

THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXIII.—No. 37

Sunday, September 12, 1943

Price Threepence.

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

All Sorts of Freedom

WE are in the midst of a war for freedom. That claim is as wide as the war. Each of the Allies is fighting for freedom and, not to be out in the cold, Germany puts forward the plea that she is fighting for the freedom of the German State, and adds that the god of Germany desires the superiority of *his* people to be recognised by all. Russia and China are the only two nations in the war who manage to stand up without God, and the rest of the Allies do not think the better of them for it. And when the present war is ended it is within the possibilities that God's followers may fall out as to the kind of freedom that is to be established. God, it is certain, will not retire from the scene with the ending of the war, and the student of history will find food for reflection in the fact that every war is waged to secure freedom for someone. But for the moment we are, rightly, obsessed with the feeling that we must "down" Nazism—at least so far as it is represented by Germany, Italy and Japan.

Even if the war of guns and aeroplanes and submarines and ships were ended, really ended, there is another war that would commence—that *must* commence. This is the war of ideas, of intelligence against cunning, of personal merit against inherited privilege. That war began many, many ages ago, and it will be a bad day for humanity when it ends. Man is a fighting animal; he ranks high or low as he fights for higher or lower ends.

Meanwhile we may glance at one or two subjects that are worthy of attention because they point to fundamental things. First, the Government has promised us a new Education Bill. Considering that aims at giving the *Christian Churches*—others do not matter—a greater hold on the elementary schools than they have had for nearly three-quarters of a century; considering also that the Churches represent less than half the population, and that the Bill is put forward by a Government that has outlived the tenure of its appointment, the attempt to restore the power of the Churches over the schools is so fine an example of political trickery that it may be called "brazen," even for a gang of political adventurers. We advise all who can to read the Parliamentary Report of the speeches made in the House of Lords (Hansard, August 4 and 5). The claims of the Church of England and of the Roman Catholic Church are openly made. The speeches are notable both for those who backed the promised Bill, and also for those who *might* have spoken on behalf of justice and common sense.

The Fight for the Child

Mr. Butler, Minister for Education, has said that his aim is to see that every child is brought up in the religion of his parents. In that short sentence we have both a

fallacy and an untruth. The untruth comes first. The religion he is providing is, at most, a special branch, or special branches, of the Christian religion. There are no arrangements in his Bill to provide for others than the favoured branches of the Christian religion being taught. The falsehood is palpable.

But if he really believes that arrangements should be made to bring up children in the religion of their parents, then he is quite unfit to hold the post he does. For progress in religion, as in other things, depends upon children *not* following in the footsteps of their parents. If that were a universal rule the Christian religion could never have come into existence. And if it had achieved existence, the Roman Church to-day would be supreme. Progress is achieved, and the fitness for parenthood shown, when children depart from the beliefs of their parents, and depart from it as a consequence of the parental attitude towards children. The rule of Mr. Butler is a good Tory rule; it is a good religious rule, but in any other direction it is just damnable. Children do not honour their parents by carrying on the *ideas* of their parents, but by the degree to which as they grow they develop new ideas and new ideals. When we realise the new world we hear so much about, we hope we shall hear less of the duties of children to parents and more of the obligations of parents to children, and hear nothing at all of the stupid rule that children must inherit and practice the opinions of their forbears.

The "Church Times," in its issue for August 27, gives us a dose of theological humbug by saying:—

"We ask for parents that any parent may withdraw his child from the religious lesson, if he so wishes. But we also ask for freedom for other parents to have their children taught the faith which they themselves desire their children to be taught."

Will the "Church Times" advocate that Jews and Mohammedans and Buddhists and Quakers, with all the odds and ends of the religious, should have their children taught the religion of their parents? Or if they agree to this, what is to be done in the case of Freethinkers who have no objection to their children being taught religion provided it is taught from a scientific standpoint, and they are told about the origin of gods and goddesses and incarnate gods, the impossibility of miracles, etc. After all, non-Christians are citizens. What becomes of their citizen rights if the schools, as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the "Church Times" desire, becomes so saturated with Christianity that it is implied in all subjects taught in the schools? It would be a great thing, a marked cultural advance, if the history of religion could be taught as modern science describes it in its origin and developments and decay. But the people of this country—and others, with the exception of Russia—are not yet sufficiently civilised to bring this about. The religious arrangements of the Government Bill is one method of retarding that development.

Humbug rules in every civilised country where religion continues. It takes hold of the child at birth in a magical christening ceremony, it follows it through life with prayers and postulations; it persists until death—and with the Roman Church it carries its influence to the first stages of existence in a world that lies beyond the grave. This humbug penetrates into our Houses of Parliament, each of which has its professional praying machine; it robs children of their playgrounds on Sunday and adults of the use of museums, art galleries and theatrical performances—unless the theatrical show be given in a church with religious accompaniments. It is worth while in our speculations as to what the new world that is to follow the present one—after the war—will be like, to bear in mind the things named and others of the kind. Intellectually the Christian religion may be in a dying condition, but it is wisdom to bear in mind that it is still in a dominating position as an institution. And as a recognised institution, largely subsidised by the State, both by patronage and cash, it exercises power to a much greater extent than the ordinary citizen appreciates.

God and the Forces

Consider the question of religion in the armed forces, which has more points of application than most people picture. Last week we printed a protest by a London clergyman against the system of compulsory church parades in the armed forces. Here is another and later one, also from a clergyman, Rev. Denis Lant, also of London. The letter was in the "Daily Telegraph" for August 27. Mr. Lant says:—

"I am in touch with very many men in the Forces, but even the keenest Christians among them have no use for the compulsory church parade. Among some of the men there is a real approach to an informal, churchless, but vital Christianity. It is, however, being hindered by the "spit-and-polish" formal church parade. I have protested in vain."

