in such a state will seize at anything. All that is asked for is a sign, a symbol, someone round whom to rally. The better-brained men would not do as leaders, the insanely religious, unintellectual, low-typed Hitler filled the bill, and the men behind were cute enough to see it and use him. The most dangerous people in the world are those without hope or what they think are realisable ideals. The gang of men behind were cute enough at least to feel the state of things and to take advantage of the situation.

We notice in the "Harrow Opinion" a well-worded letter in criticism of an attack on "Rationalism," and also a good article on "The Folly of Our National Day of Prayer." Both are by the great-grandson of Bradlaugh. If the expression did not illustrate scientific ignorance, we could use the common phrase and say it runs in the blood. As it is, we may cite it as an example of the power of tradition,

and of having parents who are proud of saying they came from such a stock. We hope to hear more of this young "Iconoclast."

One of our correspondents assures us that there are no asses in heaven. At first we doubted the correctness of the statement. Then it occurred to us that God had more use for them on earth, and we decided that our correspondent had "said a mouthful."

We have already announced the storm that has been raised over the refusal of a number of clergymen in the Manchester area to serve as fire-watchers. The ground of their refusal is that they might be called away at any time to their religious duties. A smart rap over the knuckles of these gentlemen is given by a "Retired Parson" in the "Manchester Guardian" for October 1. He makes three comments, each of which is telling. First: "Recent surveys have noted the diminution of numbers and have recorded congregations are exceedingly small." Second: "The number of parsons available are more numerous than are the members of any other vocation or profession, because of exemption from any kind of national prayers." Three: "How do they manage when on a month's holiday, or away for a week attending conferences, convocations and assemblies?" "Retired Parson" scored a palpable hit.

We are pleased to register another strong protest against the clerical plot, backed by a certain number of members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, to secure control of the schools. This comes in the shape of an article by Mr. Percival Sharp, in "Education" for September 6. Mr. Sharp points out the obvious truth that "where a system of statutory religious teaching is imposed upon the schools, the teacher who is unwilling or unable to give the religious teaching will inevitably be shut out from promotion to the headmastership or the headmistressship of a school. A candidate for a school is not rejected because he cannot teach French or physical training. It is the general quality and the general qualifications of the man which determines his success or otherwise. Where the religious teaching is by statute to obtain in the school, the unable or unwilling teacher will inevitably, and rightly, be excluded from promotion. . . . He will in plain words be subject to a test from which he is free at present."

But it is, of course, this test that the Churches wish to see imposed. Even as things are, there is a test—an improper one—in many schools to which appointment would be very difficult, and promotion a sheer impossibility, if the teacher is known to be in opposition to all religions. We cordially agree with what Mr. Sharp says, but we say emphatically that so long as religion is in the schools, so long will there be a religious test and so long will teachers be forced into playing the hypocrite. Which means that many of the best type are either kept out of the schools altogether or they never reach a headship.

In view of the advance in power of Roman Catholicism in this country, and the claim by Cardinal Hinsley that he is in favour of freedom of speech and publication, our readers may be interested in a few passages from an encyclical letter of Pope Gregory XVI., issued a century ago, and which still expresses of the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. It is part of a criticism of a Polish uprising to secure freedom:—

"From this infected source of indifferentism flows this absurd and erroneous opinion, or rather, this madness that liberty of conscience of everyone should be maintained and assured. The way for this most pernicious error is prepared by that freedom of opinion which is widely spreading, to the misfortunes of religious and civil society. . . . Hence, changes of minds, a greater corruption of youth, a contempt of sacred things and of the holiest of laws, spread amongst the people; in a word, the most deadly bane to society, as is proved by the remote ages.

"To this belongs that baneful, detestable and never-to-be sufficiently execrated liberty of the book trade to publish any writing whatever. . . the curse from which is spreading, we lament to say, over the whole earth. . . . It was the object of the fathers of the

Council of Trent to remedy such an evil. . . . It is, therefore, sufficiently evident from the constant care with which the Apostolic See has endeavoured in all ages to condemn injurious and suspected books, and to wrest them from the hands of men."

