

THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXIII.—No. 32

Sunday, August 8, 1943

Price Threepence

CONTENTS

Views and Opinions—The Editor	309
A Better Type of God—C. G. L. Du Cann	311
A Torchbearer of Science—H. J. Hayward	312
Advertising God—A. Nicholls	313
Acid Drops	313
To Correspondents	315
Sugar Plums	315
University Professor's Great Victory—J. Y. Anderoney	316
The Need for Tolerance—C. McCall	317
Oddities—Geo. B. Lissenden	318
Correspondence	319
Sunday Lecture Notices, Etc.	319

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

IF the proposed Government Education Bill becomes law the country will be committed to a further subsidising of the Christian religion in both cash and status. I say the Christian religion because other religions in England will merely share the privilege—with the non-religious—of paying for other people's religion. That is as far as this pseudo-democratic country has advanced. Of these Christian sects the Roman Catholic Church is the most uncompromising in its claims. No Protestant teacher may apply for a job, and the whole of the school life of the children attending Roman Catholic schools is saturated with Roman Catholic influences.

If, then, we are likely to have to pay for the teaching of Roman Catholic religion, it is well for the British public to know just what that Church is. For it is a peculiar feature that although everyone knows the Roman Church by name, the majority of people are but ill-acquainted with details of its teachings and its method of propaganda. We ought perhaps to say *methods* of propaganda, for its propaganda takes various forms. Certainly the form taken in this country is very different from that which it adopts.

in Southern Ireland, in Spain, or in parts of Australia. For this purpose I am dealing with a recently issued shilling publication (48 pages) which the general public is not likely to see. The title of the pamphlet is "Fatima," and it appears to be a digest of a larger work which we have not seen. The pamphlet, illustrated, is published by the Roman Catholic Salesian Press, Surrey Lane, London.

"Fatima" is not a name lifted from the "Arabian Nights," although if it had been better written it might well have been taken from that famous romance. Fatima is a village in Portugal, and the essay deals with occurrences of a mere yesterday, the actuality of which are vouched for by the very highest Roman ecclesiastical authorities. We agree with the writer of a brief preface that the narrative reminds one of "the most striking manifestations of divine power in the Old Testament, namely, the thunder

and lightning on Mount Sinai, the sun standing still at the command of Joshua. The Blessed Virgin came down to Fatima, maternal and condescending. . . . It is in order to affirm the supreme efficacy of the Rosary that Mary shook the very powers of the heavens." As a popularity hunter Mary beats the most ambitious of political, theatrical or professional showmen. It would have been more effective if Mary had appeared before a number of press reporters, but we must take these heavenly visitations as they come, and these divine performers are very careful to whom they reveal themselves. The "Virgin" sought popularity through the agency of three children—Jacinta, aged seven; Francis, aged nine; and Lucia, aged ten. Like the shepherds in the New Testament, the three children were tending sheep when the vision came to them. The children had just risen from their knees, after praying, when there occurred two flashes of lightning, and "in the blinding light there appeared a young lady of dazzling beauty. She wore a white mantle, edged and embroidered with gold. . . . In her right hand she holds a rosary of shining pearls with a silver cross." No film producer could have arranged things better.

Asked Lucia: "Where do you come from?" The dazzling vision replied, "From Heaven." "What have you come here for?" asked Lucia, with all the spontaneity of a carefully rehearsed speaker employed by the B.B.C. "I have come," replied the dazzling, expensively dressed figure, "to ask you to return here for six consecutive months, on the 13th of each month at this same hour. I shall tell you who I am, and what I want." This was the first visit of the Virgin, May 13, 1917. Lucia had been asked to keep silence, but did not, and by the next date—June 13, 1917—the three kiddies were accompanied by 60 people. On the next arranged date, July 13, 5,000 assembled to see the heavenly performance. The 5,000 knelt at the command of this very lively ten-year-old and adored the Virgin. On August 13 the Virgin had a full house: 18,000 assembled. The show was growing, the Virgin was having a full dose of "Adoration."

But the children were absent on this last occasion. The Civic Administrator had seized the children and by "promises, ruses and threats, tried to make the children contradict each other." He even went so far as to threaten them: "Either you tell me the truth or I shall have you fried in a red-hot frying-pan." It was all in vain. To compensate the children for having been away from the August 13 apparition, the "Vision" gave the children a special audience on August 19. The reception over, the children took back with them "the Branch on which the Virgin had rested her foot." The Branch gave out "a delicious perfume of a kind unknown."

On the next occasion, September 13, the show increased. There were 30,000 present. To them "a luminous globe

appears which, moving from east to west, glides slowly and majestically towards the heavens. . . . Then from the cloudless sky there fell a shower of white flowers which, without reaching the ground, faded away." It is a pity they were not preserved or a few cuttings taken.

The sixth, and final, scene was staged. By this time the numbers were too great to be counted, for we are told that an "immense multitude gathered." The roads to Fatima "were crowded with vehicles and pedestrians." But an estimate of 70,000 is finally made—almost as big an assembly as a first-class football match—but the crowning wonder was to be seen, the final message was to be given; and "exactly at noon" Lucia cried out: "There, she is coming." She came and fully revealed herself to Lucia. "She was Our Lady of the Rosary." She said that she wished a chapel to be built "to her honour." She deserved it, for at once the greatest miracle of all time was given—presumably by her orders. The rain had ceased, the sky was cloudless, the sun appeared like a silver globe.

Then all at once the sun began to spin round and round, just like a wheel of fire . . . casting in every direction . . . enormous beams of green, red, blue, violet and every other colour. Everyone held his breath and gazed upon this startling spectacle.

The three children saw more than this. They alone saw at the side of the sun four tableaux in succession. "Our Lady with Joseph carrying the child." "Our Lord grown up," "Our Lady of sorrows" and "Our Lady of Carmel." Then came the final exhibition.

The sun, after its magic dance of fire and colour, ceased to turn and, like a gigantic wheel which by every movement of turning had become loosened, detached itself from the firmament and hurtled down towards the crowd, crouching terror-stricken, convinced that this was the end of the world foretold in the Gospels. . . . But the end did not come. As if stayed by the divine hand, the sun stopped in its headlong descent, and when the first fearful heads were raised, it was to see the marvels vanished and the sun shining in its usual place in the sky.

This is the miracle. It is beyond explanation or denial.

Certainly beyond explanation. But the greater miracle is bashfully unnamed; and that, with the sun playing capers of this kind with the rest of the solar system remaining as orderly as usual.

Thirteen years later, October 13, 1930, the Bishop of Leiria declared the apparition we have been describing "Worthy of faith and officially authorised devotion to Our Lady of Fatima!"—which I take to be Mary. In Lisbon the Cardinal Archbishop has had a magnificent basilica erected in honour of "Our Lady of Fatima." Later, the voice of the Pope was heard. "In noble language, His Holiness obeyed the message of Fatima and consecrated the World to the Sacred Heart of Mary." I see no reason why it should not have as great a vogue as anything that the Roman Church has yet put forward. In any case, it is well that the outside public should know the depths of superstition to which people can sink, and on which the chief Church in Christendom lives. It should also be said

that the English pamphlet represents a much larger volume, the truthfulness of which is backed up by very numerous Roman Catholic dignitaries. I have not seen this book, but I gather it is a mere enlargement of a story, the essentials of which have been stated. I prefer the "Arabian Nights," which has wit, humour and no small degree of philosophy. And "Hans Andersen" is far more interesting to children and sensible adults.

We have space for but one more example. At the July 13 meeting, before the sun behaved in a way that would have shocked Copernicus, disproved Galileo's "And still it moves," and seriously disturbed the whole of our solar system, the "Apparition" confided three secrets to the children. Here is one of the secrets, which reminds one of a brutal Catholic booklet issued some years ago. It is Lucia speaking. She was shown by "Our Lady" a glimpse of hell. It was

a great sea of fire which seemed to be under the earth. Immersed in these flames were the devil and the damned; they were like transparent furnaces; floating in this fire, carried about by the flames which emitted from them clouds of smoke, were falling on all sides, like sparks from a great fire; the cries of sorrow and despair were horrifying and awful. The devils were distinguished by the horrible and repulsive shapes of animals, terrifying and unknown, but transparent and black. This sight only lasted a moment, and without the help of our heavenly Mother, who had promised us in the first Apparition that she would take us to heaven, I think we should have died of horror.