It is worth noting that neither of these clergymen rest their protest against compulsory church parades on the practical denial of that liberty which politicians, from the Prime Minister downward, and the Archbishops down to curates, praise so highly. They are strong believers in the liberty of man, but not very deeply interested in either democracy or the fighting forces where liberty of opinion and expression are concerned, the most valuable of all liberties for which men may fight. But these confessions and complaints of the two clergymen give a very different view from such paid advocates as the B.B.C. Roving Padre. They tell us of the eagerness with which men listen to them, and the samples given bear adequate evidence that the ordinary soldier is a very simple-minded, uneducated, helpless sort of a person—when he is not fighting, and simple enough to run to the Padre when he fears his wife is not doing as she ought. That kind of soldier must get slaughtered before the war is over, for none of them appears to survive. The soldiers that do survive the war have many humorous stories to tell of their chaplains, and it is they who appear as clowns, not the men; they recollect some who were very "decent" fellows, and others whom they write down as humbogs. But the soldiers never ask for more chaplains.

Now there is something to be said on behalf of the authorities providing opportunities for people having

religious services—for those who require them. But there is no justification whatever for compulsory church parades, for men to be marched to church, marched into church, and afterwards marched home again. There should be, so long as services are provided, a mere notice exhibited where and when services are being held. But attendance should be purely voluntary, and non-attendance should not be followed by any form of punishment.

But, it will be said, the man who does not wish to go to church need not go. That is true, but it is a religious truth, and that is usually first cousin to a lie. For the soldier who raises no objection to being marched off to church, when he is marched back again, has the rest of the day to himself. But the man who, with a stricter sense of mental integrity and who is excused church attendance, must stay and peel potatoes, or scrub floors, or clean latrines, and finds himself with very little freedom on his "day of rest."

The fact is, we think, that in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, the Government and the superior officers in the army, cannot quite get over the ancient belief that the "common" soldier is not to be treated as responsible where freedom of movement during such times as they are not on duty are concerned. The need for privates to salute officers in the street, the cases cropping up when objection is raised to privates dining in the same hotel room as officers, and many other instances that might be noted, reveals how far we are from being a democracy in reality. The army in this way reflects the country, but it reflects it in some of its phases of which we have little cause for self-congratulation. There are some forms of freedom that even a state of war should not disturb.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

THE CONFESSIONS OF A MAN OF SCIENCE

THE autobiography of Dr. Havelock Ellis ("My Life," Heinemann, 1940) is a remarkably candid and unconventional record. He expressed anxiety that this posthumous revelation should appear in print precisely as he penned it, and his publishers assure us that its author's wishes have been strictly observed.

As he attached a powerful importance to the influences of heredity, Ellis devotes considerable attention to the pedigree of the families from which he directly or indirectly descended, while tracing the various peculiarities of his character to this or that ancestral strain. His appreciation for ecclesiastical architecture, as well as his inborn mystical proclivities, he ascribes to the several ministers of religion among his forbears, while his innate affection for ships and sea he attributes to his sailor ancestry.

At the age of 17 Ellis's mother was converted, "when she adopted a narrow and rigid creed," and remained a strict evangelical throughout her life. Havelock's father, Captain Ellis, outwardly observed all religious requirements on board ship, and when at home joined in his wife's devotions. Peace was thus assured, yet his son tells us: "In his last years, I learnt from what he once told me, he had quietly and spontaneously become definitely sceptical in matters of religion, but he was not sufficiently interested in these matters to obtrude his conclusions on those whom they might hurt." Otherwise religion troubled him not at all, and his death was perfectly serene.

Born in the memorable year 1859, which witnessed the publication of Mill's "Liberty," Darwin's "Origin," "Adam Bede," Fitzgerald's "Omar" and other celebrated works, as well as the beginning of the Suez Canal and the Red Cross, Havelock was ushered into the world amid a terrible hurricane, which may

perhaps help to explain that craving for solitude and shyness towards strangers which prevented his active participation in public life. Courageous enough intellectually, he evidently lacked physical courage. His highly strung temperament is revealed very clearly in his memoir, as is that of his wife, who appears, both in her acts and writings, as a sanguine and impulsive and, at last, completely unbalanced woman.

The youthful Ellis spent some time at sea on his father's vessel, and resided for some time in Australia, where his outlook on life underwent a profound change. Then, in preparation for what he regarded as the work of his life, which became the various volumes relating to sexual psychology, Ellis undertook a course of medical training at St. Thomas's Hospital, in London.

As a schoolboy, Ellis's reading slowly emancipated his mind from the thralldom of theology. "While still at school," he writes, "I had bought a cheap reprint of Renan's 'Life of Jesus.' It was probably the first 'infidel' book I ever read. I read it with considerable admiration, though still from the Christian point of view. . . . At the age of 16, when I left school and was about to accompany my father on his ship, I purchased with other books for the voyage a second-hand copy of Swinburne's 'Songs Before Sunrise,' and at the same time, or soon after reaching Sydney, the notorious 'Elements of Social Science' (by George Drysdale)." These works, with a devoutly treasured volume of Shelley, increased his scepticism.