From the mere point of view of the transformation of 180 millions of people in the course of a single generation, revolutionary Russia earns the expression, "A modern miracle." Messrs. Lawrence and Wishart has just issued a pictorial illustration of in what this change consists. It deals with every phase of life, and in each the change is—to use a current phrase—miraculous, strikingly so in the multiplication of the number of schools, colleges, universities, museums, newspapers and books. Such a demand for books and enthusiasm for education exists in no other country in Europe. It could not exist, because the Russians during the reign of Czardom and the control of the Russian Church were densely ignorant, and it was dangerous for those of the people who could read to be found with many serious books in their homes. The book is mainly composed of pictorial diagrams, and is published at 1s. 6d. It is a case of pictures and figures speaking louder than words.

Mr. J. Clayton has just concluded a very successful season in the open, during which several clerical opponents were met in debate. Wherever possible, local N.S.S. branches gave support, but in some parts he had to open up by himself. A lone Freethought speaker inspires courage in a certain type of Christian, and the courage rises as darkness falls. In such situations threats of violence are common, and that side of the picture must be remembered in appreciating the value of Mr. Clayton's work for the movement.

We have repeatedly stated that recruits to H.M. Forces have an officially recognised right to see their own statements of non-religious beliefs accepted. The Executive of the N.S.S. will take up any case of Freethinkers being denied that right, if permission to use the man's name and unit is given. That permission is often not given because it may interfere with the man's prospects in the Armed Forces. This illegal penalisation of men for an assertion of their legal rights is a grim comment on our claim to be fighting a war for freedom. Most men, we suppose, will be in the Forces for the duration of the war only, so the argument does not seem important, but even if a man intends to follow a military career, insisting on personal rights and independence of character are assets, and too valuable to be surrendered for stripes.

DEAD WOOD

MANY years ago an eminent scientist caused a sensation by stating that "war is Nature's pruning hook." Fierce controversy ensued in the daily Press and in private circles between optimists and pessimists; between those who believed in a League of Nations and those who regarded such an institution as being unworkable; between those who were idealists and those who were realists; between those who were militarists and those who were advocates of a disarmament policy; between those who were students of history and those who were students of nothing at all. A wealth of argument was displayed on all sides, and more especially between those who believed in the inevitability of war and those who thought that mankind would finally emerge from a bellicose to a pacific mood—"when wars would be no more," and when "peace on earth, goodwill towards men" would be an accomplished fact. Such a spate of words have flowed that dry land is difficult to find.

For many years we have been assailed and overwhelmed with a large number of different theories, ideologies, systems, ideas, inventions, predictions, philosophies, religious precepts, prognostications and promises (in this life and the next), that we have become bewildered and bedevilled. Man's delicate mental mechanism is unable to adjust itself to so many complexities in the short span allotted to its *mature* functioning. According to specialists in these matters, the development of the mind, in the mass,

has not greatly advanced for many thousands of years. The material and complex conditions of modern living which we are obliged to accept—nay, which are forced upon a mentality of extraordinary simplicity and evincing many primitive characteristics that it is unable to adjust itself to the changes, and seeks to escape. From what? From itself or from its manifold encumbrances and complexities?

To a child the alphabet seems impossible of solution during the first attempts to learn it. After the first few letters the child will stammer and repeat itself until it is lost in a maze of consonants and vowels and will make no further progress. But, upon being corrected and requested to start again, or to get back to letter A, surer progress is made. Here, then, is a lesson for adults, too!

Many years ago a movement was started to extol and practice what was called the "simple life." Much amusement was caused by songs, cartoons and parodies, which sought to bring into contempt and derision this childish idea of simplicity of ways and means in life. Ridicule must have harmed this movement, for nothing is known of any material progress. "Pioneers, O Pioneers!" was the cry of Walt Whitman, and he, too, found the pioneer's lot a hard one.