The world, it is said, knows little of its greatest men. That may be true, but it may be capped by saying that the world is insufficiently acquainted with its most persevering liars. They and their work drops out of mind, otherwise the story we have been relating would never have been again told. But good lying, as we have so often insisted, is rare. It requires a delicacy of touch, a careful mixture of the possible and the actual, a modicum of wit which pleases as it dupes. But this romance of "Fatima" displays neither originality nor skill. It has been told over and over again, ever since the Christian Church created religious truth as something distinct from every-day veracity. These Fatima specimens represent the clumsy lies of the Christian era. They are the refuge of the unimaginative; the inartistic presentation of those who love to lie for the glory of God, but lack the skill to give their lies even a working aspect of originality.

The Roman Catholic Church in England is now demanding of the Government that their schools shall be maintained at the public expense, that the teachers shall be selected by Roman Catholics, that those so selected shall be satisfactorily Roman Catholic, and that the whole of the school life of children shall be saturated with Fatima-like stories that are neither artistically constructed nor convincingly told. "Fatima" serves as a good example of the quality of mind that will flourish under Roman Catholic influence. We wonder whether any Member of Parliament will have the courage to introduce a reference to this deliberate action of "the Great Lying Church," and the character of a Board of Education that is willing to play into its hands. Are we even justified in permitting it?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A BETTER TYPE OF GOD

"LET us make God in our image, after our likeness." It was Voltaire who said that God made man in his image and that man had been returning the compliment ever since. It is a forced compliment, for how else can man make him?

"No man hath seen God at any time." That is Holy Writ and not to be disputed. Still, holy men (and holy women) have said otherwise. Some of them have claimed to have seen God. There was Moses who spoke with God as a man to his friends and who saw his back parts; and hosts of others in visions and dreams and in asserted reality.

But you and I have not seen God. We are therefore thrown back on our imaginations. Or on other people's imaginations.

Enough of other people's imaginations! We have had one God, the God of the Old Testament, a jealous, revengeful, greedy, blood-drinking, Jew-loving, Canaanite-hating tribal Ancient. We have had another God of the Old Testament, a pedantic law-giver immersed in trifling ordinances, whose chief punishment for all crimes was Death. We have had yet another God of the Old Testament who cared nothing for animal blood and fat but for justice and mercy and humility—the splendid God of Micah. We have had the God of Jesus Christ; a two-faced God like the Roman god Janus, the loving Father and the inexorable Judicial Person dividing mankind into two rigid classes for eternal bliss or everlasting fire. Enough of all these!

Yes: enough of other people's imaginary gods. The God of stuffy, Dissenting conventicles, Sunday schools, "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," and pitiful, would-be smart epigrams stuck on "chapel" notice-boards for the edification of illiterate passers-by. Or the God of Italian-Catholic darkened confessional boxes, bad Latin, worse effigies, wax tapers, bread-and-wine worship and priest-craft. Or the careful, respectable God of the timidity of Anglicanism who likes a cross on the altar in one town and dislikes it in another; a God of overpaid Lord-Bishops and sweated, unhealthy curates; of Easter offerings and Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

Enough of all these!

Let you and me have our own God—a better than any of these. We could hardly have a worse, or one less worthy of worship, than the horrid conceptions of the orthodox. Let us make a god that is better than God.

We will not make to ourselves any graven image. For one thing, I have no skill in sculpture. Nor can I paint a god like Michel Angelo, whose Ancient of Days I find admirable. Besides, a graven image is forbidden by the Second Commandment. So is a likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. In any event, this last is too difficult. For I have no knowledge of celestial inhabitants (except by untrustworthy hearsay), little knowledge of zoology, and of oceanography my ignorance is abysmal.

Therefore I propose to create my god in no likeness except to my own thoughts. So shall I escape breaking that Second Commandment as well as the criticism of the likeness I make as being unlike its original.

To begin then. My god shall be as unlike man as possible; there are plenty of men already. Nor shall he be a conundrum like Three-in-One and One-in-Three. He shall not be an animal like the Golden Calf, the work of men's hands. He shall be the work of one man's brain. Nor shall he be a Ghost—if there are ghosts or spirits, I dislike them.

Let him be the Father, not of another God called the Son, but of all men, animals, vegetables, minerals, light, air, sea, land, sun, moon and stars, and all the universe or universes. Let him be the beneficent Force that makes life, and struggles against evil and death by the creation of new life. Let him be of such Majesty as to care nothing for prayer or praise or reverence or irreverence. Let him care for the lowliest worm, the poorest grass of the field, as

much as for myself, you, or the Pope, or the greatest saint. Let his compassion and forgiveness be infinite—we need that.

Above all things, let him not be bloody nor bloodthirsty. The earth is sick of blood. Let him not require the blood of Jesus nor the blood of animal nor man, even verbal blood or sacramental blood. Let him be incarnate in Beauty and Truth wherever those two elusive brides of the human spirit are to be found.

Let him be—I will not say Love, for the word is too redolent of hypocrisy—but an influence shedding peace and tranquillity upon the human spirit like the influence of the quiet stars, the blue vault of the firmament, and the summer sea that sleeps round the Isle of Capri. Let him be Myself and Not-Myself, My-Neighbour and Not-my-Neighbour. Let him be the Glory and Nobility and Sweetness that I have felt, all too rarely, in the experiences of life.

He shall not demand anything from me; how should he who has all, who needs nothing? He is too high and I too low for that. Not only should he be exempt from the puerilities of prayer and praise; he should know as I know that "Virtue is its own, and often its only, reward; and vice its own, and often its only, punishment." He should have no heaven and no hell, no Judgment, no angels (for what need has he of service?), and no devils (for what need has he of enemies other than the defects in his own universe and its created creatures?) He should be All.

But he cannot be All-Mighty—or things would not be as things are! He cannot, I fear, be all-knowing—or he would have known better than to make things so defective as things are! He may be omnipresent—although I am not sure that the role is necessary.

And what shall he, this god whom I have created, require of me? "To believe in him, to fear him and to love him?" Not at all. Too poor a thing is human belief, fear or love! "To love my neighbour as myself and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me." No. This is excellent, no doubt, but if a worm crosses the path of another worm shall the God of All the Suns and Stars weep? My petty actions shall be my own, like my petty words and thoughts. He shall not hold me to account, like a pettifogger with a debit and credit ledger.

Then what shall he require of me? Why, everything and nothing. He shall require no more and no less of me than he requires of the bindweed or the slowworm: to be myself as they are themselves. My god does not blame the tiger he made for not being a tame Angora rabbit. If a man makes a machine for punching holes in leather he does not expect it to fire howitzer shells. I see no reason why my god should not be as reasonable and sensible as myself. There have been too many utterly unreasonable and senseless gods hitherto. This is my god, after all, and I like originality in gods as in other quarters.

His name shall be Nobody and his greatest gift shall be Nothingness, which shall be bestowed on all his creation sooner or later. And what shall be the use of him? His use shall be to show how utterly inferior all other gods are—unless you can make me one as superior to him as he seems to be superior to every god I have ever heard, or read, of.

Is he a good god? He is, as Nietzsche wrote, "Beyond Good and Evil." For he created, and creates, both.

It took the God of the writer of the Book of Genesis a whole day, both the evening and the morning, to make a man out of nothing. And I have created a god out of nothing on Whit-Monday afternoon in the year 1943. How easy it is to create a god, and a better one at that! Do you wonder that so many gods have been created, are being created by their imaginative worshippers, and will be created as long as mankind exists to speculate and invent brain-phantoms?

Every man his own Deity! Yes: the most pious, devout and orthodox believer, whether Roman, Anglican, Unitarian or other,

whether Christian, Jew, Mussulman, Brahman or other, does not worship an objective but a subjective God. Let him keep as strictly to his formularies about his god as he can—and yet his God is different from his fellow-devotees! Not one single man worships the same God as his neighbour: how can he? We think of the unknown God, and no two men think exactly alike about anything.

My god of a Whit-Monday afternoon is as attractive and divine as the God of your Church and your lifetime. In fact, if there be a real God, while I do not presume to suggest he is mine, I do suggest that he may be more nearly like mine than like the eccentric and grotesque ogres that the various Churches provide for us. What a Chamber of Horrors could be made out of these extraordinary gods, and what a dishonour and blasphemy they are of even that poor picture of god which an ordinary modern mind can invent in a leisured afternoon.