As Ellis's medical studies were intended as a prelude to a literary career, in the eighties, he contributed articles to the "Fortnightly," "Contemporary" and other Reviews. At the age of 30 he published his maiden volume, "The New Spirit," which was succeeded by "The Criminal." In 1886 circumstances favoured the appearance of unexpurgated editions of the lesser-known Elizabethan dramatists. In that year Vizitelly published excellent versions in English of famous French novels, so Ellis proposed to him a series of Elizabethan classics. Vizitelly promptly accepted the suggestion and appointed Ellis editor of the new Mermaid Series. Ellis edited some of the dramatists himself, and Marlowe was one of his subjects. "In the appendix to the Marlowe volume with which the series opened, I printed for the first time in full from the original MS. in the British Museum, the scandalously blasphemous and immoral charges brought against Marlowe by an informer shortly before his death. I accepted the information as a crude and ignorant version of what Marlowe really held, and I justified these acute and audacious utterances as now 'substantially held, more or less widely, by students of science and the Bible in our own days.' Many people were shocked, including even Swinburne and J. A. Symonds, who were both taking part in my scheme, and they both wrote to tell me of their disapproval, while Vizitelly . . . swiftly mutilated my appendix, so that only in the early copies did it appear as I had sent it out." A conspiracy of silence followed until, in 1921, "The Times" published a just-discovered document which substantiated Ellis's conclusions.

Unfortunately the Mermaid Series, so welcome to scholars and literary lovers, was soon terminated. Vizitelly was charged with the publication of obscene literature, and the work indicted was one of the great Zola's novels. The publisher was imprisoned, and this outrage hastened his death, and the series, when transferred to another publisher, soon succumbed. In 1889 Ellis inaugurated the contemporary Science Series, and its first volume was Geddes' and Thomson's "Evolution of Sex." The series was a marked success and included several outstanding volumes by eminent scientists.

Vizitelly's prosecution proved the forerunner of the Bedborough case, in which Ellis was involved as the author of a volume reviewing in sympathetic and scientific terms the complex phenomena of sexual inversion. Ellis's account of the case completely coincides with the information imparted to the present writer by Henry Seymour in 1935, and Seymour was the energetic

secretary of the Defence Committee. Ellis avers: "The whole course of the case—in which I had no legal standing, although my book was the ostensible subject of it, and no power over the decisive steps of the case—was profoundly unsatisfactory. There was little but confusion, muddle, disappointment and even rascality from first to last, and in the end the issue was never, after all, fought, because Bedborough decided—and under all the circumstances I have never blamed him—to plead guilty. In the forefront of the indictment, 'Regina v. Bedborough,' was placed as the 'first count' the charge that Bedborough, who really had no connection at all with the production of the book, had 'sold and uttered a certain lewd, wicked, bawdry, scandalous and obscene libel in the form of a book entitled 'Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Sexual Inversion.'" The remaining counts in the indictment exclusively concerned the publications of the Legitimation League, a body with which Ellis was in no way connected, and was partly opposed. This wanton attack on a scientific study was perhaps deliberately disguised by the prosecution by associating its charges with subjects with which Ellis's work had no connection whatever.

Partly owing to the confusion thus occasioned, leading scientific specialists, while sending Ellis handsome testimonials, proved unwilling to appear in the witness-box in defence of the indicted volume. Still, a powerful and representative Free Press Defence Committee was formed, which included George Moore, Mrs. Despard, Frank Podmore, G. J. Holyoake, G. W. Foote and Bernard Shaw.

But all in vain, although Horace Avory, a then rising barrister, had been briefed for the defence and he "espoused the cause with even a personal ardour." But the shady solicitor engaged in the defence, who was afterwards struck off the Rolls for his unprofessional conduct in the case, although he held the £200 required to fee counsel, kept the money in his pocket. Thus, "the etiquette of the Bar made it impossible for Avory to appear."

The remarks of the Recorder (when discharging the defendant Bedborough) with reference to the prosecuted book were worthy of the darkest of the Dark Ages, and the "Daily Chronicle" comments on the case were little more enlightened. "Yet I—rather the spirit of man I chanced to embody—have overcome the world. My 'filthy,' 'worthless' and 'morbid' book," continues its author, "has been translated into all the great living languages to reach people who could not say what a Recorder is or read the 'Daily Chronicle,' if they even saw it. Unto this day it continues to bring me from many lands the reverent and grateful words of strangers, whose praise keeps me humble in face of the supreme mystery of life."

T. F. PALMER.

ACID DROPS

ANOTHER example of the manner in which God watches over those who love him. Eighty-year-old W. Chew was riding to church on a bicycle and collided with a bus and was killed. Now if he had been going to a race meeting, or to a Freethought lecture, or just having a day out—on Sunday, the hand of God would be seen, and the wickedness of Mr. Chew would have been obvious. But why permit him to be killed while on the way to Church? We must remind God that with the number of his worshippers falling off rapidly, he can hardly afford to indulge in caprices of this kind. To adapt Ingoldsby to the occasion:—

It is very unwise a friend to slay
When they're scarcer and scarcer every day.

One of the writers in the "Universe" takes delight in the reflection that the Church has "a habit of surviving those who declare it finished." True, but a religious truth is usually a fine working substitute for a healthy lie. As an institution the Christian Churches still live, but are they the Churches of yesterday? Why even the Catholic Church, unswerving in its

encouragement of the most ignorant of superstitions, is not what it was. It has to admit things to-day that it would not have admitted a few generations ago. It has to sue for favours where it once issued orders. And as to the other Churches—they are gradually improving themselves out of existence. Of course, those who attack the Church die. But their influence lives, and that is the important thing.

Mr. W. J. Edwards (Catholic M.P.) says there is some "fishy business" going on over the Government Education Bill. He says it directly aims at injuring the Roman Church. That is just nonsense. The aim of the Government, taking advantage of the war, is to do what it can to give the Churches control of the schools. It is the Roman Church that asks for complete control over teachers and teaching, while demanding that the Government finds the money. Mr. Butler and his crowd are taking advantage of the existence of a Government that is completely non-representative—save so far as the war is concerned—to replace the control of the Churches that existed before 1870. It is the most shameful behaviour of a Coalition Government that we have seen for a long time.