It is a remarkable fact that though the causes of war are the clashing of conflicting complexities which appear impossible of solution, yet, during the fighting and when great sacrifices have been made, our condition obliges us to accept simple ways and means of living. We think more of others, too. In high places there is extreme solicitude for the welfare of those situated in humbler circumstances and this concern for others is to continue after the war also. Already we can see a Commonwealth of Nations and all that implies. As if the jumbled pieces and colours of a giant jig-saw puzzle had fallen into correct positions and shown a true picture—pleasing and colourful. It looks simple enough *now*, you say. What order out of chaos!

War is Nature's pruning hook, said the scientist. But is there not a meaning less obvious than that which appears at first reading of the sentence? During our path along the highways and byways of life, most of us have accumulated and burdened ourselves with much "dead wood"—that is to say, mental illusions, dead hopes, repinings and what might have been, if only—. These cloying accumulations are a brake on much creative activity, and have the tendency to cause us to adopt a *laissez-faire* attitude towards hide-bound customs and conventions. When we get older there is no one but ourselves to undertake the necessary operation unless—**Unless there is a war?** Surely not. We see how tremendous a joint effort can be when inspired and directed to a single purpose, i.e. winning a war. If this same united effort could be harnessed in peacetime for the common good, what tremendous results could be achieved. We shall have to use the pruning hook in peacetime to dispose of the dead wood, otherwise a general rot is inevitable.

S. GORDON-HOGG.

During the reign of Charles II. the pulpits resounded with harangues against the sin of rebellion. The treatises in which Filmer maintained that hereditary despotism was the form of government ordained by God, and that limited monarchy was a pernicious absurdity, had recently appeared and had been favourably received by a large section of the Tory Party. The University of Oxford, on the very day on which Russell was put to death, adopted by a solemn public act these strange doctrines, and ordered the political works of Buchanan, Milton and Baxter to be publicly burned in the courts of the schools.—MACAULAY.

At the Ely Diocesan Conference Canon Williams declared that it was useless to send children to Sunday school if the parents do not go to church. This is rather a risky thing to say. A great many children are sent to Sunday school because it is a convenient method of getting them out of the way for a few hours. But if the parents have to go to church, we expect that the declining rate of Sunday school attendants will be even more rapid than it is at present. On the other hand, children are more independent than they used to be, and if the parents do not go to church the youngsters may well ask why should they be sent? It is a very difficult situation.

KLAUSNER'S "JESUS OF NAZARETH"

II.

KLAUSNER always takes care to give authorities for every, or almost every, important statement he makes. For him, a statement in the Talmud settles a difficulty, and there should be no appeal. In the same way, he will quote the Gospels. Indeed, I think he quotes them over 500 times just as if they were absolutely authentic and had never been seriously questioned. Never once does he really face up to the fact that the whole of the Gospels have been seriously challenged by eminent scholars on their authenticity and credibility.

Klausner has a way of quoting from them what Jesus said, and then, perhaps feeling that he was going a little too far, adding in parenthesis "or the gospels"—which, of course, makes all the difference in the world. He admires the Sermon on the Mount immensely, but has to admit that "such sayings are comparatively few in Mark, and those which occur in Luke and are lacking in Mark and Matthew are open to suspicion as emanating from a period later than Jesus." Here we get a glimpse of that "higher criticism" which should have been put more to service throughout his work, but of which he seems always a little afraid. But where he does use it, it works quite simply. When Dr. Klausner agrees with something in a Gospel, it is true and must be used. Where he does not agree with it, overboard it goes. Thus he is almost always contrasting one Gospel with another or with all the others; and that one is, or those are, historical if he can find something in Talmudic or Rabbinical literature which supports it or them.

With those who deny the actual existence of Jesus he has a particularly easy way of dealing. He quotes two passages from Rousseau—one from the once famous "Emile," the still well-known "Profession of Faith," and the other from his Works (1846) IV., 771-2. Here they are:—

"In reality this (the denial of Jesus' existence) is only shirking the difficulty (raised by the dissimilarities in the Gospels) and not getting rid of it. It is far more incomprehensible that many men should have agreed to compose this book than that one man alone should have provided it with its subject matter. . . . So impossible of imitation are the characteristics of the Gospels that the man who invented them must needs be greater than his hero."

