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Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

A Forgotten Heretic

THE practice—beloved of Hitler—of killing the heretic and burning whatever writing he has given the world was established by the Christian Church. It existed in neither Greece nor Rome. Our modern Fascists, like Holy Church, do not believe that heretical books should be kept in circulation, and indeed if the author alone is destroyed, the job is only half done. The trouble with Fascism is that to be secure from attack it must conquer the world. In this particular the Church is of the same opinion; it is, indeed, in substantially the same condition as Fascism. Soon after Hitlerism came to power we pointed out that the talk and manœuvres of the Baldwin Government to create friendship between England and Nazism was absurd. A threat to Nazism was offered by every non-Fascist country with which it was in contact. It would be forced to fight against the impact of ideas. And precisely the same difficulty faces the Christian Church. That also is fighting a war of ideas, and neither genuine Christianity nor Fascism can live on terms of real peace with any people or system the ideas of which run counter to their own teaching.

Nazism was, so far as persecution of ideas is concerned, fighting the fight that the Christian Church initiated. But as civilisation developed, and as an inevitable consequence, the propaganda of Freethought followed, there was no longer the possibility of the Church pursuing its old policy unchanged. And in this country, more than on the Continent, another and more profitable method was developed. The method of the boycott was developed. Newspapers were made to feel it to their interest to fight shy of Freethinking or open attacks on Christianity. They might attack this or that Church, because the country was sufficiently divided to make the criticism of a section safe. Shopkeepers soon discovered that to permit their non-Christian opinions to be known meant loss of custom. Candidates for political honours, writers who aimed at a large circulation, commercial travellers, casual journalists, even playwrights, were taught that it was safest to leave religion alone, and whenever

possible to express themselves in terms of profound respect for Christianity. So the Christian poison spread to the danger of the succeeding generation.

Really, the policy of boycott and misrepresentation is even more demoralising than openly applied force. To that a man may surrender without loss of self-respect or the esteem of his neighbours. But with pressure indirectly or secretly applied the issue is no longer between right and wrong, and men will yield and become apologists for their own mental degradation. Henry the Fourth of France thought Paris well worth a Mass, and there are hundreds of politicians who think and act on the belief that a political career is well worth the sacrifice of intellectual independence. A Cardinal Hinsley, representative of a Church that denies freedom of thought to all its members, can rant to an audience that acknowledges his overlordship about democratic freedom of thought and speech. A Parliament which retains on the statute books anti-blasphemy laws and declines to abolish Sabbatarian ones will talk at large of its devotion to the principle of mental freedom. Openly to forbid freedom of thought and speech is bad, but it is a thousand times worse when the victim is forced to become an accomplice to his own degradation.

In such an environment hundreds of thousands shrug their shoulders with a "What does it matter?" "Why risk the future of one's career as an author by offending publishers who are in turn dominated by fear of public opinion?" The road of compromise is paved with pleasant resting-places, why not take it, and while the lie direct may shock one, the lie by equivocation is easily told and seldom brings rebuke. But it should never be overlooked that this is a one-way track. There is seldom any turning back. Character cannot be played with in that fashion. In the days when the Christian devil was in keen competition with the Christian God there were numerous stories of men selling their souls to Satan for wealth and power or for a long life. In most instances the human bargainer tried to outwit Satan, but without success. In the end the devil got him.

I had a friend who held a prominent position in a West of England town. He had often told me that his aim was to retire and then publicly invite the clergy and principal citizens to a public hall and make his opinions of his fellow-citizens known. The time came, the pension, a good one, was in being. But the hall has not been taken, the story has never been told. One cannot break habits easily, and the fear of one's own opinions being known lest the "respect" of one's fellows should be lost is a poison that one cannot eradicate easily. Hypocrisy may become a habit much more easily than intellectual integrity.

The Three Newmans

Everyone is familiar with at least the name of Cardinal Newman. Raised in the Church of England, he afterwards entered the Roman Catholic Church and finally was made Cardinal. A man of much subtlety of mind, he wielded a

powerful pen, and was the last *Christian* Churchman of real distinction in this country. During his life, and compared with Newman, other leading Churchmen were but poor little-cattle. The bottom was touched when Winnington Ingram was made Bishop of London. The fact is that a really first-class brain is almost an impossibility in the Church of to-day. I fancy there are few who now read Newman, save those Churchmen who try to steal his thunder. There is some excuse for this neglect of Newman because he lies outside the more recent developments of a scientific study of religion. But to-day the only enlightened study of religion is that provided by anthropology, which plainly reduces it to a study of survivals. The blather which is now being handed out by the Archbishop of Canterbury is what our American cousins call "poppycock." There is no social gospel in the New Testament. For those who are engaged in the study of modern religion, Newman may still be read with interest, and perchance—profit.

Cardinal Newman had two brothers, and the interest lies in the fact that the three brothers presented to the world the picture of a Roman Catholic, a Deist and an Atheist, and each one of them of marked ability. The second brother was Francis William Newman. He almost became a Church of England clergyman. He had been elected to a fellowship of Balliol College. Acceptance, however, required an oath under the Test Act, receiving Communion according to the rites of the Church of England. He refused this, went abroad to work in accord with a Christian mission, but soon gave it up. But there is no evidence that he ever got further than Theism. His religion was very, very thin, as one may see from the tracts he wrote for Scott of Ramsgate. Scott did a great deal to further the general Freethought movement, Francis William published several books, all dealing with religious subjects.

Newman the Atheist

The third brother was one of whom the world knows little or nothing. He is, indeed, so little known that I was surprised to learn, some time ago, when talking to one of the members of the Newman family, that not only was he not aware that C. R. Newman had ever written anything, but the other members of the family were also unaware of his having done so.

I should have been equally ignorant but for two things. First I was aware that the Atheist brother had written some articles for Holyoake's "Reasoner" (Holyoake does not mention him. I think perhaps he was not important enough to be named among the well-known men whose names Holyoake records as having met). Second, Wheeler, sub-editor for many years of this paper, had written a sketch of Charles Robert. He also edited some short articles of Newman's with a brief biographical sketch. This was published by G. W. Foote's Progressive Publishing Company in 1891. The articles, while not great, are written with skill and ability. A curious fact concerning the "Reasoner" articles is that they were replies to his brother, who had sent Theistic articles for the same journal. But they were published over a pen-name, and Charles Robert never knew he was dealing with his own brother.

These articles were not, however, all that Charles Robert Newman wrote, but they are the only ones that have survived. The Theistic brother informed Wheeler he knew of nothing that his brother had written, nothing that had been published. But there was left a box full of manu-

scripts. These were destroyed, by whose orders no one knows. Wheeler says: "Whether this was done by order of his relatives, whether the landlady decided the question, whether the vicar or neighbours were called in, we shall never know."

But one may guess, and not without some foundation. There is the lonely life led by the Atheist Newman, the fact that he does not appear to be well known by surviving members of the family, and the general attitude of religious families towards an Atheist member are too well understood not to provide grounds for the suspicion that the articles were deliberately destroyed by the writer's religious relations.

It is reported that Cardinal Newman visited his Atheist brother about two years before he died. Says Wheeler:—

"It must have been a strange meeting, and one worthy the brush of a great artist. Surely in all England there were not two men of eighty whose thoughts were so divergent, whose thoughts were so diversified. The one a saintly Cardinal, called by the Pope the Light of England, who by his rare urbanity had gained the respect of all, replete with all that should accompany old age—as love, honour, obedience and troops of friends; the other fallen, too, into the *severe* and yellow leaf, and without them all—poor, solitary, unknown and despised, a scorn and wonderment to his neighbours. And all from following his own thoughts that had made him a *purus putus* Atheist."

The mystery of the destroyed manuscripts remain. Never let anyone speak of religion as dead. It is alive and will outlive all that may read these lines. And when we have thrust it off the platform of open display, it will linger for generations as do the physical rudiments we carry with us in our bodily structures as reminiscences of our animal ancestors, and in our traits of mind the dregs of superstitions that were bred in the primitive brain of our ancestors in the primeval forest.