Though their number is falling, there are still many people whose mentality is completely "Biblical," who still live utterly ignorant of the advancement of science, who still tremble in fear of God and the Devil. "Humanist," of "John Bull," has some queer problems to answer, but even he appears to have little sympathy with this primitive mentality. How can a lady call herself a Christian while she believes in Evolution? plaintively asks one inquirer, and another wants to know how dare a woman have recourse to painless childbirth when the Bible distinctly says "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children"? Poor "Humanist" is to be pitied. If he answered these fools according to their folly he would probably get the sack. But it is obvious that he believes little of the Bible himself.

Adverse criticism continues of the B.B.C., to pile up in the form of letters to the Press. In the "Daily Telegraph" the Rev. James Mackay says the religious services are framed to please a small and tame section of churchgoers. The B.B.C. has openly proclaimed that it will say nothing on religion that is likely to shock or disturb the religious beliefs of the most ignorant section of believers. The B.B.C. motto, where religion is concerned, is "There is safety in ignorance." We are not endorsing the maxim, and the time-serving religious controllers of the B.B.C. may find that the safety is not so great as they imagine. Even religious fools get glimpses of the light.

The Rev. G. Percival writes to the "Sheffield Telegraph" that the fact of being taught that twice two are four will not prevent him acting, in matters of conduct, that they do not equal five. True, oh priest. And our prison records show that teaching children that three times make one—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—does not prevent quite a large number of humans spending years of their lives in prison.

Ten very "respectable" clergymen—Established and other—have made a joint protest against a baby show and flower show that was held at Millfield Street on Sunday, August 22. The signatories say they "recognise the legitimacy of individual healthy recreation so long as it does not interfere with the prime objects of Sunday worship. . . . But we protest against organised amusements as violating the prime objects of the day." But the cant about Democracy goes on.

On the door of St. Cyprian's Church, Clarence Gate, N.W. 1: "Owing to numerous complaints of theft, Communicants and penitents are warned against leaving valuables in their seats." Really, the least God could do would be to protect the belongings of his worshippers while they are conducting their business with him. An angel might be told off in each church for this purpose. Or a notice: "Put your trust in the Lord while you are in his House, but hold on with both hands while you are in communication with him."

Whatever be the social weather one can always be assured of a full allowance of Christian nonsense—or cunning. Here is Mr.

Hugh Redwood, of the "News Chronicle," explaining in the "Newspaper World" that the world can be changed "only by the power of Christ." In that case it would seem that all our armed forces are useless to even pave the way for a world peace, and Russia should be double damned in any case. Why not, if Mr. Redwood is right, withdraw our armed forces, set everything aside and leave things to the "power of Christ."

Of course, it may be argued—probably will be argued—that we have not given Jesus—who is God—a chance. But if we have to get the world right without Christ, in order for Christ to set the world right after it has been made right, it looks as though Mr. Redwood is getting in quite a mental fog. But being an old journalist he probably reflects that he is writing for foggy-minded people, and to paraphrase Charles the Second, his fog suits their fog.

Miss Holywell, who devotes about ten minutes of her time to writing a few paragraphs that will never agitate anyone, rebukes a Jewish Rabbi who has published an anthology which contains a story of a Jewish girl convert being persecuted by "wicked priests." She thinks it "a very poor return for what the Church has done for his race throughout the ages." We recall one book, published a few years ago, that described this protection of the Jews—at least the way in which the Churches by their teachings prevented the Jews getting justice in every country where the Church was strong; but it seemed to us a method of which Hitler has given us many illustrations.

When rogues fall out—everyone knows the rest of the adage. The new educational proposals are declared by some of the Roman Catholic priests to be as if the Axis will have won "the ideological victory." We are inclined to agree that there is something in this from the point of view of a genuine educationist. We have already said much on the subject, and may say more. But we beg everyone to note that the deluging of schools with religion will commence with the passing of the Bill. Nearly all the other things will come "as we can afford them." And Mr. Butler and his crowd will see that we do not afford them in too much of a hurry.

The Bishop of Rochester, writing in "The Star," looks back longingly to the time England was "distinguished by the integrity and purity of English home life." We wonder whether these men ever give a moment's thought to what they are saying? We doubt it, for if they were knowingly lying they would surely be more tactful about the lies they tell. We challenge the Bishop to give us any evidence when home life in English history was cleaner and better than it is to-day. It is time that someone sat on this deliberate lying that comes from the pulpit. Let anyone read what was the life of the British poor of a century ago, and the humbug and insincerity that was common in home life then, and even the average parson would be ashamed of the slander of the present. The mere fact of people being alive to a better form of social environment is something to be placed on the side of improvement.

Mr. Brendan Bracken put his foot in it when he likened Rudolf Hess to an "overgrown Boy Scout." But at its best one can but have a kind of good-natured contempt for the dressing-up of a youth of fifteen or sixteen in a pantomimic costume that in itself serves to stretch childhood beyond its proper bounds; and in spite of the repetition of florid phrases the Boy Scout movement must result in an overdue lengthening of childhood, and we fancy those in power know it.

The Liverpool Catholic Evidence Society reports great success in its open meetings on "Anvil" lines. We are not surprised. It works on B.B.C. rules, and as the audience is, we fancy, made up of Catholics with a sprinkling of Protestants, the result is predestined. A Christian can always prove the beauty of Christianity—to another Christian. But what would happen if one of these gatherings were "infected" by a given number of educated Freethinkers does not require much wisdom to forecast. That is not likely to occur. Its existence would mean a display of intellectual dishonesty on the part of the Church in operation. And intellectual honesty does not run in harness with Christian beliefs.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—The General Secretary, N.S.S. gratefully acknowledges a donation of £1 from Mr. W. Evans and 16s. from Mr. W. R. Barralet to the Benevolent Fund of the Society.