C. G. L. DU CANN.

A TORCHBEARER OF SCIENCE

The Life of Marie Curie, the Discoverer of Radium

“Look for the clear light of Truth,
Look for unknown roads,
Leave the dreams of yesterday;
Take the torch of knowledge
And build the palace of the future.”

THIS was Marie Curie's creed at the age of 17 when she was earning her living as a governess at a salary of 11s. a week in Poland, her native country. She spoke German, French, Russian and English.

She wrote then: “I am reading Daniel's ‘Physics,’ Herbert Spencer's ‘Sociology’ in French, Paul Ber's ‘Anatomy’ in Russian.”

This was in 1884, when she was teaching the children of a Polish aristocrat. She refers to the yeasting of love which comes to most maidens in their teens, thus:—

“People say I am obliged to pass through a fever called love. This absolutely does not enter into my plans; if ever I had such ideas I have buried them, locked them up, sealed and forgotten them.”

But such is human nature, even in a “Positivist Idealist” (for such Marie called herself), that she soon foreswore herself. The son of her aristocratic employer fell in love with Marie and she returned his affection. This caused a check to Marie's scholastic profession, for “The father of the young man was enraged . . . the mother almost fainted.”

“What! Their son to marry this governess who had not a penny, and had to teach in other people's homes! Had their son gone mad? One does not marry a governess!”

So poor Marie's first love romance was a “fade out” and she had to leave.

To her sister she says: “If one could only say with Christian resignation ‘God has willed it! His will be done.’ Alas, that consolation is not for everybody, and strangely, the more I recognise how lucky they are, the less I understand their faith. I respect religious feelings when I meet them, even if they are often held by people with a limited mentality.”

Marie at this early age had drifted from her anchorage, the faith of Catholicism, in which she was brought up, and declared herself a Freethinking Positivist.

After six years in the occupation of a governess, during which she had spent half her meagre salary of 11s. a week towards her sister's studies in Paris—this sister married a Parisian doctor—and with her help and the slender savings Marie had accumulated, she left Warsaw for the French capital to study Physics.

For economy she travelled fourth class, which was a kind of freight car with no compartments. In fact, passengers took their own seats. So, accompanied by a mattress, bedclothes, sheets, towels in a wooden trunk and with a folding chair and food for three days' travelling, Marie left on her great adventure to Paris.

Marie decided to live in the Latin Quarter, the home of poor students. Her income was only three francs a day (2s. 6d.), out of which she had to find lodgings, food, clothes and fees at the University. After diligent search she found an attic, a single room six storeys high, looking over the roofs of Paris, rent 5s. weekly. She was not the only poor student, for most of her Polish comrades were as poor as she was, and they usually lived three or four together.

But Marie was too fond of tranquillity to live with others—too haunted with work. Her “home” was a tiny nook, lit from a loop hole; there was no heat, no lighting, no water. There with the mattress, a small folding iron bedstead, a three-legged stove, a table, a wash-basin, a pitcher to fetch and hold water, a knife, fork and spoon, stewpan, three glasses, a kettle, her folding chair and her bulging brown trunk, which served both as a wardrobe and as an extra seat, she lived and worked.

She bought her coal-slack from a merchant and carried it in a bucket up the six flights of stairs. She had but one frock—black and patched. To save light and coal she used to study in a public library.

Marie hardly ever entered a butcher's shop: meat was too expensive.

Here for four long years she lived—half-starved, half-clothed; there were unforeseen accidents, little illnesses. The one pair of shoes with leaky soles finally gave out and the purchase of a new pair became necessary. This meant a strained budget for weeks and the “enormous” expense had to be found by lessened meals and heat.

In winter the attic was icy. It was so cold that Marie shivered and chattered and lost sleep. She opened her trunk and gathered all the garments she possessed. She put on what she could and, having slipped into her narrow bed, piled the rest on the simple coverlet. It was still too cold, so Marie pulled the folding chair to her and piled it on the bed, which gave some illusion of weight and heat. Meanwhile, a layer of ice was slowly forming in the water pitcher. But Marie was not dismayed, her ambition had been realised—she was a student of Physics at the Paris University.

It was Rontgen's discovery of X-rays and Becquerel's experiments with Uranium that led Marie Curie to the discovery of Radium. She and Pierre Curie, whom she afterwards married, came to the conclusion that the rays emitted were not caused by exposure to the sun, but that they persisted independently—and to this, they gave the name of “radio-activity.”

The more Marie penetrated into the study of Uranium rays the more they seemed without precedent; nothing affected them; despite their feeble power they possessed an extraordinary individuality.

Faced with this mystery Marie felt the truth was, that this radiation was atomic, her mind suggesting it was a separate element from Uranium. She began to search for it elsewhere.

The problem was to prove this as a new element by isolating it, and in 1898 Marie Curie announced “the probable presence of this element in pitch-blende ores.” This was her “conception” of Radium.

For years, with her husband's help, she pursued this quest. On December 26, 1898, she announced in “The Proceedings of the Academy of Science”: “The various reasons we have enumerated lead us to believe that the new radio-active substance contains a new element, to which we propose to give the name ‘Radium.’”

A scientist writes:—

"Behind the Pantheon, in a narrow, dark and deserted street, between black and fissured houses, beside a trembling pavement, through a miserable enclosure which had endured the worst insults of time—in a soggy blind alley, where a twisted tree was dying in a corner—I found Marie Curie's shed: the floor was of rugged, beaten earth, the walls of ruined plaster, the ceiling of shaky laths and the light came weakly through dark windows. It was cold; drops of water were falling. There was a deep, melancholy silence. Even the echoes of Paris itself neglected its poverties."

Yet here Marie Curie laboured for long years, first by herself, then with comrade husband, and again alone when death had made him only a memory.

Yes, alone! Indifferent to poverty, with slowly increasing pain born of the very element she discovered. Peerless Marie Curie! Marie wrote:—

"We had no money, no laboratory, no help in the conduct of this difficult task. It was like creating something out of nothing. Yet in this miserable old shed the happiest days of our lives were spent entirely consecrated to work. Sometimes I spent a whole day stirring a boiling with a rod nearly as tall as myself; at night-time I was broken with fatigue."

Here, Marie Curie daily toiled, dressed in her old dust-covered and acid-stained smock, her hair blown by the wind, surrounded by smoke which stung eyes and throat.

Days became months, months years!—the pitch-blende defended its secrets stubbornly—but the work held and fascinated her.

"We lived in our single preoccupation as if in a dream." Of her husband during this fever of work she writes: "I have the best husband one could dream of—he is a gift from heaven. The more we are together the more we love each other."

(Continued on page 318)

ADVERTISING GOD

DOES advertising pay? One London vicar certainly thinks it does. He told a meeting of the Publicity Club recently "that it was certain if Christ were alive to-day, He would make use of every facility that our generation offered."

The vicar further implied that, although the Church has not hitherto resorted to commercial advertising, it was not too late to start now.

Certainly, advertising Christianity is no new thing. Even without the pulpit, it has been publicised in a score of different ways since its inception; and if the actual voice of Christ himself reached no further than the narrow limits of Palestine, his successors ensured that his dogmas should for centuries stupify the minds of men.

It is doubtful, however, whether the Son of God would become a super-salesman even in the 20th century. If he remained true to his perverted teachings, surely he would at least scorn the services of the money-changers. From what little account of him we have, he did not seem anxious to purchase publicity, nor apparently did he deliberately seek it.

That practice was left to his faithful successors who, by their ludicrous efforts, past and present, have done more for the cause of Freethought than they have for their own.

In these enlightened times even the most simple of folk tend to be sceptical of advertisements. Possibly because they have been "caught" too often. Christian advertising might well suffer the same fate.

But it would seem strange anyway that a creed which has held, for the most part, supreme sway for 19 centuries, should alter all that time be forced to advertise for recruits. One would imagine that if the creed were tenable it could by now be nothing but universal.

It would be amusing to speculate on the different types of advertising the Church might use. And the media. Would they

use "The Times" or the "Daily Worker"? Both offer some chance of success. And how would they word the advertisements? "Come back to Church, and God will end the war"?