In any case the fact that the only Newman never mentioned is the one whose intelligence flowered in Atheism.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

THE TRAGIC FALL OF FRANCE

THROUGHOUT France's varied history her north-eastern territory has been her weakest line of defence from outside invasion. The Vosges and Jura mountains and the River Rhine afford some protection, while in the south-east the Alps furnish the country's surest safeguard. The low-lying lands adjoining the Belgian frontier form France's most vulnerable area and explain her undeviating desire to obtain a Rhine boundary. The campaigns of Louis XIV. and the Spanish conflict in the 16th century were conducted in this region. It was also the battleground of France and Prussia in the 19th century and of the Allies and Germany in the 20th century. Hence the construction of the Maginot Line, which was designed to fortify the Achilles' heel of France.

In the years intervening between 1918 and the present struggle France may be fairly described as a land of chronic unrest. Cabinets were set up and knocked down like ninepins. The vested interests and the discordant Leftist parties were at daggers drawn, and a religious revival, especially among the peasants and women, intensified the trouble. Then the Royalist and clerical groups, as well as the Fascist and other dissentient

parties, all helped to shatter a national solidarity, so essential to the community, if France were compelled to face another German invasion.

When, in 1939, war was declared, the reformist measures of the Radical and Socialist Ministries were soon nullified. Political, social and economic life underwent a transformation. The manufacture of munitions was soon restored to private enterprise. The 40-hour labour week was suspended. Communist-controlled unions were ostracised and 50 trade unions were ejected from the Labour Bourse. In 1940, 36 Communist Deputies were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Prices of commodities were standardised, and a tax of 100 per cent. imposed on profits rising above pre-war levels. Indeed, industry, commerce and consumption were all placed under bureaucratic control.

The task of financing the war was entrusted to M. Paul Reynaud. Taxation was increased and a special war budget, financed by State loans, was over-subscribed. Agreements of far-reaching economic importance were made with Britain. Reynaud acclaimed this arrangement as "an economic federation . . . with a Customs union, a common currency and a pooling of their vast economic resources." A little later, a pact was signed under which many of the trade barriers between the two States were removed. France was to furnish her gold reserve, and England her business and banking facilities. Also, other States were invited to enter into the Franco-British economic federation.

Unfortunately, the vital importance of a readjusted Finnish frontier to Russia was scarcely realised by the neutral States, and the failure of the Allies to assist the Finns shook their confidence in Anglo-French sincerity. This widespread misunderstanding so agitated France that the Daladier Ministry broke down and, although another administration was soon formed, uncertainty and apprehension pervaded the public mind.

The Germans invaded the Low Countries in May, 1940, and, at the eleventh hour, the Belgians implored the assistance of the Allied armies, and these forces incautiously emerged from their fortified lines and swept into the open to meet the oncoming enemy. But the military plans of the Allies were almost nullified by the surrender of the Belgian Army to the Germans by order of its commander, Leopold, apparently without any consultation with the British and French. Also, the Allied forces were heavily handicapped by the congested roads near the Belgian frontier, thronged as they were by multitudes of panic-stricken refugees who had been bombed and machine-gunned by the Germans. In truth, the almost unimpeded advance of the Nazis, the easy surrender of important positions, and other happenings, aroused suspicions of Quisling treachery.

With the occupation of Holland and the surrender of the Belgian Army accomplished, the Nazis soon shattered the French fortifications at Sedan and then thrust back and encircled the Allied armies in Flanders, where the stubborn resistance of the British detained the Germans sufficiently long at the Channel ports to enable the Navy, with its protective Air Force, to evacuate about a quarter of a million men.

Disaster succeeded disaster with startling rapidity, and the veteran Weygand replaced the incompetent Gamelin as French commander. But the causes of the collapse were too involved for simple remedies. Many French officers were at heart disloyal to the Republic. They lacked enthusiasm or were secretly committed to sabotage and other disintegrating activities. Sorely-needed tanks, it is said, were rusting unused, regiments of doubtful reliability were posted to defend vital positions such as Sedan, where the Nazis soon smashed through, while an anti-British attitude was encouraged by disaffected army officers. Many military commanders, even Gamelin himself, proved disgracefully negligent. Appeals for much-needed mechanical equipment were met by reminders of the impregnable Maginot

Line which, when its worthlessness had been demonstrated by disaster, was jeered at as the "Imaginary Line."

Again, the Leftist Governments inclined towards pacifism and, when the danger could no longer be concealed, it was too late to adequately rearm against the titanic onslaught of the German Army and its terrible Luftwaffe. At the outset of the struggle the French authorities failed to cope with and suppress the fifth columnists, nor was munition production materially increased.

On June 3, 1940, the German promenade to Paris began, and the enemy entered the capital ten days later. The Government fled first to Tours and then to Bordeaux. Panic pervaded both the military and civil population. Reynaud, who wished to continue the fight, implored America to send large-scale aerial assistance, while he suggested continuing the struggle from North Africa. But he was overruled and compelled to give place to Marshal Pétain, who was anxious to terminate hostilities. The harsh armistice followed, and humiliated France was driven to drain the cup of bitter sorrow to the very dregs.

Hitler now sardonically compelled the French to sign an armistice in the identical railway carriage, and on the precise spot, where the exultant Foch had dictated terms to the defeated Germans in 1918. Under the armistice the Nazis were empowered to occupy every acre of French soil north of a line extending from Geneva to Tours, and thence in a southerly direction to the Spanish frontier. Thus they commanded the whole coastline north and west. French naval, military and air forces were to be disarmed, save for any units necessary for the maintenance of order in the homeland and, most sinister of all, Germans resident in France were to be consigned to Nazi custody if required.

From her proud position as the predominant Continental Power for the 20 years 1919-39, France was in 1940 hurled to the dust. Still, during this period, while mainly concerned with the task of rendering the Germans incapable of further mischief, France consistently adhered to the League of Nations and, in seeking the alliance of the minor European democracies, she helped to preserve the remnants of the spirit of liberty. Moreover, despite all her difficulties, France continued the most democratic of European States. In three elections the successful parties championed the cause of freedom and progress. Refugees from all the Totalitarian States, as well as from Poland, Austria and Czechoslovakia, when these communities were incorporated in the Reich, found a safe haven in France.

French democracy, however, was constantly menaced by influential and unscrupulous foes. The powerful French industrialists violently attacked the Leftist politicians who had carried several reformist measures. The leading capitalists and their supporters are said to have been materially responsible for the Munich farce, which they staged for the appeasement of the Italian and German dictators. Many of these wealthy industrialists, as well as highly-placed officials, favoured a royal restoration or the creation of an adequately armed and firmly controlled Fascist State. It is also suggested that the overthrow of France in 1940 was in some measure attributable to the treachery of these malcontents and as partly traceable to the inefficiency, lack of foresight and ineptitude of the Parliamentary leaders when confronted by a powerfully armed and relentless enemy.

But apart from this, the French people, despite the occasional belligerent attitude of their rulers, desired nothing better than tranquillity in which to pursue their domestic lives. So France allowed Germany to re-arm and re-militarise the Rhineland without an appeal to battle. Instead, she strove to strengthen herself by an entente with Britain and, ultimately, a Russian alliance. But France's failure to assist the Spanish Republic, and her obvious anxiety to appease Hitler, lowered her prestige in the Central European countries and seriously alienated Russia. We now know that the Eastern Power was affronted by the

absence of any invitation to attend the Munich Conference, for which England must share the blame. After the ill-starred Munich adventure France's only friend was Britain.

The historian, Professor Lynn M. Case, concludes that when France's signature was appended to the armistice with Germany in June, 1940, her standing declined to the lowest point it had ever reached since 1428. Let us trust her highly civilised people will speedily recover from their present downfall and dejection, to resume their priceless services to science and culture.

T. F. PALMER.

THE MYTHIC ORIGIN OF THE CHRIST

BY large numbers of people who have never examined the evidence it is assumed that there is no reason to doubt the historicity of Jesus. "He lived," they say, "whether or not you accept Him as Our Saviour." There is, however, a large body of evidence in support of the theory that He had no existence other than in legend and in anticipatory writings that have been called prophecies.