WAR DAMAGE FUND.—J. Kilpatrick, £3 6s.; E. Drabble, 3s.; I. Yettram, 3s.

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 noted a very short, but much to the point, letter by George Henry in the "Scotsman," protesting against the stupid idea of teachers having a "call" to their job. "Call" is a religious phrase, and there needs no supernaturalism to account for teachers. Teachers are made as any other occupation finds workmen and workwomen. But the teachers have their own snobbiness to thank for this religious phrasing. For a long time they would not admit to being counted in with trade unions. It was so common. Mr. Henry well says, as a teacher himself, that when teachers "have a real union, then we may look for a little respect as a real profession." But the teachers have yet to show that they have the courage to stand up against the clerical-cum-Government plot that will bring them under the rule of the clergy.

We are pleased to give credit where credit is due, and the very excellent talk on education given on the radio recently by Mr. Eric Kempson was notable for two things. The first was the utter absence of any reference to religion. God, Jesus, the place of the Churches, the taking over of children's education by parson and priest, were all completely ignored. Mr. Kempson's talk was a very well-reasoned plea for less book-learning in our schools, and more practical application of all the handicrafts. Education in the future should be planned not so much on academic lines with examiners whose knowledge of a subject was merely book knowledge. For Mr. Kempson, nothing could take the place of actual work on the subject with hand as well as eye. If not exactly Secularism, it was a pleasure to hear education discussed on secular lines.

Sometimes the boomerang quality of thanking God for a military victory strikes the Christian believer, and when it does he is apt to say things that cannot but irritate his Christian friends. For unless the Christian believer is either more foolish than he looks, or more deliberately dishonest than one wishes to believe he is, thanking God for being able to smash a sufficient number of God's children, with the help of God to lead to victory, implies that God took an active hand in the killing. Contrariwise, if man knows that he killed a given number of the enemy, and not God, then the Christian is just fooling his creator—and God only knows what he will have to pay for thinking that God can be so easily fooled.

U.S.A. THREAT TO FREEDOM

We have received a cablegram from New York informing us that suit has been filed contesting the right of the authorities concerned to deny entrance to the U.S.A. of certain publications which include a number of books attacking the Roman Catholic Church and our "Bible Handbook." The cablegram was dated September 3, and the other parties have a fortnight to decide whether they will draw back or fight.

We guaranteed (August 29) from "Freethinker" readers a minimum contribution of £100 and, substantially, that amount has been promised. Those who were good enough to pledge themselves for various amounts are advised that the contributions may now be sent to the Editor, "The Freethinker," for transmission. Full acknowledgment will, of course, be made in these columns.

It only needs to be said that we have been compelled to scale down many of the promises in order to give the greater number an opportunity of helping in a good cause.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The question thus raised is a very important theological one, and only a B.B.C. preacher could adequately deal with it, because no one is permitted to talk back. But the Archdeacon of Stoke-on-Trent has protested in the "Daily Telegraph" against assuming that God has any hand in the devastation caused in German cities, etc. He says the idea "is repugnant to Christian people, and a Church which sees God taking sides in war cannot be faithful to Jesus Christ."

It is not for us poor blinded Atheists (who have always insisted that God does not kill people—in fact, we do not know what he does for the praise and thanks that are given him) to explain why on earth the Churches arrange for a day of thanksgiving, and the King promises a national day of thanksgiving. We are all God's children, runs the theme, and if these thanks to God are justified, then it is because either God killed a few millions of his children, some of whom he was pleased with, others that he was displeased with, just to "larn 'em." What? We are damned if we know. For publishing such a dilemma Archdeacon Hartill deserves to be unfrocked. As a priest he need not have written in such a way as to open people's eyes. If he did not mean to do it, then we admit, on the grounds of being very foolish, he might be let off lightly. But in any case he should not have spoken in that way. The proper attitude of a Christian is on his knees with his eyes closed. Not standing erect suggesting awkward questions.

Bradford and Edinburgh Branches, N.S.S., each send in a report of extremely successful open-air seasons. Audiences have been good and interest keen. The best testimony is, no doubt, the steady demand for our literature, which has been a marked feature of all the meetings. Messrs. Brighton and Clayton have also taken full advantage of a definitely increasing interest in the Freethought message, and miss no opportunity for holding a meeting.

Not the politician ready to sell his soul for a title or a well-paid job, not the vendor of quack medicines at a country fair, can talk more nonsense or suggest a greater number of untruths than a well-placed parson pushing his spiritual wares. Here, for example, is the Bishop of Chelmsford writing in the August number of the "Chelmsford Diocesan Chronicle" on the school question. After stating the very obvious truth that "the people whose interest is paramount are the children," he concludes: "The child has an unchallengeable right to have the Christian religion presented to him by people who believe and practice it." That is downright nonsense, and it would be an insult to the intelligence of the Bishop not to say that he knows it to be nonsense.

For the right of the child is to know what every educated man and woman must know concerning the origin of religious ideas, their birth in the ignorance of primitive humanity, the development and their decay brought about by the growth of scientific study. But it is just this established truth about religion that the Bishop and his kind are striving to keep from the rising generation. They are fighting to keep the child in complete ignorance of the truth about religion, and it is high time that those who have any regard for honesty and respect for the rights of the rising generation took the gloves off when dealing with these clerical kidnapers.

JUSTIN MARTYR'S "DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHO"

II.

