

THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXV.—No. 31

Sunday, August 5, 1945

Price Threepence

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

A Losing Fight

NO one, said Anthony Collins, ever doubted the existence of God till the Boyle Lecturers began to prove it. The satire is historically inaccurate, but it contains an important truth. To begin with, the mere attempt to prove the existence of God is calculated to awaken doubts where none before existed. To discover that a belief which has been impressed upon one as an absolute truth is in need of justification establishes the legitimacy of doubt and opens up the possibility of one being, after all, in the wrong. To find the unquestionable denied, the certain rejected as false, and even defenders of the faith making a concession here and a modification there, may easily arouse uncertainty as to what remains. And it may further be said that the religious apologists never convince anyone who does not already believe. The utmost these gentlemen ever do is to reassure some and retard the emancipation of others. But I have never heard of anyone who seriously disbelieved in the existence of a God being brought back to the point of believing by any of the so-called theistic evidences. In this matter the religionist is all along playing a losing game. He is denied victory from the very hour the battle opens. The most he can do is to stave off the moment of complete defeat. If he retains his position for a time well and good. If he can prevent some of his supporters from giving a measure of help to the enemy he is still more fortunate. And all the time he has the depressing knowledge that the attack against his main position goes on developing with increasing deadliness.

Proving Too Much

Take, as an illustration of what has been said, that very powerful eighteenth-century classic, Butler's "Analogy." No one can read Bishop Butler, either in his "Analogy" or in his sermons on moral subjects, without feeling that one is in contact with an intelligence of no mean description. In those days the Church had not yet sunk so low that one of its dignitaries could attract attention merely because he said things that in the mouth of an ordinary man would be heard without surprise and considered as no more than one would expect from a man of average intelligence. Life had not then bitten so deeply into Christianity as it has now done, and the position then was different from what it is to-day. The chief enemy of Christianity then was Deism—the belief of those who opposed a God of nature to the God of the Bible. These Butler caught in a cleft stick. Against those who pitted the God of nature against the God of the Bible he convincingly argued that the marks which characterised the one characterised the other. Consequently, the one was as bad, or as good, as the other, and to reject the one while

retaining the other was absurd. Butler's argument was unanswered and unanswerable. But there was another conclusion suggested by his argument. This was that while it might be absurd to reject the God of the Bible in favour of the God of nature, might it not be equally absurd to believe in either? That, in fact, was the logical outcome of Butler's work. He saved people from becoming Deists only at the logical expense of driving them to Atheism. Burke said that Butler's work suggested more doubts than it removed, and that is not true of Butler's "Analogy" alone, it is true of all apologetic works before and after him. The clergy, if they were wise, would never argue their faith, they would assert it. Above all, they should never argue with unbelievers. They do not convert the unbeliever; all they do is to open the eyes of believers. It is absurd to appeal to reason on behalf of an unreasonable creed. Reason never brings a man to heaven. On the very highest authority it has often sent one to hell.

The Direction of Progress

It must be admitted that, in the main, professional Christians have learned this lesson—at least in relation to militant Freethought. They remain almost silept concerning it. It is seldom directly mentioned. Even a paper such as this one, of its class as widely known as any paper in Britain, is scarcely ever mentioned, not even when paragraphs and ideas are lifted directly from its pages. The pretence must be maintained either that militant Freethought is quite dead, or it is nearly dead, or that it would be folly to deal with it. Where, recently asked one of these Christian apologists, is the Freethinking that terrified our ancestors in the eighteenth century? And as that form of the anti-Christian attack is not now prominent it is calmly assumed that Freethought is powerless or dead. But these gentlemen are looking in quite the wrong direction for the heretical ideas of a century and a half ago. To find them they must look, not in our ranks, but in their own. The Christian Churches are now preaching as part of their creed things for which, less than a century since, men and women were being sent to prison for publishing. The anti-Christian teaching of Voltaire and Paine was not killed; it was adopted by Christians, and highly paid professors are now preaching it as "advanced Christianity." The most advanced Christians are now only voicing the commonplaces of a century old Freethought. Save amongst the more ignorant of Christians, the orthodoxy of Paine's day is as dead as a door-nail. And never has there been a clearer case of a handful of men and women, without either wealth or position, forcing a powerful and wealthy institution such as the Christian Church to disown some of its most ancient teachings, and adopt the ideas of its adversaries. It is a phenomenon that should encourage those who find the present fight somewhat discouraging. Some of the clearest evidences of the influences of our work are to be

found within the Churches. The clergy are "liberal" to precisely the extent that we force them to be so.