The idea of a suffering Saviour God, a benefactor of mankind, was widely spread in the pre-Christian world; the whole principle of the atonement is bound up with the death of the Corn-Spirit at harvest time, the resultant benefit to mankind and the renewed life of the Corn-Spirit in the next crop. There are many examples of this belief in the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, which have been interpreted by Theologians, past and present, as prophecies. The Jews still expect the Messiah, and regard Jesus as an impostor. The idea of the atonement is given in Isaiah 53, and there seems to be good reason to believe that it is from this and other Old Testament passages that the idea of an historical Jesus was derived. Instead of the Christ being prophesied, the story of his life was actually built up according to these writings which, in turn, conformed to the almost standard definitions of more ancient Saviour Gods. There are very many indisputable parallels to the central doctrines of Christianity. The myth of Virgin Birth is fundamental to almost all pagan religions; Apollo and Dionysos are excellent examples. It was considered essential for an exceptional personage to be born in an unusual manner. We recognise a comparatively recent case of unnatural birth in that of Julius Caesar, and Rabelais was aware of this when he wrote "Gargantua and Pantagruel."

Mary is not more historical than is Jesus. The name and its associations are of immense antiquity. Myrrha was mother of the Syrian Saviour-god Adonis; Mihr, the virgin mother of Mithra; Maia gave birth to Hermes, the Greek Logos, without intercourse with man; and there existed a Persian tradition that the Miriam mentioned in Exodus was the mother of Joshua. The name "Joshua," or Saviour, is known to be a variant of "Jesus." Myrrha, Mihr, Maia, Miriam—all these names are equivalent to Mary, and each means "the child-bearer" or "the nurse." Yet another example is Maya, the virgin mother of Buddha. It is obvious that these names are derived from a common and extremely ancient root. Is it possible to claim authenticity for the past existence of the mother of Jesus? The Right Hon. J. M. Robertson developed the theory of the origin of Gospel stories in a mystery play. One of his arguments is that the Gospel narrative, as we now have it, strongly resembles the transcription of a play, especially the Passion scene in Matthew, where Jesus is said to have prayed three times, leaving his disciples sleeping; the words of the prayers are quoted, although he was alone. If the mystery-play theory is accepted, the person playing the part of the Saviour would have remained on the stage while praying and his words would have been heard by the audience. Again, in Matthew xxvi. 45-46, Jesus says to his disciples "Sleep on now, and take your rest," and then, in the next verse and, as it stands, in the same sentence, he says "Rise, let us be going." Examination of these

two verses seems to reveal misarrangement of wording, and the passage becomes intelligible only if a short interval is assumed between "Sleep on" and "Rise."

There is ample evidence to support the mystery-play theory, which has been approved and developed by Prof. Arthur Drews, Prof. Benjamin Smith, the Right Hon. J. M. Robertson and, more recently, by Mr. Gordon Rylands.

The bread-and-wine dogma is another example of Christian plagiarism. It is connected with the amalgamation of the worship of Dionysos, the Wine-God, and Demeter, the Corn-Goddess, and their assimilation into the religion of Jesus. The age-old practice of eating the body of the god, or theophagy, is also represented. The bread and wine are regarded as the body and blood of the sacrificed Saviour god. In ancient times, the victim bought or otherwise obtained for the sacrifice, was believed to be the god himself, and his body was undoubtedly eaten by his worshippers, in the belief that they would thereby convey to their own bodies the peculiar virtue or virtues of the god. This virtue was generally fertility, either for their crops or their cattle, or for both of these and the fecundity of their women.

The crucifixion of Jesus, whether fiction or fact, cannot be claimed as a novelty. Quite apart from the fact that crucifixion was a common punishment inflicted on criminals, the idea originated in an extremely primitive belief in the efficacy of the cross as a talisman or salvation emblem. It is interesting to note that the Jesus ben Pandira of the Talmud is supposed to have been hung 100 years before the date upon which Jesus "Christ" is said to have been born. This word "hanging" was sometimes used instead of "crucifixion" by the Greeks in the Roman period, and it may mean the same thing. There is also the story of the Babylonian Jesus ben Stada, reputed to have been hanged about A.D. 100. These three, all named Jesus, were all hung or crucified for sedition on the eve of a Passover. Does this not indicate the performance of Passion plays?

In the atonement by Jesus for the sins of mankind we see the degenerate, doctrinated remains of the ancient personification of the Corn-Spirit by a living man who died a violent death on the harvest field. This sacrifice generally took the form of a mock king who was allowed to reign for a certain period, usually one year. It has been pointed out that this reign of one year may be the "acceptable year of the Lord" mentioned in Isaiah lxi. 2. The mock king was allowed unlimited licence during his reign and his sexual intercourse with the wives and daughters of other members of the tribe was welcomed as a favour from the god. Women who conceived as a result of this intercourse were greatly envied and regarded as blessed. The words of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women!" Luke i. 28, are significant when compared with this superstition of divine favour. Parallels to the Atonement myth are found in the mysteries of Attis and Osiris, in which the participant symbolically dies with the god and by his power rises again sinless. The Christian worshipper becomes one with Christ in the Eucharist.

The Phrygian worship of the saviour-god Attis included among its rites the ceremonial representation of the great Mother, Cybele, mourning over the body of the slain Attis, and ended with the opening of the rock-grave, which is found to be empty. This is a clear case of a pre-existent religious ceremony which has been adapted by Christians to the legendary resurrection of a similar saviour-god. Lamentation by women was featured in the worship of Adonis, who was also known as Tammuz; of Osiris, who was mourned by Isis and Nephthys; and of the Babylonian saviour Marduk, whose empty tomb was also found by a mourning woman, playing the part of a goddess. It is too obvious to indicate the similarity of these legends to the Gospel stories. Add to this the fact that there were many educated men, including historians, living at the time of Christ's supposed

life and within very few miles of the scenes of his activities, and the fact that these men left no writings or reports of the stupendous happenings in Judæa. Nothing at all was said regarding Christ by eleven of the most reliable writers of the period. Tacitus, the younger Pliny and Suetonius mention disturbances caused by certain Jews and also the names Christus and Chrestus. The name Jesus is nowhere found, and as Christus, meaning Messiah, was a frequently used name, and was as Chrestus, another name for the god Serapis, the successor to Osiris, the evidence from contemporary historians can only be taken as inconclusive testimony; we can, perhaps, go so far as to say that they refer to certain Christ cults that were in existence at that time. Against these few poor lines of dubious reference we have the undoubted fact that the two Jewish writers, Philo and Justus, the former deeply interested in Judaic sects and the latter an historian, both living at the time when Jesus is said to have existed, say absolutely nothing about the very subject that would have seemed to them most important. In the second century of the Christian era Justin wrote his "Dialogue with Trypho," in which he represents the Jewish Trypho saying: "But Christ—if he has indeed been born, and exists anywhere—is unknown . . . And you, having accepted a groundless report, invent a Christ for yourselves, and for his sake are inconsiderately perishing" (the Ante-Nicene Lib., vol. 2, p. 99).

Can it still be believed that Jesus was an historical figure when those who would have been his contemporaries say nothing that can be accepted as proof of his existence, and refer in only a very few uncertain lines to a religion that might be that of Jesus Christ, but is quite possibly not; when those whom we may reasonably expect to have at least heard of him say nothing about him or his cult; when we have reliable evidence that even in the second century his reality was doubted; when his antecedents, so similar and having the advantage of a higher degree of originality, are admitted by every modern scholar to be legendary?

R. GAUNTLETT.

THE COMMUNIT

SINCE the war began a host of books describing possible "new world orders" have been published. Hitler, without consulting these authors, has fashioned his "new order" with some success during the war. His textbook of revolution, "Mein Kampf," was not taken seriously for many years, but historians of the future will no doubt have a lot to say about "Mein Kampf's" prophetic realism.