Christian advertising would, no doubt, be very acceptable to some of our newspapers. Not only would they catch the pennies of the devout, and increase their circulation by playing upon the credulity of the superstitious, but they would be paid for doing it into the bargain. The only drawback is that the newspapers might well become involved in a nation-wide controversy, and eventually lose more readers than they would gain. Even the worthy vicar admitted that only 10 per cent. of the population are members of a religious body.

No! It is unlikely that the Churches would entertain such a scheme. The vicar must restrict his ideas to his Parish Magazine. Such schemes have been tried before. The results were most unsatisfactory.

The Christians will have to produce a more saleable commodity for advertising to be effective. As it is, the readers are inclined to feel that they have been "had." Even Christ himself seemed doubtful of his own wares when he said, after performing a miracle: "Tell no man what you have seen."

A. NICHOLLS.

ACID DROPS

A SERVICE plane, as reported in the newspapers of July 22, caught fire while in the air. The burning plane fell close to a motor-car, and two elderly ladies were burned to death. The pilot of the plane gave evidence at a Coroner's inquest that before baling out he "trimmed" the plane so that it would fall into the sea and "prayed to God that it would land there," realising the danger if it fell in a town or near people. That prayer was earnest enough, but God—? Well, he was probably interested in listening to the plans for children being taught the value of prayer before they left school. And the clergy will not cite this case as evidence of the love of God for his people.

The Dean of Carlisle says: "The time is coming when there will be a need for larger churches." That is what we call optimism—which may be defined as feeling certain that something will happen which one knows will not occur. After all, one may keep a people ignorant of the truth, but—short of an operation on the Hitler plan—by what plan can men and women forget a truth they have seen?

We suppose the Archbishop of Canterbury means something when he told the Canterbury Diocesan Conference that the first step towards complete unity, of Christians, was for all Christians to join together. To one who has not received a call from God, it seems that if Christians join together unity has been achieved. But the real task before the Churches is how to turn the social clock back so that people will forget what they have learned.

Meanwhile we have to thank a Glasgow paper for the information that the Church of Scotland's "Life and Work" is advising ministers not to speak of their churches as "half-empty," but to refer to them as being "half-full." These Scotch preachers know their fellows, and also the kind of intelligence they are most likely to attract.

Bishop Barnes says the clergy must be prepared to lead or the Church will be swept away. But the clergy are prepared to lead. Their trouble arises from the fact that the people are not so ready to follow.

Doctor Temple says there has been an "alarming collapse in respect of honesty and sex morality." Of course, most of this kind of talk is just bunkum, but if it were true it would be evidence that the type Christian training has produced is not a very durable type.

Says the Vicar of Grosmount, Yorks., "Religion is well-nigh dead in the Church of England. Those of us in the rank and file of the ministry . . . know this." But, of course, not many of the clergy would admit a truth of this kind.

Mr. Stanley James, of the "Catholic Herald," says that a great film could be made out of the life of St. Paul. We agree; so could a life of any of the disciples and also of the life of Jesus. The film could show us Jesus walking on the water, causing a blind man to see, raising another from the dead, feeding a large body of people with a loaf and a few fishes, and more food being on hand at the finish than there was when the play began. The technique of the film could do all these things—and nothing else could. And, subconsciously, the audience would, if they were Christians, or semi-Christians, feel that they had been given absolute proof of the New Testament mythology. Roman Catholics, one may well assume, feel that way when they attend a special church service. The film could be very valuable to all the Churches. And the evidence of the movies would be conclusive.

The question of what was involved in God forbidding Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge has been generally accepted as a purely sexual offence. The Roman Catholic "Universe," in its issue for July 25, puts an authoritative condemnation. It says that to give such an explanation is blasphemy. "The exercise of the sex act was not the original sin." It was "some act of disobedience." That looks as though we must fall back on the explanation that God reserved that particular apple tree for his own use. Many ordinary growers have acted in a similar manner. But we are glad to have this question settled. It is very important.

A rather interesting piece of information is given by a writer in the "Observer" for July 25. He states that in the Barnsley area, out of about 700 boys who leave the elementary schools and go to work, about a third go to the pits. On the other hand, of the hundred that leave a grammar school only about three go down the pits. "They are usually the sons of mine officials," who look for a career of posts as mine managers. The difference is clearly not due to difference in ability. It is one of status. Of course, there must be more working miners than managers, but there is no satisfactory reason why the proportions should be as they are.

The War Damage Commission reports that 13,895 churches, monasteries, convents, and other ecclesiastical buildings in Great Britain have been destroyed or damaged by enemy bombing in Great Britain. Taking the number of buildings as a whole, we would say that this is more than a fair proportion of the damage done by bombing. God is very remiss in his behaviour towards buildings that are specially designed to do him honour and to prove that he is "Lord of all."

It is somewhat difficult for even a man like C. S. Lewis, who was, on his own confession, once an Atheist—until he was about 14 years of age—not to get a truth in sometimes, although other Christians are fairly certain to object. Thus, Mr. Lewis denies that anything in the Bible was fiction. Fr. Beck, on the other hand, did not welcome the statement; and yet books such as the Bible are not *written* as fiction, but as solid truth, and Mr. Lewis goes the whole hog, just as though he belonged to a period of about 3,000 years ago. His opponents, more wary, know that the time has passed when the teaching of the Bible can be held to be nothing but the truth; it is symbolism, or something of that kind. The intellect of Mr. Lewis runs to the more primitive type. It is indeed a contest between artful modernists and undeveloped primitives.

The "Universe" accepts the bombing of the sacred city of Rome as a necessary measure. But what the "Universe" does not explain is why some Roman Catholic miracle did not happen to protect religious buildings from the bombing of the R.A.F. What a chance God missed. It would have been the finest advertisement the Church has had for centuries. God did not rise to his opportunities. He has let down his Church.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham says of the proposed Education Bill that Catholics "welcome every advance in education." Of course they do, but it must be Roman Catholic education; and what that is in practice readers of this paragraph

will see when they read the story of Fatima—in "Views and Opinions" in this issue. When a Church sanctions the circulation of this monstrous story, and its highest ministers declare its truth, it may well be asked whether such a Church ought to be tolerated in a modern State.

The Rector of Hawarden Church—once associated with the Gladstone family—is disturbed at noting the number of brides who come to church to have the secular ceremony of marriage mixed up with a religious service, which has no legal significance at all. The rector says: "It is an insult to God while the bride openly proclaims that she puts more trust in the horseshoe superstition than in the prayers of the Church." But what of all the other things that take place in the church: the sprinkling of holy water, the prayers for rain, or fine weather, and a dozen other things, not forgetting days of penitence? Are they more sensible than a horseshoe?

We offer the rector a fair chance of testing the matter. Instead of the stereotyped reminders to God that he might manage things a little better than he does, let us have a parade, or a few parades, of horseshoe carriers. Then tot up the results? We undertake to prove that the aforesaid procession of horseshoes brings as many results as any church ceremony.

The Vatican is anxious that a stricter censorship over the publication of books should be exerted. We are not surprised. The aim of the Papacy is to restore, so far as is possible, the dear days which Chesterton called "the golden age," when anyone who published a book without having secured the sanction of the Church might find himself brought before the Inquisition charged with heresy. At present the Church has to be content with placing a book on the Index and forbidding the faithful to read it without receiving priestly permission. This is a quite logical decision. The Pope is God's mouthpiece on earth. It is his chief job to see that people believe the right doctrine, and what more certain way of perpetuating is there than to see that the people never get hold of the truth?

According to the "Sunday Mail," 14 British seamen were adrift on a raft. The raft floated for ten days, and eight of the men died one after another. Only two survived—picked up by a ship belonging to the U.S.A. The survivors are reported as saying: "We thank the good Lord for his *mercy*." We italicise "mercy," but if one wanted an example of the degrading influence of religion it is surely to be found in the comment of the two survivors. We do not believe for a moment that the men felt all that the expression attributed to them expressed their real feelings. Human nature is seldom as bad as our Christian guides would have us believe. Men may sink very low, but not many would sink as low as the sentiment would indicate.

The Bishop of Chelmsford has fallen into hot water for pointing out that only a very small percentage go to church or are interested in religion. In the "Daily Telegraph" he replies by saying that there is "a world-wide ebbing of the tide of faith," and he points out that "soldiers from the United States constantly express surprise at the large number of people who go to church in this country." In that case the number must be very small indeed, because the Bishop has placed the number of church-goers at 50 per cent. of the population.