God as Myth

But the clergy remain the clergy, and it does not follow that, because circumstances force them to teach things they previously denounced, they have become more receptive to new truths. The plea that what these people are fond of calling the "Materialism of the Victorian era," or the unbelief of Paine and Voltaire, is dead, is mere camouflage designed to hide the fact that the attack on religious beliefs still goes on, and is far more deadly than ever. One well-known Christian controversialist recently took me to task because in my "Theism or Atheism?" I said that to the informed mind it is no longer a question of whether there is a God or not, but solely one of studying the conditions that gave rise to such a myth and the circumstances of its development. And yet another Christian writer was "astounded" that, in another work, I could have said, the old question of whether Jesus Christ was an historical character or not was rapidly losing, if it had not already lost, all importance. And yet both statements are substantially true. If all that we now know of primitive thought is accepted, if we can really trace the beginnings of the belief in supernatural powers to the ignorance of primitive humanity, if we know the facts upon which that belief was based, and now interpret those facts in an entirely different manner, and if we can trace the modern ideas of God back to these primitive beginnings—if these things are true, then we no longer need waste time in discussing the evidence for and against the existence of a God. We know that the whole thing is nothing but a myth, and to discuss the possibility of the existence of God is equal to discussing whether the giants and fairies of Hans Andersen's tales may not actually exist. We have settled the question of the existence of God when we have determined the question of the origin of the belief.

A Hopeless Fight

Substantially, the same thing holds of the question of Jesus Christ. The historical question has here given place to the psychological one. We need no longer discuss whether Jesus walked on the water, or was born of a virgin, or raised men from the dead, or turned water into wine. We know, if we know anything at all, that none of these things ever happened. All we really have for discussion here is how people came to believe in such things. And for that purpose the study of the mental conditions of peoples in a less advanced social and intellectual state than our own is far more to the point than all the books of Biblical criticism which are poured out from the Press. And all this means that for nearly a century the point of attack, the method of criticism, has been changing. The Christian no longer hears quite so much of the old Freethought attack, but it is giving place to another and a more deadly one. The Christian does not mind so much discussing the old form because it keeps attention off a far more destructive assault. The attack made by both anthropology and psychology he will not meet because he has nothing in his controversial armoury to meet it with. He cannot disprove what both these sciences teach, and if he admits the truth of their main teaching his whole structure vanishes into thin air. So his old dilemma

remains. If he declines the challenge of modern thought he loses the more educated and the more worthy of his followers. If he attempts to meet it he demonstrates the more surely the hollowness of his beliefs. So he goes along making a little concession here and another there. And the worst of it, for him, is that Christian apologists cannot now any more than in the days of Collins, avoid opening the eyes of those whom they would willingly keep unenlightened. Some sort of defence they must make, and the only kind of defence possible is one that brings nearer the hour of ultimate defeat.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

ENGLAND IN SAXON TIMES

THE unification of Southern Britain in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods began earlier than that of modern France. England, at this time, was little more than a quarter of the size of the country across the Channel. Ireland retained its independence until the twelfth century. Wales was not incorporated until the reign of Edward I, while Caledonia maintained its own monarchy until the accession of its ruler James to the English Crown in 1603.

In preceding centuries, our little island had experienced successive invasions. Celtic intruders had supplanted Britain's prehistoric peoples and then Gaels and Brythons overcame the Celts. For four centuries Britain was subjected to Roman dominion, when, with the withdrawal of its protective legions in the fifth century, our sea-girt isle became the prey of Teutonic marauders who created petty kingdoms where they settled.

The eighth century witnessed the Scandinavian incursion which led to a partition of our country, when the ruler of Wessex, King Alfred, in signing the Treaty of Wedmore in 878, surrendered Northern and Eastern England to the colonising Vikings from the Scandinavian lands. During the early eleventh century, Danish sovereigns ruled our island almost until the last successful invader, William of Normandy, overthrew the restored Anglo-Saxon monarchy in 1066.