"My friend, such things are not invented; the matters told of Socrates—whose existence no one doubts—rest on far slenderer evidence than do those told of Jesus of Nazareth."

These passages may have been conclusive to Rousseau and, of course, are to Klausner; but they seem the height of absurdity when put forward as a serious argument. The Gospels are literary compositions which have been edited over and over again, and which embody a good deal of the floating religious literature and oral sayings contemporary with the writers. The idea of a sacrificed Saviour God is dominant in the Gospels and was borrowed from the surrounding religions. And there is much that is symbolic, as was recognised by Robert Taylor and Woolston—and, for that matter, by Origen. Of these sides of the Christian religion, Klausner seems to have very little knowledge; or if he has, he refuses to recognise their importance in any scientific study

of the Gospels. Nor does he appear to know the great part anthropology plays in the making of a religion—a part stressed by John M. Robertson as of *primary* importance.

Klausner shows also very little knowledge of English scholarship. He says "No treatment of the ethics of Jesus along the lines of objective scholarship yet exists in any language," and gives as the best a book by a German. From the Christian standpoint he gives two French works—one of these is a translation of Peabody's "Jesus Christ and the Moral Question"—and one by another German. It is obvious that a real attack on the moral teachings of Jesus would not, in his opinion, be of an "objective" character. Otherwise, it is a pity he does not read Evan Powell Meredith's "Prophet of Nazareth," which makes an awful mess of a good deal of the moral teachings supposed to emanate from Jesus.

Klausner is really obsessed by the "Jewishness" of Jesus. He stands apart in amazed admiration that a Palestine Jew could have so impressed a great part of the world with his personality that it has made a God of him and has worshipped him for nigh on 2,000 years. It is a stupendous achievement, and it was a Jew who did it. The Jewish race should be the first to acclaim such greatness; and Klausner has put all his splendid scholarship to help in that service. But in his heart he must know that is almost impossible. The Jews who believe are too conscious still of the fierce persecutions their forefathers suffered ever to take Jesus to their hearts. The Jews who do not believe are either completely indifferent or are actively engaged in destroying all religions, including Christianity.

It seems to me that the method of Klausner in fashioning a life of Jesus could be applied quite easily to many famous fictional characters. Take one of my own examples, for instance—Mr. Pickwick. If somebody, say 1,000 years hence, set to work to prove the historicity of Mr. Pickwick, he could take Klausner as a very good model to follow. First, he could give an account of our hero by his first biographer, and point out that it would have been quite impossible for anybody to have invented such a character—and particularly many of the amazing quips and oddities associated with Sam Weller. They are far too "lifelike" not to have happened.

Then the author could draw upon the Pickwick "Apocrypha" to show how absurd it is to imagine that other writers would actually add to the adventures of a character *invented* by somebody else. A book like G. W. M. Reynolds' "Pickwick Abroad" could be used as evidence that there was another editor of Pickwick's adventures besides Dickens. And some of the other Pickwickian items—pens, cigars, etc.—could be brought forward to show the nonsense of imagining that the name of an imaginary character could have any hold on the public in this way.

After this, our author could draw upon many of the books written following in detail the travels of Mr. Pickwick—those by G. A. Sala or Percy Fitzgerald or F. G. Kitton or Walter Dexter or other eminent Dickensians. We know the pubs Mr. Pickwick visited, the hotels he stayed in, the particular rooms in which he had some of his remarkable adventures, the streets and towns he graced with his presence. Are we to believe that the Victorians, the Edwardians and the Georgians would reverently visit the George Inn in Southwark, for instance, if Pickwick were only a myth? It is utterly incredible.

Finally, look at the immense literature surrounding Mr. Pickwick. Look at the way in which he is

known all over the world. Look at the way in which his wonderful adventures have been recorded and translated into numbers of foreign languages and his portrait known and recognised. And then dare to say he was just a myth! If, in addition to all this, a study of contemporary life be added to show how Pickwick was a child of his era—well, there you have the true Klausner formula.