It is interesting to speculate about current attempts to forecast the society of the future. Is there in existence any English-written book which could be regarded as the textbook of the new society? No doubt every publisher in London and New York would claim to have such a book. Progressives have widely acclaimed Sir Richard Acland's "What it will be like." The title is certainly explicit! A more scholarly best seller is "Conditions of Peace," by Professor E. H. Carr, the present writer of "The Times" leading articles. I came across "The Road to Total War," by Lawrence Wolfe (Big Ben Books; 9d.) when browsing through a bookstall, and I commend it to all interested in a new society.

This book is concerned with a domestic revolution and problems of world organisation are not considered. The author argues cogently that the most ambitious blue print of the future is worse than useless if it does not describe the day-to-day changes necessary for its realisation. This is a point of view that is too often lost sight of by authors. Mr. Wolfe no doubt regards his domestic revolution as an essential pre-requisite for any fundamental change in world organisation. Since his proposals apply with equal force to every industrialised country and they entail an entirely new philosophy of life, he may well be right.

"The Road to Total War" introduces as a necessary and expedient war-winning measure the "Communit" system. A Communit is "an association of a number of families and individuals acting in common in all matters in which their interests and wishes coincide, but retaining complete independence in all other respects." Most people would see nothing objectionable in this definition. Its application, however, would effect so many radical changes in our way of life that it is likely to be resisted vigorously by the custom-loving mass of mankind. The imaginary ditches which sheep are prone to jump parallels public distrust of innovations. A thousand reasons why "Communits" are impracticable can be adduced. Example, always better than precept, may induce conservative human sheep to "follow their leader!"

Mr. Wolfe's thesis is simple. He wants neighbouring families to associate themselves in a Communit of from 100 to 500 or more persons. In an average street of 100 families there are, at present, 100 cooks. Each family buys and cooks its own food. Tradesmen deliver milk, bread and groceries at every house. Each householder makes his own arrangements with his landlord or building society.

Is not this reasonable? you ask. In an age of large scale organisation the family is one of the few institutions which have not been rationalised. Capitalists combine to safeguard their interests. Workers combine to increase their bargaining power. Farmers and professional men unite to protect their livelihood. The Church, though slowly eroded by public enlightenment, remains a powerful organisation. The family muddles along in isolation, "keeping itself to itself."

The cell is to the animal organism what the family is to the State. The sound cell is an "intimately co-operative member of a cell community." The "family isolationism" of suburbanites is well known, and its evil social and psychological effects have led to community and health centres being established. No one, least of all the author of the Communit proposals, wants to abolish family unity and family privacy. But if extreme family isolationism hinders the war effort and has thoroughly bad long-term social effects, we should take stock of the facts, if nothing more.

The domestic gas cooker is responsible for an immense waste of labour. It occupies the housewife for several hours a day. It compels inefficient and costly food distribution. It wastes millions of tons of coal a year. It causes food wastage when shipping space is vital. It provides work for married women, assistants in food shops, van drivers, warehousemen, coal miners, merchant seamen, gas stove manufacturers and a host of non-productive workers. The waste continues every day, and daily appeals for economy, salvage, more war supplies—above all, more labour—ignore the colossal waste inevitable with family isolationism. If we had our meals communally, or purchased them from the communal restaurant; if food were delivered to one Communit in each street instead of to 100 separate houses; if each Communit operated its own nursery school, allotment, hobbies centre, library, etc., etc., the labour saved would help munitions output, would solve the food problem, would release shipping for military purposes, and would make unnecessary the frantic fuel economy campaign.

In theory, nothing is supposed to stand in the way of Britain's war effort. After reading "The Road to Total War" one could say, after Zola, "I accuse"—the domestic gas cooker!

Freethinkers would be miscalled if they did not subject every controversial issue to scientific analysis. The social implications of the Communit system are far reaching. As an advocate, rather than a reviewer, I would ask readers to weigh the evidence carefully. Victory will come sooner if we efficiently utilise our resources. The achievement of a new social order NOW should be more of an inducement than to-morrow's "Pie in the sky."

JOHN DARKER.

ACID DROPS

THE Roman Catholic authorities are naturally very much disturbed over the recent Trades Union Congress vote against religious teaching in State schools. They are encouraging their supporters, or ordering their dupes to write letters to the papers on the subject, and there is the repeated threat that if this policy is persisted in, separate Roman Catholic Trade Unions will be formed. We do not believe the danger of this to be very great, for while the Roman Catholics in this country are numerous, they are scattered, and in the event of a trade dispute they would either have to support their fellow trade unionists or disclose their inferiority in numbers. The influence of Roman Catholics in this country does not spring from their numbers but from the manner in which their supporters are placed in key places in the Government, in the Civil Services and in many other directions. The Catholics were quite familiar with the fifth column policy long before it was made popular in the Spanish war and openly used by the Nazis.

Several of those Catholics who have written to the Press do, however, bring good news that will cheer those who wish to see the State really neutral where education and religion are concerned. Thus, a Mr. J. Donovan told an interviewer of the "Universe" he was dismayed at "the steady drift of the Congress towards Secularism." Mr. Donovan must be a very simple individual since he goes on to add that his surprise at this preference for Secularism was because the country as a whole was going back to religion. Someone must have been pulling Mr. Donovan's leg, probably his priest, or he might have discovered that while a man may remain in a state of ignorance throughout the whole of his life, once that ignorance is removed it remains removed.

Another Roman Catholic, a Mr. Davy, wrote to his trade journal that he wanted no advice from his Union as to how his children should be educated. But the Trades Union Congress did not pretend to even advise parents how their children should be educated. What was objected to was the Churches, through their parents, demanding that the teaching of religion should be practically compulsory in State schools. But even at that, is Mr. Davy quite sure that parents do not need instruction as to how their children should be educated? Most of the parents we have come across would be all the better for advice in that direction. And Mr. Davy would not object to a priest—not advising—but ordering him what education should be given to his children.

Archbishop Williams (R.C.) demands that the children of Roman Catholics should "be taught by teachers of their own faith in a Catholic school under Catholic management." He left unexpressed one other condition. Non-Catholics are to pay for this being done.

The Bishop of Monmouth, as reported in the "Western Mail" of 23rd September, says that "the tendency of the nation is to forget God." It is a pity that these preachers cannot make up their minds which is the tale they ought to tell—and stick to it. When they wish to boast so idiotic a performance as a Day of national prayer we are told that the whole nation responds to the call, and our cock-eyed Press gives us columns of the nation at church. When it suits the purpose of the moment the nation is almost hopelessly non-religious. Why do the leading clergy not adopt the simple policy of telling the same lie altogether and all the time?

The Rev. J. S. Baxter, of Edinburgh, told a Birmingham audience that he did not say "the organised Church had *always* stood on the side of right and progress." Oh, modest Baxter! The Church has not *always* stood on the side of right and justice. We should like to know how often it has stood on the right side, and how often has it been a matter of compulsion or profit?

We wonder what Sir Stafford Cripps had in mind when, at the Albert Hall meeting, he was displayed as an enemy general might be paraded as a trophy, in saying that the Church would have to give up its endowments and its establishment. As a

lawyer Sir Stafford Cripps must know that the Church—if by that is meant its ministers—can do neither one nor the other. The Church is established by the State, and its endowments are the property of the State. It is for the Government to say that the wealth now squandered by the State on religion shall be devoted to social purposes, and to declare that there shall no longer be a State religion in this country.

We fancy the Archbishop of Canterbury knows this, even though Sir Stafford may have overlooked it. Dr. Temple knows that, quite apart from the wishes of the "upper" clergy, the majority of which would never agree to either suggestion being carried out, there is a strong political party, of which the Prime Minister is at present the leader, who would object. They would, for various reasons, object to a "Godless England" being created, as they object to a "Godless Russia." So the Archbishop may go on parading his harmless generalities in safety. His prime business is to conserve the position of the Church of England. Whatever *human* feelings he may have on other matters, they must be subordinate to that end.