But the Bishop of Chelmsford is correct. The decay of religion is a world-wide phenomenon. There is not 10 per cent. of the clergy themselves who believe in the Christianity of the New Testament or the Christianity of the creeds. They repeat the words, but transform their meaning. When they talk of heaven and hell they explain they mean, not places, but states of mind. When they talk of the virgin birth they mean an ordinary birth, not a miraculous one. When they talk of "God's help," they mean that God will not help us unless we are able to do the thing in hand without his help. Honesty would say that when the meaning of a doctrine is altered the doctrine itself has ceased to exist. But the clergy say no—at least not so long as the salary and the social status remain the same.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. SHARPLES.—We hope that you will keep up the fight against the intolerant decision of your local Council. Pleased to hear of good work being done by Mr. Shortt and Mr. Clayton.

H. RILEY.—Sorry to have missed you when you were in London. Pleased you find the Bible Handbook so useful. It has taught many Christians really to read the Bible with sense and understanding. The ninth edition is being sold even more rapidly than previous editions. Our friends with the Forces find it very handy, and the poor padres very disconcerting.

For "THE FREETHINKER."—N. V. Beaman, 5s.

S. P. W.—We share your appreciation of that great Freethinker, Anatole France. The "Garden of Epicurus" is full of good things. His style is French at its best, and his humanism is of the purest kind.

C. N. W.—We were sorry to return your article, but it was far too lengthy for our restricted space. As a rule articles sent should not exceed two columns. When the subject cannot be reduced to that length, a little skill would convert one article into two, distinct and yet related. We have to work under very trying conditions.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—The General Secretary of the N.S.S. acknowledges a donation of £5 from Mr. William Nelson to the Benevolent Fund of the Society.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY of the N.S.S. acknowledges the receipt of postal orders amounting to £2. No name or address of the sender was given, but the money has been allocated according to instructions.

A. HEPWORTH.—Book sent, and thanks for cuttings.

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

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

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, 17s.; half-year, 8s. 6d.; three months, 4s. 4d.

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

SUGAR PLUMS

We may clear up what we may call a domestic matter, lest falsity take the place of fact. Recently Mr. Cohen took a few days' holiday—the first since the opening of the war. While away he fell down and the shock led to a heart attack. Result, two days in bed, and then he was once more in fighting form. We hope this will clear up any mystery that exists, and allay any fears on the part of our friends. The Editor is quite well, in fighting form and has made the usual promise to be careful, etc.

One of our readers sends us, without causing surprise, an account of how things work out in the Armed Forces. A kind of Brains Trust was brought into existence and our correspondent was invited to take part. He accepted the invitation, and in answer to some questions he answered them as an educated Freethinker would. The audience, he says, were interested and delighted in the replies, but those responsible were not, and he was very soon dropped. The B.B.C. gets over this kind of difficulty by having most of their spontaneous replies rehearsed beforehand. Our correspondent says he was not surprised at the result, because the padre selected the "Brains Trust," and clergymen do not make that kind of mistake twice—with the same person.

Our correspondent goes on to say:—

"I have insisted on my rights as an Atheist since joining the Service, and if other Atheists did likewise it would lessen the burden carried by those of us who heartily declare what we are when called to the Forces. . . . "The Freethinker" has indeed stood me in good stead in this work. I can never thank you enough in the work you and the staff of your good paper do to make issues clear to your readers."

We notice an excellent letter in the "Spectator" from Mr. Anthony Philip Kiely on the question of religion in the schools. He concludes that "if we are to continue religious teaching in the schools let it be on a comparative basis, not a sectarian or solely Christian. . . . For the preservation of a democratic society the development of a critical attitude among young people seems to me to be absolutely essential." That is good common sense, but it is not for the creation of an informed critical mind that the Churches, and those responsible for the religious parts of the coming Education Bill, are working. They want pupils to leave school sufficiently dulled in intellect to accept established religious beliefs. It is time that both the State and the State schools cut themselves adrift from the policy of forcing religious doctrines on children.

We recently noted the statement of Mr. Horsfall, of the Manchester Teachers' Association, that the proportion of children from the Courts as "delinquents" was smallest among children from Council schools, much larger among those trained in Church schools, and considerably larger with children from Roman Catholic schools. Canon Peter Green suggested that the explanation with regard to Church schools is that in poor districts the schools were almost exclusively Church schools. Mr. Horsfall goes back to the facts and finds that in poor districts Council schools are in the majority. So much for the Canon's apology. The "moral" influence of schools is lowest where the religion is most pronounced. But this will not prevent our Government giving the Churches greater power in its new educational programme.

The Blackburn Branch N.S.S. applied to the local authorities for permission to hold a Freethought meeting in the Corporation Park. Religious meetings are held there, and a sense of justice would have secured what was asked. But we are a democratic people, we believe in the equality of citizens and in freedom of speech. Still, the minority of the people in this country are Christians, and the local gods who control affairs decided that Christians would not like to have Freethought speeches in the park, and the right of non-Christian lecturers was set aside. The branch of the N.S.S. is determined to keep up the fight. They should have the support of those who have a real desire to secure fair play for all.

We notice that some letters are appearing in the local press on the matter. The copy of the "Northern Daily Telegraph" that lies before us contains two letters on the subject—both by clergymen. Both of these parsons claim that "Blackburn is still officially a Christian town." But that is not true. It is a town in which there resides a large number of Christians, and that is a very different proposition. That there are a majority of Christians on the Town Council is obvious. The denial of equal freedom of speech is good evidence of that. In any case, a sense of justice would have led the Council to give equal freedom for all. These little Hitlers should be taught a lesson.

The "Moscow News," published in London, in its issue for July 17 gave an interesting account of an exhibition held in Moscow in honour of Charles Darwin. Special tributes were paid to "Our Darwinists," that is, those who did so much during Czarist days, and to those who had done so much since the revolution to popularise and extend evolutionary knowledge. The notice adds that as a consequence of the close study of Darwinism and subsequent evolutionary theories, particularly important work has been done in achieving higher yields in agriculture. We expect that such an exhibition in London to-day would raise a great many protests by our Christian primitives.

UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR'S GREAT VICTORY

(A few weeks ago we wrote an article concerning the heresy hunt in New South Wales arising from a statement concerning religious instruction. Since then we have received a fuller account of the matter from a correspondent, and we feel it will be appreciated by our readers.)

IN Sydney (New South Wales)—and, in a slightly lesser degree throughout the whole of Australia—the forces of enlightenment and the forces of superstition have been in violent conflict for the past month.

The ignition spark was the following report, published in the April 2 issue of Sydney's most conservative paper, "The Herald":—

"To talk about religion in education was like talking about snakes in Iceland—they had nothing in common, said the Professor of Philosophy at Sydney University, Professor John Anderson, in an address to the New Educational Fellowship last night. Education was concerned with development, inquiry and investigation, said Professor Anderson. Religion was concerned with the limitation of inquiry, and put up a notice, 'Here inquiry must stop. This is not to be examined.' In so far as a child accepted religious instruction, his education was limited, his powers of inquiry reduced. If religion were to be taught in schools, it should be taught in a secular manner, and divorced from all notions of sacred authority. The proper approach would be to teach religion as literature, and put the Gospels forward as a series of stories of a folk-lore character. It should not be necessary for teachers who taught religion to believe in what they taught. Teachers would be well advised to keep the clergy out of the schools. To have people not members of the teaching profession coming into schools and professing to give special instruction in these matters should be resented by teachers, said Professor Anderson."

Then began, the very next day (April 3), the hue and cry.

Among the first to lead off was Mr. Cahill (N.S.W. Minister for Works), who declared that "the professor's views were alien to the minds of this and former generations," and that he would use his influence "to ensure that this man, holding a position in a State-subsidised University, is not allowed to affront public opinion."

These very soon found collective expression in the N.S.W. Parliament—first in a resolution in the Legislative Assembly (April 6), and then, two days later, in a vote confirmatory of the resolution in the Legislative Council. The resolution—directing the attention of the Senate of the University to Professor Anderson's publicly-expressed views, and declaring that these were "calculated to undermine the principles which constituted a Christian State"—was frankly stated to be a demand for his dismissal.

In the Assembly the resolution was passed without a single dissenting, protesting voice.