Klausner's "Jesus of Nazareth" will, I think, long hold its own as an able and scholarly work. But it can never be used to prove that in Palestine over 1,900 years ago a god or man described in the New Testament as Jesus of Nazareth really lived and died. That work has not yet appeared. H. CUTNER

Yet Henry VIII., though he had quarrelled with the Pope (Clement VII.) and despoiled and abolished the monasteries, had not renounced the *religion* of the Church of Rome. He still prided himself on his title of Defender of the Faith, and he continued, in every respect, to be a good Catholic, except that he chose to be pope in his own kingdom.—TYTLER'S "HISTORY."

"Religion is sick, but it is by no means dead, and on some calamitous to-morrow it may enjoy something of a revival. That revival, in fact, is constantly predicted by specialists in human stupidity, and . . . it may be on us after the next World War. If . . . Western civilisation is really in a low state, then Christianity or something worse will undoubtedly profit." — H. L. MENCKEN ("TREATISE ON RIGHT AND WRONG," 1934, p. 251).

MORE WAR BOOKS

"DYNAMIC DEFENCE" (Capt. Liddell Hart, 1940; Faber). This military expert puts forward a view which may seem surprising, namely, that German military successes have been gained largely by defence. He examines the way in which the extended Maginot Line was pierced. Instead of making a frontal assault on the Line, the Germans, having prodded for a weak spot, poured through near Sedan, making a gap which became a bulge. They hurriedly improvised a defence ring round the opening. Since, according to military calculations, the attackers need a three to one superiority in numbers, the Germans say that their enemy did not get that superiority at the point in question. The French counter-attack failed as would a bolster against a rapier, and, at the correct moment, the Germans fanned out in a renewed advance. Gamelin assumed that the Ardennes could be left comparatively unguarded, and used only one division for a 20-mile front.

The enemy profited by this error, an error which, according to Hart, could have been avoided by adequate reconnaissance. Hart discusses other mistakes of Gamelin, and also mentions the use of artificial fog by the Germans, and their trick of making for a direction roughly between two objectives, so as to divide the opposition, and then suddenly swerving for the more convenient. While the general plan of attack is fixed, the fifth column prepared and the minute chosen, the detailed plan is somewhat elastic and always ready to meet changing circumstances and to take full advantage of fortuitous happenings. When the German line became extended towards the Channel Ports it was so well defended that Weygand's attempt to pincer it was again like a bolster against a rapier.

"A Federated Europe" (Lord Davies, 1940; Gollancz). A Federation is something in the nature of an inter-state parliamentary government, like the U.S.A., and if federation is impossible, confederation, the author holds, is a good second best. Not all federationists hold the same views about the war.

Even supposing it were possible to bring about an Armistice, is Nazi Germany to be admitted into the Federation? If so, how are we to make the Nazi lion lie down with the federal lamb? And if it is to be left out, the war is still on, as Nazism *versus* the hypothetical Federation. Lord Davies, however, sees that until Germany is beaten there can be no federation at all. He wants a Union of Peoples rather than a League of Governments. This sounds promising, but then, under present conditions, at least, peoples must have governments, and they usually get the governments they deserve. Each of the men who frittered away the liberties of the Czechs at Munich was either democratically elected or had an overwhelming plebiscite. And if it be argued that they only came as representatives of their people either because they had manufactured opinion at home or had crushed opposition, that is only another criticism of the political incapacity of the people in question.

Russia, we learn, is not to be admitted into the Federation because of what Lord Davies calls "Bolshevist imperialism." Russia, he says, is intolerant, anti-God and Asiatic, three good reasons for keeping it out of the Federation, Lord Davies' "union of peoples." "Scratch a Russian and find a Tartar." It is rather surprising, therefore, to find that Turkey is really European, and should be included in the Federation. A cheap publication, "The Federal Union Myth" (Montague, 1940), gives the Communist attitude towards federation. From the Freethought standpoint we conclude by noting that this federationist asks us to "go into the darkness and put our hand in God's." Events will decide future policy, he says, and so "lead us to the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Beware of the English" (Hamish Hamilton; 1939), is a compilation of German propaganda about England, containing cartoons and extracts from Nazi speeches and German newspapers. The fact that it can be published in this country for our amusement is a striking commentary on the mental health of this country as compared with Germany.