The composite character of the European peoples is illustrated by the truth that all the various racial strains enumerated above also entered into the inheritance of what we commonly regard as a homogeneous French people. Still, it must be noted that Gaul was far more completely Romanised than Britain had ever been, French law and, above all, the fact that the language has been developed from a Latin dialect prove the persistent influences of ancient Rome.

The piratical invasions of the Teutonic seafarers induced many Britons to seek safety in Cornwall, Armorica and Wales. Yet the bulk of the native inhabitants seem to have blended with the newcomers who seldom brought women on their expeditions. An extensive blending of Saxon and Celt is also indicated by the survival of Celtic customs and the persistence of the village community.

Considerable light has been thrown on this obscure period by the researches of modern scholars. The seventh century is now partly illumined by the decipherment of texts, both in the common and the Latin tongue, that have come down to us. For these writings, owing to their continuity, have yielded invaluable information.

In his learned treatise, "The Feudal Monarchy in France and England" (Kegan Paul, 20s.), M. Petit Dutaillis, member of L'Institut de France, concludes that—

"With the passage of the centuries, Anglo-Saxon society was profoundly modified but now, at the beginning of its history, we need only remark one striking and permanent feature—the existence, in addition to the slaves, of an important class of free men who were both agriculturists

and warriors who took over the old British villages and adopted their collective practices and regulations, frequently forming free communities recognising no lord. Even when William the Conqueror had Domesday Book drawn up there were still communities of this kind in existence."

Moreover, even after the feudal system was well established the ancient Celtic rural arrangements persisted and formed the fundamental social structure.

A judicial system was scarcely in embryo, but the law was administered in the Shire and Hundred Courts where monthly trials of thieves and bandits were conducted. But these local courts gave way to seignorial and royal justiciars, although the Hundreds, to the number of 729, still survive as a geographical sub-division. The shire, or as the Normans renamed it, the county, formed a larger territorial region.

At first restricted to Wessex, the shire, owing to its conveniences as an instrument of administration, was introduced into other Anglo-Saxon settlements, and the 39 counties still with us were created. The Shire Court met twice a year to settle judicial cases.

The sixth century Christian Church, as depicted by Gildas, had fallen into ignominious decay. The Britons had returned to their ancestral faith and the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons was not begun until the mission of Augustine in 597. Still, towards the close of the seventh century, a Greek named Theodore was despatched by the Papacy to England to organise the Christian Church; the dioceses were reconstructed and the primacy of Canterbury instituted.

Prelates soon became prominent in public affairs. The only semi-educated class, the prelates, when the unity of the English kingdom was at last attained, officiated in the Shire Court much as the parish priest functioned in the Hundred. The Archbishop of Canterbury assumed Court leadership and retained that position for several centuries. The Primate occasionally took the place of the monarch at the meeting of the Witan. It appears that: "In a charter of 812 they speak of the 'wise men of the king and archbishop.'" Even then, the Church was aiming at secular as well as religious control. After long and bitter internal conflict between contending Saxon kings in the ninth century, the ruler of Wessex became sole sovereign of England. Egbert, Alfred, Athelstan and Edgar ruled over a more prosperous and peaceful community.

Administration was improved; the finances reformed, and a national army created, but this inefficient force was supplemented by mercenary soldiers. The Danegeld, an impost levied for protection from the Danes was perhaps the most reliable revenue of the Crown. Another duty which devolved on the community was the maintenance and repair of roads and bridges so essential for communication in primitive conditions.

After the king's formal election, he was consecrated and thus became the Lord's anointed—a ruler by divine right, and full loyalty to the Crown was now a sacred duty. And when the Danish kings reigned over England this Saxon tradition was continued. Canute's laws declare that: "Above all, our subjects must all love and adore one God alone, join together in observance of the Christian faith and show loyal devotion to the King Canute." Still, the Saxon rulers were not completely independent, the clericals and thanes saw to that, and the prelates were also conspicuous when unsatisfactory kings were deposed.