After the rabid nonsense of Lord Halifax in the U.S.A., with his foolish and false, although quite Halifaxian religious outburst, in which he claimed every social decency as being Christian in origin, we are not surprised to find the Turkish press, as reported in "The Times," objecting to Sir Samuel Hoare's declaration that the post-war settlement of the world must be achieved "on a basis of Christian brotherhood." The Turkish press sees in this an attempt to revive old Christian prejudices and to place non-Christian peoples on a lower level.

Of course, it would be to the good of the nation if both Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Halifax were to take a holiday from politics—say, for about 20 years, but that would not do away with the impudence and insolence of this continuous stress upon the need to settle the world on a Christian basis. This insult to non-Christians runs right from the speeches that are put in the mouth of the King down to the uneducated oration of a Salvation Army preacher. That it does not appear to a Christian to be an insult merely makes the matter worse. If we must use some system, why not Confucianism or Buddhism? Either of them would be preferable to "Christian." Neither has the black and bloody background of the rule of the Christian Churches.

There is more than one side to almost every question, and no greater blunder can be made than to ignore it. For example, Rev. D. R. Davies writes in the "Hull Times" that along with the decline of belief in Christianity there has gone on "an alarming decline in Europe." Suppose now we grant that. What follows? What is the value of the Christian influence if it acts only as a police watch on burglars—prevents only as long as the police watch is sustained? And there really is something in that statement, for when the preacher makes common decency depend upon whether there is a policeman-God or not, the logical conclusion is the one that orthodoxy has always drawn, namely, that if there be no God and no future life, then let us "eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." That is the extent of genuine Christian morality, and one is not surprised at its failure.

Referring to the move of the Conservative Party that there should be a compulsory herding of youth from 14 to 18 or 20 years of age, the "Morning Advertiser" remarks:—

"On the one hand there are Mr. Ernest Bevin and the Socialist Party, who appear determined to force all adults into Trade Unions; on the other hand there are the Conservatives, who appear equally determined to force all juveniles into their Youth Federation. It only remains for the Liberals to come out with a scheme for the nationalisation of toddlers, and the web will be complete. The question must be asked, however, is it absolutely necessary, in order to preserve the future of our country and Empire, that we should regiment our population in this manner? We should have thought that the real happiness of the future generation can only be achieved by giving every opportunity to the individual to live a full and free life and to develop his personality in an independent fashion." That looks to us to be "a hit, a palpable hit."

"THE FREETHINKER"

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. BISHOP (Victoria).—Much obliged for cuttings. Always useful in keeping us in touch with things.

"ANONYMOUS."—Letters received. Many thanks. "The Freethinker" will be sent as requested.

F. KENYON.—Thanks for cutting. Your article will appear shortly.

S. MORTIMER.—Do you really think that the clergy will willingly give up their privileged position and their emoluments? The vague talk about reorganising society should deceive no one. The policy of the Churches with regard to the schools is enough to judge their sincerity.

R. J. JENKINSON.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.

WAR DAMAGE FUND.—E. Swale £1; A. E. Garrison, 3s.

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SUGAR PLUMS

MR. COHEN will not be doing much provincial lecturing this season. Travelling over long distances is no picnic these days, and the difficulty of getting food on long journeys does not get easier. We say that so that our Glasgow friends, and others at a distance from London, will understand why he has been compelled to refuse invitations far from London. Perhaps the other side of the New Year may be more hopeful.

Mr. Cohen is, however, visiting Leicester on October 18. It will be an afternoon meeting, and his subject will be "The War That Never Ends." It should prove interesting.

Not a big book, but full of meat is "Race and Racism," by Dr. Ruth Benedict. Dr. Benedict believes in Race, stated in such a way as not to arouse strong opposition from the thoughtful reader, but not in Racism, which flourishes with the Vansittarts of Berlin and London. It says little for the depth of thought displayed by most of the champions of Racism that their position should ignore the cardinal fact that man's superiority—or shall we say man's potential superiority—over the animal world consists in the fact that biological heredity plays a small part in his mental development. A healthy body is required, yes, but once that is forthcoming, how that body shall behave in relation to its inheritance in the shape of cultural facts, language, inventions, institutions, customs, etc., is dependent on the quality of his social inheritance.

This seems so plain, once stated, that one ought to see it directly it is stated. But we still talk habitually of the English race—one of the most mixed groups in the world; America supplies us with the Anglo-Saxon race—from Poland and Russia and France and Ireland and other parts of the globe, and Germany follows by giving us the German race. Dr. Benedict canes all

these "racists" cheerfully and deservedly, and when one has done with her one will find, not merely grounds, but justification in setting some countries as better than others, as a lesson—to be gained from her book. The book gains in interest by a series of specialist opinions under the heading of "What They Say." The volume is not a cheap one (7s. 6d.), but it is a good one. We do not use the vulgar phrase "It will repay reading," for every book repays reading, whether it is wise or silly—if one possesses the wit to appreciate it. We prefer to say that it is one of those books one will do well to read because it will afford much room for agreement and something for its opposite.

Wherever possible N.S.S. branches and speakers have made good use of the open-air season now closing. Blackburn, Bradford, Edinburgh, Kingston, North and West London Branches all report well-attended meetings, whilst Messrs. Brighton, Clayton and Shortt have kept an increasing circle of outposts in regular touch with our message. In addition to these efforts, quantities of our literature are sent free each week to actual readers in all branches of the armed Forces, and many letters of grateful appreciation have been received from men introduced to Freethought as a result of that scheme.

The following is from a resolution passed by the National Association of Headmasters and sent to the Minister of Education. The Masters object to teachers being ordered or asked to make a religious call to "faith," and add that the pose of the Public Schools "as the most exclusive employment agency in the world" must disappear, as the "virtues" of the public schools' training is incompatible with democracy. It also says:—

"The suggested infiltration of children from grant-aided schools will not break the system. Since the numbers so admitted will be small, the result will be bad for two reasons. The 'lower' classes will be robbed of their most progressive types, and the admitted children will be moulded to the pattern of the 'ruling' classes."

The assertion that by infiltrating the privileged class with a handful of the people results in robbing the working class of its best by assimilating them into a class that keeps a real democracy at bay, is a good one. The way should be open for the best, whether it comes from the aristocracy or from the people at large.

From Belfast:—

"A hundred thousand welcomes to 'Approach to Christianity' and my very best thanks for its success. The last chapter especially."

We are delighted to know that someone is pleased, and, for many reasons, that our latest publications are selling well. We are still struggling to get out another very cheap propagandist edition of the "Age of Reason."

It is reported by a naval chaplain—a Roman Catholic—that before joining their ship at Sydney 14 sailors went to confession and communion. Their ship put to sea—and the whole 14 were drowned. Now what would have happened if they had spent their last night ashore in getting drunk? Still, we suspect there is some moral about the story—if only we could find it out.

When our theological specialists have tired of the doubly saturated nonsense they let loose on the world, some of them might be daring enough, and decent enough, to inform the world what moral quality is it that can be manifested in connection with Christian beliefs that cannot be manifested without them? We would bet ten to one that Britain does not hold a single parson of eminence who would venture to answer the question without equivocation.

"We must keep our civil liberties," says Cardinal Hinsley. Agreed. But what are the civil liberties we are to keep? What does the Cardinal mean when he speaks of civil liberties? Of course, the Roman Church will not, while it is without the power directly to interfere, openly oppose what we understand by the phrase, but suppose the Roman Church had the power of interference, would it refrain? We all know very well it would not.

BIBLE NOTES AND NOTIONS

HOWEVER interesting, in an academic way, is a study of the Hebrew and Greek Bibles, very few people in this country, comparatively speaking, know these two languages. For the mass of the English people it is the Authorised Version which is meant by the Bible—and that, in spite of the fact that there are many other versions in the field. It is still the A.V. which is read out in our churches, chapels and little Bethels. The Revised Version, which was compiled to supersede it, is even yet hardly known; and other translations, like Young's and Moffat's, have been published, but seem little known and are never or rarely read in our churches and chapels. They are, in fact, only appealed to when a Christian is in debate with an "infidel," and he finds the A.V. rather inconvenient to defend—especially if he knows that the passage in question is a bad translation.