WHEN Trypho twitted Justin, in the passage I quoted in my last article, for following "an idle story" (or "a vain report"), what exactly did he mean?

Anyone familiar with what are called "Christian evidences" and the many books written to produce them will know that Justin is almost invariably quoted as a witness, for the fact that the Gospels were in existence in his day, about the year A.D. 150. Passages are taken from his "Apology" and his "Dialogue with Trypho" to prove that he was quoting Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and in my copy of the translation of the "Dialogue" the references to the texts used by Justin are fully given, showing that he used nearly all the New Testament. Yet there is not the slightest hint in it that Justin never names Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. As a matter of fact, he always refers to the documents (or document) he uses as the "Memoirs of the Apostles."

Justin copiously quotes the Old Testament, but only on one occasion does he mention the name of a writer in the New—that of Peter. Christian apologists have striven hard to identify the "Memoirs" with our Gospels, and as very few of their readers ever looked into Justin for themselves, they nearly always got away with their contentions. Unluckily for them, there is no evidence whatever that Justin was quoting the Gospels we have. In any case, his quotations rarely correspond with our New Testament—if they do, it is only on one or two occasions.

The truth must be that even in Justin's time the Christian story and its Gospels were in the process of formation. The fact that Justin's quotations "differ more or less widely from parallel passages in synoptic Gospels," as the author of "Supernatural Religion" says, "and in many cases differ in the same respects as similar quotations found in other writings in the second century, the writers of which are known to have made use of uncanonical Gospels," is sufficient proof that our Gospels, in the form we have them, were unknown to Justin. And further proof of this lies in the fact that Justin quotes sayings of Jesus not found in our Gospels, and "facts in the life of Jesus . . . not only are not found in our Gospels, but are in contradiction with them." Yet Justin undoubtedly believed in Jesus Christ as the Saviour, and tried his best to persuade both Trypho and his companions to adopt Christianity.

Trypho's objections to Christianity can be pleaded even now, and it is interesting to find, especially when it is claimed by rationalist believers in a man Jesus, that he said, not that Jesus the man had never been born, but the Messiah, to find that he talks of Christ, that is, the same Christ referred to in the passage I quoted in my last article in these words: "But this fellow of yours, who is called Christ, was so inglorious, mean and despicable a wretch as to fall under the greatest curse in the law of God: for he was crucified." And note that Trypho—unless I have missed a passage—always calls Jesus "Christ."

Trypho had already said that "you do form to yourselves an imaginary Christ," that Christ was unknown, and so on; yet here he is made to declare that Christ (the Messiah) was actually crucified! This beats even the famous passage in Tacitus as Christian evidence!

The case against the passage, which shows that Trypho believed no more in a real Jesus than I do, was put by the late Sir A. G. Cardew, who flattered himself as being something of a critic, in the "Literary Guide" in 1935. He told his readers that Trypho, by using the word "Christ" did not mean Jesus. "No Jew would call Jesus 'the Messiah' unless he had turned Christian." Unfortunately for Sir A. G. Cardew, we have, in the passage I have quoted above, Trypho, who was a Jew and proud of it, distinctly calling Jesus the "Christ" or "Messiah," whichever term a translator likes to use. Trypho, in fact, was obliged often

to argue as if Jesus had really lived—just as I do when I am discussing the ethics of Jesus, or, as I often put it, the ethics of Christ. Besides, Jews often use the word Christ, meaning Jesus. I have heard them do so dozens of times, and they certainly neither believed in him as the Messiah or were converted. Sir A. G. Cardew was talking nonsense.

Trypho pressed home many arguments which are distinctly modern—or, at least, we still use them. He ridiculed the Christian assertion that the "person" Justin believed in was the very same Messiah foretold in the Old Testament, which gave Justin the opportunity, of course, to weigh in with the "argument" that every time some mysterious "deliverer" or Israel was mentioned in the Old Testament, or a "Son of Man," or an uncomplaining lamb, Jesus Christ, and only Jesus Christ, was meant—and therefore foretold.

More than once Trypho bluntly told Justin that he was out of his senses, the Christian apologist protesting he was not mad. But what else could Trypho say when he was told that "the twelve bells which were hung upon the High Priest's ephod were a type of the twelve Apostles"? Justin actually believed that "all the other things commanded by Moses . . . were only types and figures and representations both of those things which were to happen to Christ and of those persons whom it was foreknown would believe in him."

Over and over again Trypho could not conceal his contempt for Justin's infantile arguments—arguments, be it noted, which still do service in the Christian Church. "What you say," he cries, "seems to me incredible and what cannot be proved." And take this from Trypho:—

"For that which you assert, namely, that this Christ is God, who existed from all eternity, and that he afterwards condescended to be born and made man, and that he was not man of man, seems to me not only incredible but absurd."

Justin was so quick in answering objections that Trypho was forced to say "You seem to have been concerned in numbers of controversies with several people concerning every disputable point"—which proves what I recently asserted, that this dialogue is really an epitome of numbers Justin must have had with many Jews. I wish it were possible to quote extensively here from it, but space forbids.

I claim that anyone reading it must see that there is no doubt whatever that for Trypho Jesus Christ was an absolute fiction, "an imaginary Christ" made up by Christians from misunderstood "prophecies" in the Old Testament. Justin was following merely an "idle story" written by a set of "worthless fellows." That was the opinion of many of the instructed Jews of the time of whom Trypho was such a worthy representative. But this is a free world, and anybody, even a reverent rationalist, is free to think otherwise.

H. CUTNER.

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.

"LOOKING BACKWARD"

O my prophetic soul!—HAMLET.

NOWADAYS, when speculation is rife concerning the standard of social and economic conditions which will be reached some time after the war, it is interesting to recall the incidents narrated in "Looking Backward." This book describes the ideal State in operation.