The Witan—the Council of the Wise—seems to have assembled in early Saxon times in each tiny principality. But with the unification of England under the Wessex kings the previously independent Witenagemots were merged into a national assembly. This new body, however, became much more select under a united rulership. The most powerful magnates, above all the Primate of Canterbury, acted as chief advisers to the Crown and when the Witan gathered, its chief thanes, ealdormen and the leading divines, participated in its deliberations. In

the words of Petit Dutailis: "In general it was an aristocratic assembly whose discussions were led by the Churchmen but its national character was very clearly marked by the fact that the laws on which it agreed were published in the vernacular, an unprecedented feature in the legislation of the Germanic peoples."

So when the Normans came they found a country fairly easy to govern. England's population must have been very small, but no reliable estimate is possible with the scanty evidences available. Still, Domesday Book shows that some two-thirds of the islanders were peasant cultivators whom the Norman scribes termed villains, bordars and cottars. The free small farmers retained their position in rural regions, but most were soon subjected to feudal dominion and apparently sank to the status of serfs.

Socmen and Freemen were husbandmen somewhat higher in the social scale, but these were comparatively few in number.

The Feudal System was, in several respects, a natural development of agrarian and social conditions dating from Anglo-Danish times. Indeed, the Norman barons in many instances replaced the earlier Anglo-Saxon territorial magnates, both temporal and spiritual. As Petit Dutailis intimates:—

"Even in the Anglo-Saxon period, these great landholders were few in number and could dispose of very considerable fortunes. Godwin and Harold on the eve of the Conquest had immense demesnes. They were subject only to the king and formed the apex of the pyramid of commendation."

Commendation apparently arose from the necessity of protection, both for person and property. A man minus a lord was regarded as one permanently insecure and therefore a public liability. In those turbulent centuries, military tenure was being prepared and would soon appear. As the generations sped on, the feudal barons were more and more entrusted and held responsible for the collection of the revenues and the defence of the realm. They were also expected to preserve the public peace. Thus their jurisdiction was enlarged and the old Hundred Court was converted into a court of seignorial adjudication. In the interest of public tranquillity, kings surrendered rights, revenues, and even estates.

T. F. PALMER.

THE CATHOLIC-FASCIST CONSPIRACY IN SPAIN

WITH the victory of the Allied Forces in Europe and the subsequent political turmoil, Spain (nominally neutral, but essentially pro-Axis) has become the topic of much discussion. For there—though some may prefer to forget it—the war against Fascism was begun nine years ago! Begun, and lost; lost owing to the shortsightedness of those nations who refused to "meddle in a purely internal struggle," and the intervention of those other nations who used it as a preparation for the intended conquest of Europe. But only temporarily lost, if the conquerors of Fascism elsewhere are willing and ready to help the Spanish people finish the job, when the time comes.

The contributors to a pamphlet entitled "Freedom for Spain!"* think that the time is at hand, and they have consequently presented a brief, but very useful picture of the country, its people and its rulers. All the six writers seem well qualified to deal with their respective subjects: four are Spaniards (Mauri Codina, Arturo Barea, Garcia Pradas and W. Carrillo), the other two are Charles Duff (Editor of "Spanish Newsletter" and translator of Quevedo) and Edith Moore, author of "No Friend of Democracy"; and though Socialist or Anarchist in tendency, none of them write in a sectarian manner.

* "Freedom for Spain!" International Publishing Co., 1945; Price 9d.

In his Introduction, Charles Duff insists that the problem of Spain is "in final analysis, one of freedom," and he warns us, in Britain, that it is a problem with which we need to concern ourselves, for "Franco's Spain has become the main focus of Nazi-Fascist infection in post-war Europe: the starting point for new planning against human freedom, for new slaveries." He points out that the Spanish people were the victims of a "Conspiracy of Force, Law and Church," and that there were more killed in the so-called Civil War than in the whole British Empire in either of the two World Wars.

Arturo Barea deals in a vivid manner with that Civil War, and asserts that the battle for freedom is international and not just national, while other subjects are: "The Spanish Agrarian System," "Spanish Anarchism," "The Future of the Spanish Labour Movement," and "Theocracy in Spain."

The latter essay, by Miss Moore, is a particularly important one for Freethinkers. World statesmen, who hold the destiny of millions in their hands, are still all too ready to trust the Roman Catholic Church, and even pander to it, and it behoves us to expose that institution at every opportunity. In Spain the Church shows itself in its true colours, and Miss Moore's factual study is a damning indictment.