Leaving aside the literary excellences which the A.V. may or may not be supposed to contain, and concentrating on its virtues as a competent translation, it may well be pointed out that it has been scathingly and almost contemptuously denounced by such a great linguistic authority as the very orthodox Dr. Robert Young, whose "Analytical Concordance of the Bible" is a masterpiece of its kind. He shows that the A.V. is a translation of a translation—that is, it derives in the first place from the version made by Wycliffe, who, not knowing either Greek or Hebrew, used the Latin Vulgate as his "original" text. From this came the versions of Tyndale, Coverdale and other men who seemed to do but little more than revise Wycliffe without going entirely to the "original" Greek and Hebrew—to which Young himself went for his own "Literal Translation of the Bible." Unfortunately, Young refused to discuss the texts he used, as he accepted them as God's Holy Word; and he contended that "nine-tenths of the objections of sceptics and unbelievers are entirely removed by the new and correct translation of the Hebrew and Greek originals."

He is particularly severe on the way in which some Hebrew words have been translated; and he shows that (to give one example of his drastic criticism) "70 meanings [have been ascribed] to one Hebrew particle, 60 meanings to one Hebrew verb and 60 Hebrew nouns [have been translated] by one English one!" There are hundreds of "lax" renderings as well as "confused" ones; while there are "dozens of errors arising from wrong divisions of the chapters and verses . . . thousands of instances where the particles are jumbled together in a way unparalleled in the translation of any other book"; and "there is no error in the Christian Church that cannot be maintained from" the A.V. And Dr. Young adds that "the reader who depends on such a work as Cruden's "Concordance" for finding the meaning of *verbal* parallel passages, is deliberately misled at every step of his progress."

The Revised Version has had similar attacks made upon it, particularly on its translation of the New Testament; and here I would like the reader to go to the Variorum edition of the Authorised Version of the Bible, and study the multitudinous notes which give the various renderings and readings and which admit that there are "meanings wholly unknown." Nothing that has so far been said will prove more absolutely the utter impossibility of finding out the "true" text of the Scriptures, or even if there ever were one. In view of this indubitable fact it is amusing to read what Peter said: "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not of old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"; especially when we realise that the "scripture" about which Peter makes this statement was the Old Testament only, and the Greek version at that, admitted by all theologians and commentators to be irredeemably faulty.

Equally amusing is the declaration of St. Augustine in one of his letters to Jerome: "I have learned to pay such fear and honour to the canonical Books of Scripture that I most firmly believe that not one of their writers has fallen into a single error in writing them." No one who has studied the history of the transmission of the Hebrew text as we have it at this day—except, of course, those Fundamentalists like the more ignorant of Catholics or members of the Salvation Army—could say this now. Textual criticism has abolished such foolish statements.

But though it is a fact that the A.V. is the Bible par excellence for the mass of English-speaking peoples, yet one still has to explain why such an admittedly faulty translation has been accepted by them as the infallible Word of God. Over and over again they have been told it is packed with mistakes. Over and over again attempts have earnestly been made to correct them. I have mentioned Young's famous translation. But there are others almost forgotten. Who has read Dr. Conquest's Bible? Or Wesley's? Or Goadby's? Or Clarke's? Who knows the versions of Campbell, Wakefield, Belsham, Sharpe, Watson, McClellan, Epp?

They all differ from each other. Dr. Conquest claims to have corrected 20,000 errors in the A.V., and between them it is possible the others have settled 100,000 more.

The Roman Catholic Version, known as the Douay, insists that the A.V. is not God's Word, except, I suppose, in parts. It says that the A.V. is quite incomplete. Luther, in his German version, left out, I believe, both James and Revelation. Boothroyd left out the Song of Solomon, and at least one Christian, Adam Clarke, was unable to see its "spiritual" excellences.

One stands aghast at the immensity of the labour which has been expended on the Bible, on compiling it, on editing it, on its commentaries, on its history and on trying to find out, especially these days, where it stands.

For if there is one thing almost all critics of note have sadly come to the conclusion—it is that the Bible is no longer God's Infallible Word.

H. CUTNER.

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

THIS is rather a strange title, but I hope that I shall be able to fit it into my narrative. My theme in the main will be dealing with the cosmic process—that is, inorganic and organic evolution; and let me at once plunge into my subject and ask: How was our planet created? Astronomical science tells us that millions and millions of years ago what we know to-day as the Solar System was a gigantic cloud of fire, mist or gaseous substance scattered throughout the stark, naked void. Gradually in the centre of this imponderable mass a revolving movement began which ultimately increased to a tremendous velocity, drawing in all the nebulous substance around it until it became a roaring, whirling furnace of white-heat intensity, with a temperature at its core of 2,000,000 degrees (Centigrade). It is said this temperature is so intense that if a coin the size of a shilling piece were heated up to this temperature it would frizzle up anything within 1,000 miles of it. In any case, this is how, we are told, the sun was born.

For reons of time this blazing, flaming mass was turning on its axis and travelling through space at an incredible speed, until, as Sir James Jeans says, in the remote past, another sun, evidently out of its orbit, drew near ours and, being a bigger body, its pull of gravitation was stronger, and as it drew nearer and nearer to our sun it tore a mass of fiery substance out of it, which fell in fragments and at random around our sun, and which could have flown off into space only for the gravitation pull of their fiery parent which kept them in their position; these specks of flaming substance began to revolve on their own axis, and in this way our planets came into being.

Our earth happened to drop into a frigid zone, where life as we know it could evolve. Farther away, due to low temperature, life could not exist, and nearer the sun high temperature would make organic existence impossible. With the exception of Mars, all our outer planets are enveloped in a coating of ice up to a depth of hundreds of miles. On our inner planets, i.e. Venus and Mercury, especially the former, the temperature is so high that animal life could not survive in them. It is therefore obvious that life on our planet is the by-product of an accident. Moreover, we know that the Universe is hostile to life.

After the cooling down of our Earth to, say, normal temperature, life appeared. How it was created we do not know. The problem of the origin of life belongs to the domain of biology.

Now I am coming to the main point—that is, how the vast range of life from amœba to man was stored in the fire-mist I have already mentioned. What inscrutable mystery, what a staggering conception of the evolution of inorganic matter into the organic or life and activity, which makes the imagination falter and reel! Imagine, if you can, the gap between white-hot gas and man! Yet every form of life which appeared on our planet from the beginning of organic existence, and which will continue to appear to the end of time, were potentially in that mysterious, intangible substance. Locke said "that the ultimate essence of matter is unknowable." But the evolution of the inorganic into the organic is to my mind far more startling. Evolution has ceased years ago to be a theory. It is now a fact—a stark naked reality. What were the agents which were responsible for organic development is meantime beside the mark. Whether Darwin's natural selection or Wiesman, with his mutation theory, are right is at present immaterial. Both may be right up to a point, but probably there is still an unknown factor to be discovered. However, the fact remains that Darwin proved evolution to be a fact, as I have already said.

Now I am coming to the title of my article: What is it all about? Why are we here? Whither are we going? What is our objective in this drama of existence? As far as we know we have no definite goal in life. Existence consists of birth, development, disease, old age and dissolution. We go round in a vicious circle, our offspring begins where we broke off, and this endless chain of birth and death goes on for ever and ever, with the added tragedy thrown in that 95 per cent. of mankind are in a veritable hell from the cradle to the grave. Has evolution a purpose in life? Professor Julian Huxley says "No," and goes on to say that we could plan a better system for our physical and mental development than the blind forces of nature. If that is the case, the expansion of the human brain has been a gigantic tragedy, because animals are far happier than man. They have no yesterday or to-morrow in their mentality—they are creatures of the hour—their life is governed by three factors, namely, feeding, mating and roosting. They know nothing of the inevitability of death and old age; this sinister knowledge is confined to man alone. The best of us have regrets and remorse in our yesterdays, and we are looking forward to the morrow with something akin to fear, with disease, old age and death in the background. Even those of us who are parents fear the morrow for our children's sake. To me it is a horrible idea that my loved ones have to pass through the same vicissitudes of existence as I did. Indeed, I feel guilty of an unpardonable crime in being responsible for bringing them into this cold, dismal, cruel world, full of misery, suffering, pain and death. In my opinion life is a blind alley.