Another book of German extracts is "Sound and Fuehrer" (Tell, 1939). The absurdities and contradictions in Hitler's speeches and his book are here set out in much the same way as that used in Foote and Ball's "Bible Handbook." There is plenty of evidence of Hitler's belief in a helpful Deity, and there is the report of a statement given in all seriousness to a meeting of pregnant German women, to the effect that a dog, in response to a question, raised its paw and cried, "Mein Fuehrer."

Mr. H. G. Wells, like Dr. C. E. M. Joad, has changed his views about the war. Both now regard it as justified on our part. This tardy recognition of the rights and wrongs of things is quite welcome, but sets one comparing the attitude of these clever intellectuals with that, say, of thousands of young airmen and sailors who have been in the thick of it since September, 1939. In his "The New World Order" (1940), Mr. Wells asks for a declaration of war aims, suggesting a "declaration of the rights of man." The recent Churchill-Roosevelt Atlantic Charter appears to have satisfied him, according to a recent article of his.

"The Penguin Political Atlas" (1940), is a mine of information about the products and general war significance of every country. Another publication is "Why Britain is at War" (Harold Nicholson, M.P.; 1939), tracing the rise of Nazism in much the same way as Konrad Heiden's authoritative little work, "One Man Against Europe."

"Wage Policy in War-time" (Allan Flanders, 1941; International Publishing Company, pp. 24; 3d.). Quoting statistics and other facts relating to wage changes, Mr. Flanders advises that the Trade Unions put for-

ward, not merely unco-ordinated demands, but a wage policy clearly formulated to strengthen, and not to weaken, the war effort, and he suggests a basis for negotiation.

"Renaissance" is a new monthly periodical, partly in German and partly in English, though other languages may follow later. The editor is a courageous anti-Nazi German, Willi Eichler, who hopes to provide a Forum for the oppressed of all nations. It can be obtained through the International Publishing Co., or through a Smith bookstall; pp. 24; 6d.

G. H. TAYLOR.

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,—W. Kent, in your issue of October 5, alludes to "the Early Christian martyrs made comic by Bernard Shaw in 'Androcles and the Lion.'" He follows it up by saying: "I confess I have not reconciled myself to this, particularly from a man who has so astutely avoided martyrdom even in its mild modern form. Men fond of funning rarely make martyrs. Perhaps that is the trouble with Wodehouse in Germany."

Well, as regards Shaw, I should just like to say this: He has wrought and fought for the ideal State as no other man, living or dead, has ever done. I mean, of course, the Socialist Commonwealth. What's more, at the age of 86, he is still doing it! Moreover, his life throughout has been that of the ascetic—but not that of the anchorite! This may not be martyrdom, but it is something much more useful. He has been dominated by an overmastering and passionate determination to sweep the most dire disease of this world from the face of the earth—**poverty!** It is in that that he differs diametrically from the sainted martyrs of old who wallowed in it. I have much more to say, but I will let his life-long opponent, G. K. Chesterton, say it. These two men were poles apart in religion and politics—yet, here is Chesterton on Shaw:—

"Here was a man who could have enjoyed art among the artists, who could have been the wittiest of all the *fâneurs*, who could have made epigrams like diamonds and drunk music like wine. He has, instead, laboured in a mill of statistics. . . .

"The usual mean theory of motives will not cover the case; it is not ambition, for he could have been twenty times more prominent as a plausible and popular humorist. It is the real and ancient emotion of the *salus populi*, almost extinct in our oligarchical chaos, nor will I, for one, as I pass on to many matters of argument and quarrel with him, neglect to salute a passion so implacable and so pure."

For such a tribute, neither will I, an Atheist and Socialist, neglect to salute the spirit of G. K. Chesterton!—Yours, etc.,

ARTHUR HANSON.

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