I think that all readers of "The Freethinker" are aware of the part played by the Church in the overthrow of the democratically-elected Republican government. As Cardinal Goma of Toledo stated in a letter entitled "The Martyrdom of Man":—

"In substance we must recognise in this war the spirit of a veritable crusade for the Catholic religion.

Take away the force of the religious feeling in it, and the present war has no soul.

The war would be lost for the rebels were it not for the diving stimulus which excites the soul of the Christian people enrolled for war."

The present Pope also affirmed that the conflict was of a religious nature, and gave his "apostolic benediction" to Franco and his Fascist supporters, whose victory, he said, was granted by God! Certainly it was a victory for Catholicism, and Miss Moore demonstrates how completely the Church has regained its lost control. One passage is worth quoting at some length. Here it is:—

"The Jesuits came back from exile and were given back their wealth and property holdings. The annual State payment to the Church was restored to what it had been under the Monarchy: In 1945 it amounted to (roughly) 100,000,000 pesetas (one peseta equal to 2s.). The Government in addition issued interest bearing bonds to the total of 40,000,000 pesetas to rebuild and construct churches and to found seminaries. Roman Catholic religious instruction was made compulsory in all schools and universities, pupils starting the day with a salutation to the Virgin, recognising the Immaculate Conception (as in the sixteenth century). The crucifix has been restored to every classroom. The laws of the Republic concerning civil marriage and divorce have been annulled. The practice of birth control or the dissemination of contraceptive propaganda have been made illegal. Severe penalties for abortion have also been introduced. The cemeteries which were secularised by the Republic and transferred to municipal ownership are again in the hands of the Church."

The filthy Christian attitude to sex is revealed in the most absurdly strict regulations on bathing, etc., and religious pictures plaster even the walls of the prisons! And inside the prisons? Miss Moore gives some details which compare with the worst deeds of Nazism, and says: "In the midst of prison squalor, terror, vindictive vengeance and murder, the padres are everywhere and religiosity abounds."

It is difficult for us to realise the full extent of this diabolical Catholic-Fascist domination of the Spanish people, but a statement by the National Chief of University and Secondary Education in the Burgos Ministry of Education, Jose Pemartin, leaves no room for doubt. In "What is the Spirit?" (the "Mein Kampf" of the Franco movement), he says:—

"We must be absolutely intolerant of the ideologies and opinions contrary to the Catholic religion, and their propaganda must be absolutely and decisively banished in all its forms, be it political, philosophical or proselytising for false religion."

Miss Moore deserves our thanks for a short but extremely informative contribution to a small but efficacious pamphlet, which I recommend to all who are interested in freedom. I am sure it will provide its readers with a better insight into conditions in Spain.

Whether the Spanish people's second war against Fascism is as close as the various writers seem to think, I do not know. When it does come, however, freedom lovers throughout the world must ensure that the effort is not sabotaged as before. And the last struggle, though unsuccessful, can give encouragement, for, in the words of Arturo Barea:—

"Men came from all countries, races and corners of the earth and offered their lives to defend Spain, to defend Madrid; to defend freedom. . . . The soil of Spain was drenched with the blood of men from all over the world—with the blood of Man."

More blood may have to be shed. "Tyranny like hell is not easily conquered," as that great fighter, Thomas Paine, told another nation striving for its freedom. Yet a great cause demands great effort and sacrifice, and there is no greater cause than the liberation of humanity.

C. McCALL.

FICTION AND FIGURES

II.—THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

TOWARDS the end of May, 1942, the Rev. S. J. Davies, of Anfield, Liverpool, sent a letter to the "Liverpool Post" which was published under the heading of "Church and Social Doctrine."

As was King Charles's head to Mr. Dick, so is the abolition of slavery to the parsonry in general; sooner or later, in all their writings, the hoary fiction that all the credit for it goes to Christianity, is sure to crop up, so of course the Rev. S. J. Davies cited it as "a supreme example of Christian endeavour."

Upon this, Mr. John McManus of Liverpool, a bonny fighter for rationalism, whose name is familiar to all freethinking denizens of Merseyside, in a letter to the "Post" on June 2, pointed out that whilst due credit must be given to the efforts of Wilberforce and Clarkson, at least four-fifths of the leaders in the fight for reform were non-churchmen, such as Paine, Lloyd Garrison, Franklyn, Jefferson, Bentham, J. S. Mill, Ricardo, Burdett, Grote and Shelley.