It is more than fifty years ago when Edward Bellamy, American novelist and social reformer, scored a tremendous success with his masterpiece "Looking Backward." Although admitted to the Bar, he devoted his life to literature and politics. "Looking Backward" was first published in 1888 and was judged first as merely a romance. But it was soon realised that the book was a gospel of Socialism: the "gospel according to" Bellamy. Displaying amazing originality in the treatment of his subject, and utilising a wealth of argument and persuasive eloquence combined with a sympathetic understanding of mankind, Bellamy set himself the task of envisaging the America of the year 2000. With masterly skill and penetrating insight he shows us in practice the ideals of political reformers and speculators throughout the ages. Bellamy's method is as startling as it is interesting. Using the novel as a medium to propagate his views, he relieves, with a charming love story, all possibility of boredom.

The hero, Julian West, goes to sleep in 1887 for 113 years. The circumstances attending this extraordinary feat of hibernation must not be inquired into very closely, and the author skims over biological ground so easily that only a churl would complain at the Rip Van Winkle subterfuge. Our hero awakens in a Communists' paradise. Everyone is happy and healthy in the enjoyment of equality of rank, income, education and opportunity. A doctor who has effected the resurrection of West acts the part of host and explains the working of the political machine of the year 2000, and, in return, gets an idea from his guest of its "working" counterpart in the year 1887. In the discussions which ensue all criticisms are dealt with satisfactorily by the doctor, and arguments are interspersed with incidents relative to the progress of a love story, the heroine being the daughter of the doctor. The disclosure of the girl's antecedents with bearing on West's former "existence" is evidence of Bellamy's skill as a novelist in weaving a plot.

In addition to the amenities already mentioned, the America of 2000 levies no taxes, and there is no National Debt. Education begins when the child is six years old and ends at twenty-one. The working life lasts twenty-four years, the citizen retiring at the age of forty-five years. There is no money system. Each citizen is provided with a credit card, of equal value, entitling the holder to "purchase" commodities according to his needs. The credit allowed is sufficient for all normal requirements—thus the motive for most crimes has been eliminated—"conditions of human life changed with motives," as Bellamy stresses more than once in his narrative.

What part, if any, does religion play in the Millenium? At one point of the story the doctor suggested that, being Sunday, his guest might like to hear a sermon. West replied, "So you still have sermons and Sundays? We had prophets who foretold that long before this time the world would have dispensed with both." The doctor said that religious practices have naturally changed considerably in a century and that the nation supplies any person or number of persons with buildings on guarantee of a rent. (This arrangement is in operation in Russia.) A person can go either to church or stay at home and listen "in acoustically prepared chambers connected by wire with subscribers' houses."

And what kind of sermon did Julian West hear? Not very satisfactory from the orthodox point of view. The speaker scorns

(Continued on next page)

CORRESPONDENCE

AN INQUIRY.

SIR.—In a recent issue of "The Freethinker" one of your correspondents made a short comment on Robert Graves' poetry. Would you please allow me to ask him was that the same Graves whose poems are occasionally to be seen in the "Daily Herald" in its early days? The title of three of them were: "A Lover From Childhood," "To the Wise" and "One Hard Look."—Yours, etc.,
C. F. BUDGE.

OUR SCHOOLS.

SIR.—In your leading article, "The Threat to our Schools" ("The Freethinker," August 22, paragraph headed "Our Kidnapping Clergy"), one sentence begins: "If the teacher is so trained that every lesson given carries with it a religious tag . . ." And in the next paragraph you write: "The Archbishop tells us quite plainly that religion—the Christian religion—must be 'pervasively present' (his own words) in every lesson."

To one reader, at least, it appears that for once you and the Archbishop share the same mistaken view of education, whether the subject is sacred or secular! How could religion "pervade" a lesson, say in arithmetic or grammar? What has it to do with adding up numbers or parsing?

Apparently religion teaching when purely ethical—the side of it in which Freethought justly claim to share—would be to impress upon the pupil that to *erib* is immoral!—Yours, etc.,

MAUD SIMON.

APPRECIATION.

SIR.—In last week's "Freethinker" Mr. H. Cutner expressed a wish to know readers' opinion of the famous Justin v. Trypho passage *re* Christ.

After a careful re-reading of the matter I, as a mere "man in the street," think that Mr. Cutner's explanation is a sound one, such as any ordinary reader would give. Justin advances his particular Christ, and Trypho rebuts that particular Christ as quite unknown, etc.

Otherwise he would be countering a specific case with a vague generality.

I hope we shall hear more from this careful and accurate writer.—Yours, etc.,
CHAR. M. HOLLINGHAM.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

LONDON—OUTDOOR

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond).—Sunday, 12 noon. Mr. J. G. LUTON: "A Lecture. Parliament Hill Fields, 3-30 p.m. Mr. T. H. ELSTON: "The Public Purse for Sectarian Ends in Education?"

West London Branch N.S.S. (Hyde Park), Sunday, 3 p.m., Mr. E. C. SAPHIN and supporting speakers.

LONDON—INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m. Mr. S. K. RATCLIFFE: "The Destiny of Man."

COUNTRY—OUTDOOR

Bristol and District Branch N.S.S. (Durdhams Downs), Mr. G. THOMPSON, 6-30 p.m.

Burnley (Market).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m. Mr. J. CLAYTON: A Lecture.

Enfield (Lancs.).—Friday, September 10. Mr. J. CLAYTON: A Lecture.

Glasgow Secular Society (Brunswick Street).—Sunday, 3-30 p.m. Meetings held weekly, weather permitting.