The fact of the matter is that it is impossible to believe that the members of the Assembly are, mentally, the utter backwash that the resolution represents them to be. All the more so is this the case in the light of the statement that at least one of those who shared in the unanimous vote was until a few years ago a member of the N.S.W. Rationalist Association. Rather is the explanation to be found—an explanation which, if possible, is even more to their discredit—in the fear of losing some of the votes that had given them their seats. In other words, their attitude to the professor was shaped by the cowardly terror in which they stood of the Church-ridden sections in their respective electorates. Thus, brushing aside the rights of a man to free, individual expression, they did not shrink from revealing themselves as abject panderers for votes—as Parliamentary trucklers whose souls soared no higher than a ballot-box.

In the Legislative Council—a body not elected by popular vote—the resolution fared very differently. The voting was: For, 22; against, 15. Some of the dissentients, too, frankly expressed themselves in protesting against the attempt to suppress the professor to the extent of having him dismissed from the University.

Foremost among these was Sir Norman Kater, who declared that the whole thing savoured of a heresy hunt in the Middle Ages. "In this enlightened age," he said, "the rack and the thumbscrew have disappeared; but individuals are made to suffer mental torture because their ideas may seem to be somewhat heterodox." He agreed with Professor Anderson that it was utterly wrong to seek to inculcate in a child as literal truths some of the statements in the Bible. For example, that the world was made in six days when, they now knew, this was a process dating back 50 or 100 million years. Sir Norman went on to point out to those denouncing Professor Anderson that many things which used to be regarded as heresy had since been proved to be scientific facts. "Galileo," he concluded, "was imprisoned for saying that the world went round the sun. Nobody would question this fact nowadays."

But on the whole there has been very wide support for Professor Anderson.

Prominent in this has been the "Sydney Telegraph," a morning paper with a daily circulation of from 250,000 to 300,000 copies. The courage shown by the "Telegraph" in opening its columns for a discussion of a religious character is unique in the history of Australian newspapers. Incidentally this is a most wholesome indication of the trend of present-day thought.

The "Telegraph" devoted several full-column leaders to the controversy. First of these, published on April 7, the day after the matter had been brought up in the Legislative Assembly, was derisively headed "A Witch Hunt in A.D. 1943." In all its editorials the "Telegraph" strongly pressed the case for Professor Anderson. In addition, for the better part of three weeks, it published pages and pages bearing on the matter: letters by correspondents, for and against; articles by the professor himself and articles by Catholic prelates; and the views of professors in other States, notably Dr. Duhig (Brisbane, Queensland).

Except in very rare instances there was no attempt on the part of the professor's opponents to reply to the charges made by him with regard to the Bible. All that was sought was to have him removed from his position. The reason advanced for this was that he had no right to publicly express himself because of his professorship at the University.

Devastating was the reply to these critics by the writer of the following letter:—

"Would there have been this outcry against Professor Anderson if he had spoken in favour of religion? Certainly not. The outcry is wholly because he attacked religion. That being so, is it not a case of religious persecution—naked and unashamed? It is entirely beside the point to bring in the matter of his being a professor at the University. Is not a professor, outside the University, free to express his sincerely held convictions? Unless he is, he must be deemed to be deprived of his freedom. Is not this suppression—outrageous and intolerable?"

"Plainly the cry that the objection is to Professor Anderson publicly expressing himself regarding religion, for the reason that he holds a position at the University, is merely a screen to silence him by fanatics and bigots because of his anti-religious views.

"Sir Henry Manning says that the University was formed for the advancement of Christianity. Well, what if it was? This should not be a bar to Professor Anderson, in his

capacity as a citizen, publicly repudiating what he personally conceives to be the incongruities and absurdities of the Bible. I would have thought the purpose of the University was the promotion of true knowledge, and that it would have been quite sufficient to compel a professor, within the University, to withhold the teachings he might impart to those he is supposed to lead, without seeking to force the same professor, outside the University, to withhold his views from the public generally."

Gratifying it is to note, too, that Professor Anderson had the enthusiastic support of all the societies associated with the University, and that on May 1 there appeared the announcement that, the previous day, twenty professors of the University had signed a statement affirming that University teachers have the same liberty of free expression as other citizens.

Finally, in this report, published to-day (May 4), is revealed a complete victory for the professor:—

"Sydney University's decision yesterday is understood to support Professor John Anderson's right to say what he thinks. After the Senate's two-hour meeting in camera, the Chancellor (Sir Charles Blackburn) said the decision would be sent to the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. Following the meeting, individual members of the Senate said they had promised not to disclose anything regarding the proceedings; but it is known that the Senate's decision is emphatic on freedom of speech, and that the voting was practically unanimous."

What a squelcher, above all, for the N.S.W. Parliament!

All that remains to be added is that Professor Anderson has long been widely admired for his great moral courage, and that his experience in the present instance might well prove a stimulus to others, in tutorial and public positions generally, to similarly assert their rights to freedom of thought and speech.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

J. Y. ANDERONEY

THE NEED FOR TOLERANCE

THE Archbishop of Canterbury recently wrote an article on the love of good books, in which he gave his own preferences and dislikes. He also made some general remarks on literature, in which preference is so much a matter of personal taste. I am not concerned with the Archbishop's particular fancies, but one of his wider statements deserves attention. Dr. Temple said: "If I am to be entertained, I must enjoy the outlook of the author and the company of the people to whom he introduces me."

Keeping purely to the literary side for the moment, it is surely true to say that this is not the case with most readers of good literature. The sentence quoted has, in fact, already received a good deal of criticism from this angle. Most of Dickens' characters are enjoyable company, it must be admitted, but Uriah Heep, Scrooge and Mr. Squeers are as entertaining, I think, as many of the lovable ones. In "Candide," Freethinkers will revel in the sheer nonsense of Dr. Pangloss, and many Christians are great admirers of Shelley, though they differ in outlook from the poet! Can it be doubted that Iago is as entertaining as Othello himself? What of Shylock and Macbeth? There is no need to extend the list; the few that I have given should suffice to show that the Archbishop's words are not generally true. Undeniably they contain some truth, for our greatest "loves" in literature are most likely to be those with whom we are in sympathy.

Great art is, however, largely independent of creed, and we need not be Christians to admire St. Paul's Cathedral, nor pagans to delight in the Acropolis. The Atheist, Shelley, loved to sit in the quiet corner of a cathedral and read Dante; and

Shelley's lovely descriptions of continental churches are unsurpassed. Likewise, the French Atheist, Anatole France, was keenly appreciative of beauty, even in the form of a religious ceremony. Both these men were artists in the true sense of that word!

With intellectual works the case is different. Here it is the logic and the reasoning that are important—the art is secondary. Nevertheless, Dr. Temple's words are not wholly applicable even in this sphere of literature. Having reached a position of Atheism, one will, no doubt, find Freethought works most interesting. But a Freethinker does not confine himself to atheistical books! On the contrary, he reads many opinions differing from his own—and often with benefit. That fine Freethinker, Walter Savage Landor, speaking through the mouth of Diogenes, said: "The great man . . . must have an intellect which puts into motion the intellect of others," and that is the real philosophical Freethought position in this matter. Whether one agrees with the writer or not, a book is valuable in so far as it stimulates thought.

The Christian view, on the other hand, is distinguishable in Dr. Temple's remarks on literature. It is the stationary attitude, that the truth has been revealed, as distinct from the attitude of investigation, and it ultimately leads to stagnation. It is typically Christian to read only the works of sympathisers and to ignore the rest. This is, in fact, compulsory in the Roman Catholic Church, unless permission is given, and the intellectual type that it fosters is deplorable. The final truth has been reached in the "sacred" book and the "faithful" read little or nothing of any opposing case.

The need for Freethought is greater than ever it was. Throughout the world we see the disastrous results accruing from its curtailment. Mass emotionalism and mass training are everywhere in evidence, and individual thinking is dangerously rare. There is talk, of course, of new worlds after the war, but each religious or political creed is only concerned about a world in which its own teachings will hold sway.