This elicited a letter published on June 4, 1942, from another clerical gentleman, the Rev. Leslie E. Evans, of St. Thomas's Parish Church, St Helens, who admitted that:—

"Many churchmen, myself included, would endorse the opinion expressed by Mr. McManus that the Rev. S. J. Davies chose an unfortunate illustration in citing the abolition of slavery as 'a supreme example of Christian endeavour' towards social reform, and would agree that a great share of the credit goes to those who were not professing Christians."

but wanted to know:—

"Could the enlightened humanism of which Mr. McManus speaks have come into being apart from the antecedent Christian ethic from which it drew its substance and vitality?"

Next, the Rev. S. J. Davies himself made an *amende honorable* by a letter on June 5, in which he wrote:—

"I defer to Mr. McManus's historical judgment and admit with shame that the abolitionists received far greater support from the secular humanitarians than from the official leaders of the Church. He is undeniably right in saying that four-fifths of the supporters were non-churchmen but . . . if the secular philanthropists no longer called themselves Christians, who can doubt but that the sentiment of such philanthropy sprang from a source ultimately Christian and was the fruit of some 1,500 years of Christian influence on European society?"

Now to figure it out: we may safely suppose that at that period—say from 1775 to 1800—some 60 per cent. at least of the population were practising Christians, attached to one or other of the Christian denominations, leaving about 40 per cent. others indifferent or hostile to Christianity.

It is common ground that this latter group provided four out of five of the active humanitarians, that is four out of 40 or one in ten non-Christians against one out of 60 Christians, i.e., it required 500 per cent. *more* Christians to produce one sound humanitarian.

As both our clerical friends *insist* that the emergence of these humanists was due fundamentally to the Christian ethic and the influence of 1,500 years of Christianity, it follows that the preaching of the Church was six times as effective amongst those who neglected or openly repudiated its teachings than amongst its own members, and, to paraphrase the poet:—

"Heard sermons are good but
unheard six times better."

is the curious, but only logical conclusion to be drawn from this clerical clap-trap.

W. A. GOURMAND.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ABSOLUTE BEING

A Warning to Skinflints

ARE we yet prepared to pay the price for world-wide progressive peace?

Or are we still mentally wool gathering amongst inflated and extravagant delusions as to the course of future Human actions, similar to those which bewitched us between 1919 and 1939.

The report on the coal industry by those who should gauge present facts and future needs with the requisite exactitude, reveals an amazing condition of antiquated methods and outlook.

Probing the human element gives cause for serious concern regarding the present conditions, methods and prospects of other vital industries and institutions.

When war in the Far East ceases the various nations will be faced by two alternatives, either to prepare for, and enter, a scientific world of realities, or the corridor to speedy and final oblivion by means of muddled, sterile inertia or obliterating war.

Production, industry, and commerce, as experienced between the two wars, is sufficient warning—to the discerning—of the need for comprehensive technical enquiry, and studied recommendations in every important avenue of human effort, if any development of enduring and progressive methods is to obtain, for this, and future, generations in our Western Civilisation.

In a nutshell mankind will be faced with a world-wide revolution. Planned or otherwise.

A second alarming sequence of wholesale wishful thinking and delusion, followed by the inevitable devastating realisation of facts, must be prevented at all cost.

The financial industry, or utility, wrecked the Versailles Treaty, owing to the inflated megalomania of the master minds operating therein. Who—until too late—looked upon sound advice or criticism as mere lunacy.

The views of these leading lights and their outlook and general diagnosis of the conditions then obtaining, were proved, by events, to be outrageously fantastic, and the seeds of this second volcanic eruption.

Have we yet realised the price of financial peace and progress?

A factual and realistic enquiry is needed into the scientific effects of stupendous, and continually increasing, unpayable, interest bearing, National debts, with no regard whatsoever as to repayment.

Such a policy being mere fantastic madness from the viewpoint of Race Survival, for which a Realistic conception of the Future is the vital and fundamental pre-requisite, whilst delusive dreams are one of the greatest enemies of successful survival on this mundane plane.