Why does man fear death? It is the operation of a natural law, like sleep. No one is afraid of falling asleep. What then is the cause of our terror of our last enemy? Metchnikoff, the Russian biologist, in his thesis on Natural Death, says we fear death because we die before our time. Even the aged, he adds, die of a pathological old age, and if we could reach the physiological old age which would increase our span of life by 30 or 40

years, then the fear of death would be superseded by the desire to die.

In this contribution I have no doubt I shall be accused of being a pessimist. Well, then, that is paying me a high compliment because pessimism involves hard thinking. I am a follower of the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, and their dismal arguments are certainly founded on logical grounds.

The optimist points us to the singing of birds and the beauty of plant life as a true indication of optimism in nature, but as I have already mentioned, birds and other animals are happy because they know nothing of death and disease.

Pessimism is the result of arriving at the highest stage of mental development, when one becomes conscious of the futility of our hopes and the illusion of life which drives one to take a pessimistic conception of existence, or of the Universe, if you like.

It is, in fact, far easier to survey the dark side of life than the sunny side. There are more clouds than sunshine in the mental world. Man's capacity for pain increases far more with the passing of years than do his powers for pleasure. Extreme old age is repulsive and repugnant to man—a sinister malady—and is also a terror for the aged.

I have now come to the end of my story, and I say, with all my faculties intact, that I would rather a thousand times I was never born. Of course, I know that I am in this wish beating the air.

It will be observed I have so far evaded referring to religion, simply because I cannot get a foothold in Christian theology. May I add that I am an unwilling sceptic; nevertheless I am a great admirer of the ethics of the Nazarene.

NORMAN MORRISON, D.Sc., F.Z.S. (Scot.).

DESULTORY THOUGHTS UPON THE MYTH THEORY BY AN ADMIRER OF ITS INGENUITY

(Concluded from page 406)

LET us examine the facts as they are recorded in the Pauline Epistles, selecting with this object the first eight of the fourteen works, the rest, excepting Philemon (which has no importance for our purpose), being from internal evidence of various kinds regardable as spurious, though one or two may possibly incorporate authentic fragments. In 2 Corinthians xi. 6 Paul says: "Though I be rude in speech, yet am I not in knowledge." There is a modicum of truth in the first of these clauses, whilst the second is indisputable. The imperfect purity of his Greek does not, however, disguise his mastery of rhetoric, evinced in many noble passages, and certainly not the acquisition of a day. As to the learning displayed in his works, it should be recalled that, according to Acts (xxi. 39, xxii. 3), Paul, on two public occasions of great moment, declared himself to be a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia; and that in his "Epistle to the Galatians" (i. 21) he mentions his having spent, three years after his conversion, a period of time in Syria and Cilicia, which the context shows to have lasted several years. There was then in those parts and in the surrounding lands, a ferment of religious and philosophical ideas chiefly mystical in their character. There were Saviour-Gods who died a sacrificial death and rose again to "newness of life"; there was Gnosticism with its principalities and powers, good and bad, who occupied "the heavenly places," and its mediators between God and man; and there was the personification of wisdom in the Jewish Apocrypha culminating in the Logos of Philo, that divine light which irradiates the human mind. All these, at one time or another, and in some form or another, Paul introduces into his lucubrations, blending them together with the sublimated conception of the Jewish Messiah. From the last chapter of Luke and the opening chapters of Acts, the faith of the earliest Christians would appear to have been as follows:—

Jesus was the suffering Messiah foretold by Isaiah. He had

died for the sins of his people. He had survived death. He had gone up into heaven. He would return to restore the Kingdom unto Israel. All Jews, who believed these things, and thus put their trust in him, would have everlasting life as the reward of their fidelity. The inclusion of Gentiles as well as Jews within this redemption scheme is an addition to the original creed, and was due to Paul's inventive genius, working up material inaccessible to the primitive apostles, such as Peter and John, who are said to have been "unlearned and unlettered men" (Acts iv. 13). It cannot be too strongly emphasised that Paul denies his conversion to have been the result of human instrumentality, and attributes it solely to divine revelation. What made him a Christian was unquestionably the conviction that he had seen Jesus after his death and burial, and that Jesus then gave him his instructions. Being the sort of man that he was, Paul thought it worse than superfluous to seek human information and, instead of doing so, retired into Arabia, a very suitable land for religious meditation.

In later years, when he did confer with the apostolic band, they had to treat him on terms of strict equality. But from canonical and other sources it is evident that they and their party regarded him with jealousy and distrust. His success would strengthen these hostile feelings. Rare indeed is it for beginners of a movement or starters of an invention to reach the point of greatest importance. Usually some newcomer takes the pre-eminence: There were many reformers before Luther, and at his day, but the respect of his friends and the hatred of his foes distinguish him as the central figure of the Reformation. It was the same with Paul; the priority and other advantages of the original apostles long restricted his advancement. He made his victorious strike by proclaiming to the Gentiles "If ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing" (Galatians v. 2). This brought multitudes into the Christian fold who would otherwise have been kept out of it by their detestation for a barbarous and disgusting rite. Surely where a man's description is psychologically and historically so natural as Paul's is, it really does seem a shame to evaporate him and to give laborious forgers the credit of his genial compositions!

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

CORRESPONDENCE

A PARSON REPLIES

SIR,—I am a member of what you seem to be highly pleased and amused to call the "parsonry." I know what a low estimate you have of us intellectually. In reply I would say this, that I for one am intellectual enough to be a regular reader of "The Freethinker." For many years now I have taken it and read it carefully week by week. I have read many of your books and pamphlets. I am very interested in the Secularist Movement and I have attended several meetings in the Conway Hall in Red Lion Square, London. This, as it seems to me, is on my part sufficient justification for my writing to you now, and also for your justification for consenting to give this letter a place in "The Freethinker." Moreover, some time ago you complained that no parson dared to face up to you, and you added that if he did so the columns of "The Freethinker" would always be open to him. I am thankful to receive this kind and generous invitation from you, and I gladly accept it here and now. What I want to refer to in particular and to criticise is the quotation from Professor McDougall's "Body and Mind" in your "Materialism Restated." In "The Freethinker" (Sept. 13) you make the attempt to right what you consider to be the wrong in Professor Joad's "Evening Standard" article, which appeared there a few weeks ago, and you do it thus: "With great humility I would suggest a glance at my own 'Materialism Restated.'" Very well, let us take the "glance" and then see if the "great humility" is matched with great accuracy. On page 200 of "Materialism Restated" there is a quotation from Professor McDougall's "Body and Mind." The book is named, but the page reference is not given. The

words you quote are in the Preface, page 12, Fourth Edition. In the original the word Science in the first line is written with a capital S and has inverted commas—"Science." Both of these are omitted in the quotation given in "Materialism Restated." But further, the use you make of this quotation is entirely wrong. You give it a meaning which is the exact opposite and contradiction of what the original author intended to convey to his readers. What is done is this—and it is a very serious fault—the quotation is cut off from its preceding and succeeding context and then twisted into a meaning that it neither says nor implies. As a matter of fact, this is not a quotation from Professor McDougall at all, but his quotation from another with which he does not agree. I will give the context leading up to and that following your quotation:—

"I am aware that to many minds it must appear nothing short of a scandal that anyone occupying a position in an academy of learning, other than a Roman Catholic seminary, should in this 20th century defend the old-world notion of the soul of man."