The Freethinker presents no cut and dried solution to the problems facing mankind. He knows, however, the direction in which solution—if it is possible—will be reached. G. W. Foote and Charles Bradlaugh are now considered by many to be reactionary. Naturally, some of their ideas have been superseded, but one important lesson that they taught is very necessary at the present time. It is the value of individualism which has been so weakened in the welter of mass and class influence. The prevalent idea that a majority is justified in dictating to minorities, and even disposing of them on the grounds that "those who are not with us are against us," needs combating by all Freethinkers. The world is badly in need of advice such as Ingersoll gave in his "Liberty of Man, Woman and Child":

"What do I mean by liberty? By physical liberty I mean the right to do anything which does not interfere with the happiness of another. By intellectual liberty I mean the right to think right and the right to think wrong. Thought is the means by which we endeavour to arrive at truth. If we know the truth already we need not think."

Never was it more imperative that we should all argue and fight for the liberty of the individual in thought, speech and publication.

C. McCALL.

To some extent everywhere boycott is systematically applied to Freethought. Our party has to fight a terrible battle against great odds . . . the victory is still distant, but it is sure. All honour to the heroes who share in this stern combat, without plaudits, laurels or rewards.—G. W. FOOTE.

ODDITIES

SO far as is known, there are no two things on this planet exactly alike. There are very many "pairs" of things so much alike that the human eye cannot detect anything to choose between them, but the microscope reveals many little differences when they are compared one with the other.

It is the same with human beings, only more so; there is no perfect "pair"—perfect in the sense that they resemble each other in every possible way. Two children of the same parents and brought up in apparently precisely the same way, and under precisely the same conditions, are bound, when they grow to maturity, to be different to a greater or lesser extent. It is natural that this should be so; by the very nature of things none of us can be exactly like our brother or our sister, much less like our next-door neighbour. We may be cast in the same mould, so to speak, but even so we shall in time vary, little or much. It is that, the nature of things—in other words, the natural process of evolution—which makes us what we are and occasionally produces oddities: those non-human things and human beings which, for no apparent reason, differ so considerably from the majority of their kind—the dullard or the genius, for example.

We all know of someone—one of a big family not far away, maybe—who is, from our viewpoint, so unlike either of his parents or any of his sisters or brothers that we marvel at him. If he is misshapen bodily we possibly speculate as to what has happened and, as a rule, get nowhere. Obviously we cannot get anywhere, simply because we know nothing whatever of the biological process which has made him what he is—or, rather, we haven't seen it at work during the period of his formation from the embryonic stage. On the other hand, this boy or youth or man whom we have in mind may be of outstanding mental ability—a veritable genius and miles ahead of the rest of the family—and we are just as much at a loss to account for his unusual mental development. In our ignorance we write him down as an "oddy" and leave it at that.

But there is, of course, a particular cause and an explanation of all this—this physical form and content, at any rate—and science is getting down to it rapidly. In due course—probably very soon—there will be no "mystery" about it; the secret will be revealed. In the meantime, it is known that the historical background of each one of us is different from that of all those around and about us, and that our reactions to our environment and our deductions—our profit or loss—from what takes place within our ken varies in accordance with our likes and dislikes; in other words and especially: our mental and moral selves.

By way of example: something may happen to a boy, when he is young and very impressionable, that may alter the whole course of his life and cause him to develop along lines vastly different from the general lines followed by the other members of his family, or even the lines upon which he originally started. That "something" may be comparatively trivial in itself and with anyone else—anyone who had not his social background and outlook—it would be quite ineffective, if not pass almost unnoticed. But in his case—because of his sensitive nature and the quality of his mind—the effect was great and lasting. He responded to the event in his own peculiar way, and the memory of it remained with him constantly, affecting him mightily.

It is a matter of common knowledge that many men and women have been influenced in precisely the same way. That is to say, something has happened during the course of their lives which has caused them to turn either in this direction or that, for good or ill, and they have continued along the road which their own inclinations or fate, or whatever one may choose to call it, mapped out for them. In the case of human beings even so apparently trifling a thing as a book may do it. A book—or a

look for that matter—may so shape a person's life that henceforth he or she becomes, in a sense, an entirely different person. If the groundwork and the desire are there the response is almost a certainty; given suitable soil the seed is sure to grow.

And as with a person, so with a people: given the individual with sufficient cunning and determination, they can be diverted from their normal course, and sooner or later become oddities among the family of nations, and in the most unexpected way—unexpected, that is, except by those who understand the workings of the human mind and the signs of the times. We are just now witnessing a ghastly exhibition of this sort of thing. The whole world is in a turmoil and suffering excruciating agonies of both body and mind because one or two criminals persuaded themselves that they have the panacea for all the world's evils, and then persuaded others to take the same view. And because those others were conditioned by their recent experiences they followed readily. The whole affair had a trifling beginning, but the end. . . .

In short and speaking generally, none of us knows precisely what accounts for the appearance of an oddity. All we can do, if we are sufficiently interested, is to make deductions from known or ascertained facts. But what we do know, from recorded history and current affairs, is that once an oddity does appear on the scene he may be either a blessing or a curse to mankind.

GEO. B. LISSENDEN.

A TORCHBEARER OF SCIENCE—(continued from page 313)

In 1902, 45 months after Marie's announcement of the probable existence of Radium, Marie succeeded in preparing a decigramme of pure Radium; its atomic weight was 225. A decigramme is only 1-300th of an ounce. Not the weight of an apple pip, and yet eight years of constant labour were employed in isolating it.

The incredulous chemists could only bow before the facts—before the superhuman efforts of a woman. Radium officially existed!

Prodigious Radium! Purified as chloride, it appears to be a dull white powder which easily might be mistaken for common kitchen salt, but its properties seem incredulous. Its radiation passes all expectation in intensity, two million times stronger than Uranium.

Science has analysed and dissected it, subdividing its rays into three different kinds which traverse the hardest and most opaque matter, and only a thick screen of lead is able to stop the rays in their invisible flight.

Radium has its ghost! It spontaneously produces a singular gaseous substance—the "Emanation of Radium," which was also active and displayed itself clearly when enclosed in a glass tube. Its presence is proved in the waters of some thermal springs.

Radium spontaneously gives off heat: in one hour it produces sufficient heat to melt its own weight of ice. The diamond is phosphorescent by the action of Radium, and can be so distinguished from paste and other imitations. If protected against external cold it grows warmer and its temperature will rise as much as 10deg. Centigrade above the surrounding atmosphere. It is luminous; it makes an impression on photographic plates through black paper; it colours glass receivers with mauve and violet; it corrodes to powder paper or cotton-wool in which it is wrapped. The light emitted is strong enough to read by in darkness.

Radium is contagious like a persistent perfume or a disease. A plant, animal or person left near a tube of Radium acquires a notable "activity" which sensitive apparatus can detect.

This contagion was the daily enemy of Marie Curie, who wrote: "Special precautions must be taken—the various objects used

in a chemical laboratory all become radio-active in a short time. The dust, the air of the room, one's clothes all become radio-active. The air is a conductor. Radium's activity even after 30 years will still affect measuring apparatus. Radium contains dramas subjected to implacable fatality—it contains life and death."

The last and most moving miracle is that Radium is the friend of human health and happiness; it is the ally of humanity against dreadful diseases. By destroying diseased cells, Radium cures growths, tumours and certain forms of cancer.

The world of science work up! The discovery of Radium was a milestone in the progress of mankind. From all quarters of the world honours were showered upon Marie Curie. Twice the Nobel Prize was conferred upon her—an honour no other scientist has ever received. The universities of Europe and America piled degrees upon her name, the enumeration of which fill six closely-typed pages. Twice the Legion of Honour was offered and refused.

Her home and the old shed were shrines to which crowds of scientists, philosophers, research workers and journalists came from all ends of the earth.

The President of the French Republic waited upon her and suggested a visit from the King, which Marie declined. The French Parliament voted her an honorarium of 40,000 francs yearly.

Her fame was a tragedy to her! She says: "I would like to dig myself into the ground, away from it all." She suffered from the honours and publicity the world wanted to give her. Marie Curie did not know how to be famous. She had given all and wanted nothing, except to continue to serve.

Einstein, her only peer of science, when she died, said: "Marie Curie, of all celebrated beings, is the only one whom fame has not corrupted."

When the Nobel Trustees sent their rich cheque she did not even buy a "new hat."

But the insidious influence of the effect of the Radium rays on Marie's unprotected body gradually asserted itself; she weakened, her last too few years were full of pain, her naturally strong physique waned.

Marie Curie lived until 1934. Then on June 3, at dawn, when the sun had set the mountains aglow, when the full light filled the room, illumined the bed and reached the hollow cheeks and poor wasted body, her heart at last ceased to beat.