Kingston-on-Thames Branch N.S.S. (Church Street).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m. Mr. J. W. BARKER: A Lecture.

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

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

Worsthorne.—Thursday, September 16. Mr. J. CLAYTON: A Lecture.

COUNTRY—INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Laycock's Cafe, Kirkgate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m. Mr. HAROLD DAY: "Daylight and Darkness."

(Continued from previous page)

the moral hideousness of the old society which he likens to the struggle in the Black Hole of Calcutta, except that in the latter there were no women, children and cripples. He goes on to compare humanity in the olden time to a "rose bush planted in a swamp." Religion, as such, is a back number in Bellamy's State. "For the first time since the creation, every man stood straight up before God." The Utopian pill is sugared with references to God and a Creator, for at the time his book was published readers would have experienced difficulty in swallowing both a godless and a Communistic state of society!

When once the fraternal standpoint was concerned of "What shall we eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed," all difficulties vanished. Thus, from a form of society which was founded on the pseudo self-interest of selfishness and appealed solely to the anti-social and brutal side of human nature, Julian West had to adjust his views to an institution based on the "true self-interest of a rational unselfishness," and appealing to the social and generous instincts of men. Despite Bellamy's reference to the "fatherhood of God," his Utopia had been reached after a general decay of religion had set in, and which culminated in the passing of the old system. And all that was left of religion was "a pale and watery gleam" which, eventually, would finally disappear.

"All difficulties vanished" when the fraternal standpoint was conceived. Is it as simple as that? Bellamy thought so when he formed a "National Party," but no political hold was effected in America.

In England about twenty-five years after the publication of "Looking Backward," Robert Tressall, a house-painter, wrote "The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists." In a preface to his work Jessie Pope wrote, "He recorded his criticism of the present scheme of things until, weary of the struggle, he slipped out of it." Poor Tressall!

Bellamy hoped. Tressall despaired. Both writers looked into the mirror of life.

Reader, what can you see in it?

S. GORDON HOGG.

THINK, MAN, THINK!

A VERY curious notion is still going the rounds to-day, and will probably maintain its popularity as long as fools are proud. I refer to the notion that one man's thinking, and therefore conclusion, is of necessity as good as another's. This is by no means the case.

Thinking is a science. Clear thinking is an achievement. To achieve anything in any field of science requires work. The thinker who can be relied upon for his logic and sequence of thought is therefore a man who has given time and taken pains to attain a degree of perfection in a science.

Golf may be played in a sense by all with appropriate clubs and ball, and a passion for open spaces. But golf can only be played well by the man who has practised long and got "his eye in." Any man can think, but few have got their "mind's eye" in by much practice.

No man dreams of attaining to the English XI. without much practice at the nets, yet the damndest fool regards his undisciplined and untrained mind capable of authoritative statement in all matters of debate. He will appear in Hyde Park asserting his rights as a thinker. Has he any such rights until his mind is trained in the school of logic and in the college of scientific exactitude?

Let us be honest with fools. The thoughts of a man with a dogmatic, untrained mind are not to be compared with the thoughts of a man who by diligent study has become a master

of the art of clear thinking. Let us say so then. Why pretend that a nincompoop has any right to be heard. He has no such right. There is only one thing for him to do—to listen and learn. For he may attain the highest height.

It is not every man who wields a sword aright or who employs the laws of logic with strict application.

It is not every man whose thoughts are purposeful, driving to an end, attaining something definite, not side-tracked or encumbered by preconceived impossibilities. To quote John Billings: "The trouble with most folks is not so much their ignorance, as their 'knowing' so many things which ain't so."

One of the first essentials of a worthy debate is the setting aside of all matter irrelevant to the point in question.

Apply this to the question of the existence of God. The religious man will say he likes to believe in God, it gives him comfort, he feels bound to so believe, there must be "something," and so on. . . . But what does it matter? The question is as to whether it can or it cannot be demonstrated that God exists.

A further necessity of debate is the calling to the inquiry of all matters truly relevant to the matter under debate.

Again apply this to the question of God's existence. Design and beauty in nature is still stressed in Christian literature, while haphazard ugliness and strife is overlooked. Goodness is given right royal emphasis, while evil is relegated to a back pew.

Of course, I am aware that religious men are not over-addicted to clear thinking, excepting those who are of the more modern school, and who, in consequence of their thoughtfulness (as far as it goes), have little religious platform at all, and are occupied in the main in contending for the ethics of the irreligious.

The men and women of one book, and/or of books written by men of one book, do little independent thinking, and bring upon themselves the crushing criticism of W. Drummond when he said: "He who cannot reason is a fool; he who will not reason is a bigot; he who dare not reason is a slave."

That's it—a slave! A bigot! A fool! A believer in divine revelation! There is no difference. Such have little minds, narrowed and warped to little more than total inactivity. You cannot reason with them, for in religious matters they have no reason. God is in his heaven, and all's right with this bleeding, broken world of his. Hell is hot and heaven is half-empty, and God is over all, good and kind, the great "mind" behind it all.

LLOYD COLE.

THE PROFITEERS

They call "Dunkirk" a miracle,
The gentlemen in black
Who fear they've lost their market
And want to get it back.

They call "Dunkirk" a miracle,
The men who were not there.
Soft pedal, please, on "Courage";
The note to stress is "Prayer."

They call "Dunkirk" God's answer
And are discreetly blind
To forty thousand mothers' sons
Left prisoners behind.

A battered host came straggling home,
Unarmed and disarrayed;
Since when "Dunkirk" 's a miracle
To advertise *their* trade.

They call "Dunkirk" a miracle,
With all its pain and waste.
Good God! Whenever was there heard
A joke in poorer taste?

P. V. M.