After this your quotation comes. It is not Professor McDougall's own words, but a quotation from another source in which "Science" is supposed to be in opposition to the Professor's "notion of the soul of man." Now take Professor McDougall's reply to this:—

"But I am aware also that not one in a hundred of those scientists and philosophers who confidently and even scornfully reject the notion has made any impartial and thorough attempt to think out the psycho-physical problem in the light of all the relevant data now available, and of the history of previous thought on the question; and I am young enough to believe that there is amongst us a considerable number of persons who prefer the dispassionate pursuit of truth to the interests of any system, and to hope that some of them may find my book acceptable as an honest attempt to grapple once more with this central problem; and I am fortified by the knowledge that a few influential contemporary philosophers adhere to the animistic conception of human personality, or at least regard the psycho-physical question as still open, as also by certain indications that the 'mechanistic dogma' no longer holds the scientific world in so close a grip as during the later part of the 19th century."

This, then, is Professor McDougall's "notion of the soul of man." Now take what "Materialism Restated" has to say about it:—

"Professor McDougall's statement is the more telling from the fact that it occurs in a bulky volume written to re-establish some form of the theory which he declares has gone out of fashion. It is a pre-scientific form of thought, and until the student gets that well into his head, he has not taken the first step towards a genuine understanding of the question."

The curious thing for me in the present regard is this: that after reading Professor McDougall's idea and contention as to the reality of "the soul of man," and then after coming upon the reference thereto in "Materialism Restated," I am left with the impression that the author of this commentary has never read even the Preface of "Body and Mind," still less the book right through. What can this mean?

As to "Materialism Restated," considered in its entirety I have this to say: that I have read the book through from cover to cover. Several chapters of it I have read twice or three times. The chapter on "Cause and Effect" is very disappointing. It doesn't go to the root of the matter. "Causation, in short, does not and cannot carry us back beyond phenomena." In reply, I maintain that it does do this, and also that the sum total of phenomena has a cause that is other than the phenomenal. I am aware that this requires elucidation, but space forbids that now. I would ask you to look up Kant's great "Critique of Pure Reason" on this subject and question. (See Norman Kemp Smith's Translation, pp. 464, 465, and Max Muller's, pp. 432 and 433.)

I notice also a quotation from E. A. Burt's "The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science." Further on in this book you will find more sentences that you might quote. See page 318, and especially page 328 to the end.

Another quotation is from the American psychologist, William James. I don't remember in which one or more of his books he says of "consciousness": "It is the name of a nonentity, and has no right to a place among principles." I should like to know in what connection James says this, and I shall be glad to be told the title of the book, with page-reference, in which I may find it.—Yours, etc.,
J. R. PARKYN.

REJOINDER

Sir,—I do not intend to reargue the theme of "Materialism Restated." That must take care of itself for the present. I am concerned only with what the Rev. Mr. Parkyn says is a misrepresentation of the position of Dr. McDougall. I did not say, neither did I infer, that the citation given from McDougall represented his position, and I am surprised that Mr. Parkyn should have read it as such. I deny altogether that it is not properly presented, or that I insinuated that the passage represented McDougall's own belief. He was attacking a view with which he disagreed, and he put that position as such. Mr. Parkyn's statement that I was citing someone else's opinion as McDougall's is simply not true, and anyone who will turn to page 20 of my book and to page 12 in "Body and Mind," preface, will see that it is not. McDougall was stating a position, and I pointed out that in a very big book he undertook to disprove the position he had summarised as being popular in scientific circles.

Mr. Parkyn reads "The Freethinker" frequently, if not regularly, and he ought to know that even were I knave enough wilfully to misrepresent an opponent I am not fool enough to do so. It is quite common tactics to state a position in order to disprove it. Directly after using the quotation on page 200—McDougall's, not mine or anyone else's—I said as plainly as possible that he sets out to "re-establish" some form of the soul theory.

I dismiss the remark that I had probably never read "Body and Mind" as, shall we say, an accidental impertinence. I am not one who writes about a book after "mugging-up" the material in a public library. I have most of McDougall's books on my shelves and have had them since their publication. I suggest Mr. Parkyn—for his own sake—owes me an apology.

I am not concerned with Mr. Parkyn's opinion of my theory of causation. It is a position I have held, and have written and talked about for half a century, and have had the gratification to find it used by others—without acknowledgement. The passage from William James: Here again there is a covert suggestion of dishonesty on my part. But the quotation will be found on page 2 of "Essays in Radical Empiricism." And here is another from the same work which may help Mr. Parkyn to swallow the one quoted: "For 20 years I have mistrusted 'Consciousness' as an entity. For seven or eight years past I have suggested its non-existence to my students."

I think I ought to say that when I received Mr. Parkyn's letter it was so inaccurate that I wrote him asking whether he had not better revise it in face of facts. I did not wish to take advantage of what might have been a slip. If I find a man is likely to fall into a bog I do not wait for him to do so before giving him a helping hand. But Mr. Parkyn declined my offer, and the decision lay with him.—C. C.

THE CAUSES OF PROGRESS

Sir,—In your issue of September 27, Mr. Archibald Robertson says I do not believe in the cause of progress. I believe very much in it, but I differ wholly from Mr. Robertson as to the best way of bringing it about. Mrs. C. M. Burns has just published a very valuable report on infant life in Durham, in which she says: "Quite a few women who are actually certified mentally defective are married and have had large families." That is one of the evils I am anxious to remove. Is Mr. Robertson? I have never known either Mr. Robertson, or any other apostle of popular thought, to open his mouth on the subject.

On the contrary, most of Mr. Robertson's friends are now clamouring for family allowances which could have no other effect except to stimulate slum birthrate. Bidding is getting very lively. Miss Rathbone would be content with 5s. per baby, but a Fabian tract prefers 7s., while Captain Randolph Churchill has pronounced in favour of 10s. per week per baby after the first two. No working woman in good circumstances would ever be

influenced by such an offer, but there are great numbers of very poor women to whom 10s. per baby would be a gold mine, and who would promptly produce cargoes of babies to supply such a demand. Among such applicants the mentally defective would be sure to be well represented.

There would then be another magnificent opening for Mr. Robertson and his friends. Colin Clark, the Socialist economist, has told us that unemployment is beyond comparison more common among the unskilled than among the skilled. Family allowances would give us hordes of unskilled, and then there would be a tremendous cry against the wicked capitalists who keep numbers of worthy and admirable people unemployed.

On the question of war, Mr. Robertson and his friends are the main obstacle to a correct diagnosis of the causes of war. In the United States the universities are all appointing professors of population, and they teach that the main cause of war is pressure of population. Says Fairchild, of New York: "Population pressure has always been, and still is, the great underlying and predisposing cause of international war." Lord Keynes says the same thing, and so do the continental writers and speakers who talk about *Lebensraum*. The only difference is as to whether peace should be obtained by keeping down numbers or by conquering more land. But popular thinkers will not listen to any discussion of the subject at all, and prefer to rely on utterly superficial remedies like Leagues of Nations, Federal Union and so on.—Yours, etc.,
R. B. KERR.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

Report of Executive Meeting Held September 27, 1942

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the Chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Rosetti (A. C.), Bryant, Seibert, Ebury, Horowitz, Griffiths, Mrs. Quinton, Miss Woolstone and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Financial statement presented.

New members were admitted to the Edinburgh Branch and to the Parent Society.

Correspondence dealt with included that to and from the Director-General of the Home Guard, Preston, Edinburgh and London. Reports of lectures and open-air work during the season were noted from Edinburgh, Blackburn, West London Branches and from Messrs. Brighton and Clayton.

Arrangements for future lectures were made and other items of our propaganda discussed.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Sunday, November 1, and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON Outdoor

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 12-0 noon, Mr. L. EBURY; Parliament Hill Fields: 3-30 p.m., Mr. L. EBURY.

West London N.S.S. Branch (Hyde Park), Thursday, 7-0, Mr. E. C. SAPHIN; Sunday, 3-0, various speakers.

LONDON Indoor

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Professor C. B. FAWCETT, D.Sc., "The Columbian Discovery—1942," at 11 a.m.

COUNTRY Indoor

Bradford Branch N.S.S. — Meetings every Sunday at Laycock's Cafe, Kirkgate, 7-0 p.m.

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