She was slain by the very gift which she gave humanity, the victims of the long accumulation of radiations. "Her rough hands, calloused, hardened, deeply burned by Radium—stretched out on the sheet—were still and fearfully motionless." Those eloquent hands that were the friends of mankind and whose untiring work will release future millions from pain and disease.

"She lay dead!—all in white, the premature white hair laying bare the high forehead—she was, even in death, the noblest and most beautiful thing on earth."

Without speeches or processions, without religious ceremony, without sounding litanies or swinging censers, Marie Curie took her place in the realm of the dead.

Marie Curie was a Freethinker! She rejected all the theological claims of religion; like Florence Nightingale, "The Lady with the Lamp," she was "outside Christianity."

Had she retained her Catholic Christianity, which she rejected in her youth, what pœans of praise would have been pulpitized from a million churches! what requiem masses would have been said to "save her soul"! She would have been canonised as a saint; her name would have been marketed by theologians as a glorious example of a Christian woman; her sacrifice exalted and her fame proclaimed with trumpets.

Marie Curie might have even been given a clearance of the pains of Purgatory by the Vicar of Rome.

But higher honours are hers, for through the ages to come her name and selfless sacrifice will be remembered and blessed

by countless sufferers healed by her priceless gift of Radium.

Remember her creed of life:—

"Look for the clear light of Truth
Look for the unknown roads,
Leave the dreams of yesterday;
Take the torch of knowledge
And build the Palace of the Future."

If you desire to know more of this illustrious woman scientist, read "The Life of Marie Curie," by her daughter, Eve Curie, from which much of this article is garnered.

H. J. HAYWARD.

(Reprinted)

CORRESPONDENCE

HONESTY AND MORALITY.

SIR,—The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the collapse of honesty and sex morality in the country at large. For two years in this war I worked in one of the largest pay offices in this country which dealt with Army pay and allowances to soldiers and their womenfolk; here one obtained a view of a very good cross-section of the community. Later on, as a costings investigator of the Ministry of Supply, I had access to the accounts and records of business firms and saw another cross-section at work on munitions. Now, as an official of an agricultural war executive, I am engaged in checking acreages of wheat and potatoes for the Government subsidy.

I have probably had as great an opportunity of sensing the honesty of "the man in the street" as the Archbishop has, and I am confident that over 95 per cent. of the country is pulling its weight. If it were not the country would not be in its present position; it is only a very small percentage, probably less than 5 per cent., which needs the Archbishop's advice.

The Army Pay Office has to deal with the problem of V.D. by stoppages of pay in connection with Court orders; these average about 21 cases for over 3,000 soldiers' accounts, which does not appear as if the country had completely lost its sense of morality.—Yours, etc.,

South Kilworth.

W. G. COATES.

[Owing to the holidays many letters are held over till next week.]

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

LONDON—OUTDOOR

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

West London Branch N.S.S. (Hyde Park).—Thursday, 7 p.m., Messrs. WOOD and PAGE; Sunday, 3 p.m., Mr. E. C. SAPHIN and supporting speakers.

COUNTRY—OUTDOOR

Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m. Mr. J. CLAYTON: A Lecture.

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Car Park, Broadway).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m. (if wet, Laycock's Cafe, Kirkgate): A Lecture.

Cliviger.—Thursday, August 12, 7-30 p.m. Mr. J. CLAYTON: A Lecture.

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (Mound).—Sunday, 7 p.m. Debate, "Problem of Evil": Messrs. F. SMITHIES and GORDON LIVINGSTONE, M.A.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Platt Fields).—Sunday, 3 p.m. Mr. W. A. ATKINSON: A Lecture.

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Bigg Market).—Sunday, 7 p.m. Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON.

Padiham (near Footbridge).—Sunday, 11-15 a.m. Mr. J. CLAYTON: A Lecture.

New PamphletBy
C. G. L. DU CANN**Will You Rise from the Dead?**An Enquiry into the Evidence of Resurrection
Price 6d. Postage 1d.**The Bible Handbook***For Freethinkers and Enquiring Christians*Edited by G. W. FOOTE AND W. P. BALL
Ninth Edition*The passages cited are arranged under headings—*BIBLE CONTRADICTIONS, BIBLE ATROCITIES
BIBLE IMMORALITIES, INDECENCIES AND
OBSCENITIES, BIBLE ABSURDITIES, UNFUL-
FILLED PROPHECIES AND BROKEN PROMISES.

Full references are given for every citation

*Tastefully bound in Cloth. There is no
war-time increase in price*

Price 2/6 Postage Twopence Halfpenny.

MATERIALISM RESTATED*With special chapters on "EMERGENCE" and
the "PROBLEM OF PERSONALITY"*

By CHAPMAN COHEN

"MATERIALISM RESTATED" is written by one who does not mistake obscurity for profundity or assertion for proof. It is a simple but complete statement of a position that is of first rate importance in its bearings on religious and scientific problems. It is a book that no Freethinker should miss and one which all intelligent Christians would be the better for the reading.

Price 4/6 Postage twopence halfpenny

PIONEER PRESS, 2 & 3, Furnival St., London E.C.4

Pamphlets for the People

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

What is the Use of Prayer?

Deity and Design.

Did Jesus Christ Exist.

Agnosticism or . . . ?

Atheism.

Thou Shalt not Suffer a Witch to Live.

Freethought and the Child.

Christianity and Slavery.

The Devil.

What is Freethought?

Must We Have a Religion?

Morality Without God

Price 2d. each. Postage 1d. each.

*Other Pamphlets in this series to be published shortly***GOD AND EVOLUTION**, by Chapman Cohen.
Price 6d.; postage 1d.**AN ATHEIST'S APPROACH TO CHRISTIANITY**,
A Survey of Positions, by Chapman Cohen.
Price 1s. 3d.; postage 1½d.**CHALLENGE TO RELIGION** (a re-issue of four lectures delivered in the Secular Hall, Leicester), by Chapman Cohen. Price 1s. 3d.; postage 1½d.**THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH**, by Chapman Cohen. Price 2s. 6d.; postage 3d.**PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN THOUGHT**, by Chapman Cohen. Price 2s.; postage 2d.**ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING**, by Chapman Cohen. First, second, third and fourth series. Price 2s. 6d. each; postage 2½d. The four volumes, 10s. post free.**A GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT**, by Chapman Cohen. An outline of the philosophy of Freethinking. Price 3s. 6d.; postage 4d.**THEISM OR ATHEISM**, by Chapman Cohen. Price 3s. 6d.; postage 2½d.**BRADLAUGH AND INGERSOLL**, by Chapman Cohen. Price 3s.; postage 3d.**THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH**, by Colonel Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1d.**ROME OR REASON? A Question for To-day**. By Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 4d.; by post 5d.**WHAT IS RELIGION?** by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1d.**THE BIBLE: WHAT IS IT WORTH?** By Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1d.**MISTAKES OF MOSES**, by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 3d.; postage 1d.**THE FAULTS AND FAILINGS OF JESUS CHRIST**, by C. G. L. Du Cann. Price 4d.; by post 5d.**THERE ARE NO CHRISTIANS**, by C. G. L. Du Cann. Price 4d.; postage 1d.**PAGANISM IN CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS**, by J. M. Wheeler. Price 1s. 6d.; postage 1½d.**FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST**, by J. M. Wheeler. Price 2s. 6d.; postage 2½d.**INFIDEL DEATHBEDS**. The last moments of famous Freethinkers. By G. W. Foote and A. D. McLaren. Price 2s.; postage 3d.**SHAKESPEARE AND OTHER ESSAYS**, by G. W. Foote. Price 2s.; postage 2½d.**THE MOTHER OF GOD**, by G. W. Foote. Price 3d.; by post 4d.**BIBLE ROMANCES**, by G. W. Foote. One of the finest Freethinking writers at his best. Price 2s. 6d.; postage 3d.**THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND THE MYTHICAL CHRIST**, by Gerald Massey. With Preface by Chapman Cohen. Price 6d.; postage 1d.**THE RUINS OR A SURVEY OF THE REVOLUTIONS OF EMPIRES**, to which is added **THE LAW OF NATURE**. By C. F. Volney. A Revision of the Translation of 1795, with an Introduction. Price, post free, 2s. 2d.**THE PIONEER PRESS**

2 & 3, Furnival St., Holborn, London, E.C.4