The principle of modern building societies' mortgage repayment opens the way to a solution. A very slight increase in the annual interest, over a period of years, extinguishing the debt.

The conventional outlook upon the drama of human destiny lacks the realistic upstage scenery emphasising the evolutionary sequence of human life, thought, aspiration and custom, from the Stone Age through the succeeding periods, illuminating the so far vain attempts to produce an enduring happy race continuity, by depicting the numerous dead cultures, beliefs and races.

Our scales of loyalties, and values, utterly failed to guide the nation along the path of realities subsequent to the Versailles Treaty.

Our conventional philosophy and ethics engendered the disposition to trust to religious superstitions and delusions, to guide mankind into the ways of peaceful progress—or stagnation.

Ascertained and verified facts revealed by the continuous and untiring industry of scientific research and enquiry, have demonstrated the true relationship of mankind to our terrestrial and celestial environment; and the relative importance and significance of this tiny planet (and the vegetable and animal life therein, the atmosphere being part of the structure) comparatively with the innumerable host of celestial bodies.

Some scientific, competent, and detached exposition of mankind's responsibility for a united effort to co-ordinate our scales of loyalties, and values, according to universal needs, rather than serving sectional ends, is imperative—if peace is to endure.

Our financial methods and outlook, together with our ethics and philosophy must be so regulated, and understood, as to serve mankind, rather than financial and religious institutions, and the delusions associated therewith by their leading lights.

Out cant, humbug, superstition and delusions, the coming conditions will revolutionise.

Plan—and Plan Realistically, mere theoretical and convention-tied thinking will inevitably spell Catastrophe.

CHRISTOPHER W. ADAMSON.

CHAPEL LOSSES

One explanation offered as to the diminution of members in the Methodist Church is that "God himself is stultified by the weakness and folly of his instruments." Well, if that were true, God made the instruments, and it says little for his handiwork that it was of such a feeble quality. With the Methodists and other sects bemoaning their losses, and the Archbishop of Canterbury advertising the increase of Atheism, the outlook for religion as a whole is about as black as it can be.

ACID DROPS

"Woe betide us if we try to make peace without God," says Archbishop Godfrey (R.C.). Well, we would lay a fairly solid amount that God will not appear in the making of the Peace. There may be much talking about God nowadays, but when serious things are under consideration those concerned forget God and get down to something like common sense, or the normal chicanery of these after-war arrangements.

In what way could the peace be made *with* God? God did nothing to stop the war. He did nothing in the dark days when it looked as though Germany might overrun this country. Was the belief in God any guarantee, a guarantee of honesty and decent behaviour? The representatives of the different countries that are now in session carving up Germany do not open their business with prayers. If these men cannot act decently *without* God it is quite certain that they will not present the world with a real peace with him.

We see that Russia is reported that its Navy will be rebuilt stronger when this war is over. And we have already laid plans for building up weapons of "Defence" so that we may never be caught napping. And, we admit, that if that is the only way we can face the future then war is inevitable. War planes and cannon are made for use, not for mere exhibition. And we are now getting the lesson right before our eyes that there is no such thing as gaining in a war. It is only a question of how much are we to lose. Those that lose the least are said to have won. Our politicians tell us over again that Germany came near wrecking civilisation. But the indication of that truth in its relation to future wars is ignored.

Already our leading journals are beginning to press home the moral of the world war. This is that we must go on making new and still more effective instruments of war. Articles in leading papers are beginning to tell us that we must not fall back into the error made in previous years. In a special article in the "Sunday Times," for example, we are informed that the manufacturers of war-time weapons are beginning to wonder whether "another slough of disinterest" in manufacturing war implements will set in. Well, without discussing whether we ought or ought not to expend our energies in manufacturing still more deadly weapons of war, we are certain that preparation for war is the surest way of securing it. If the lesson of the war that is not yet ended is to get ready for a more deadly one, then this world war will have been largely in vain. As the Allies stand to-day, there is an opportunity of ending national wars. And the road to that is to make national wars criminal, with an international army that will act as a police force does in civic life.

Things move, and with regard to religion the movements are, as God's commercial representatives see it, in the wrong direction. For example, it is reported that an official at Durban (South Africa) has discovered that the reason for our convoys getting through was "that the usual treacherous weather was 90 per cent. favourable." That is God all over. He was on our side ninety per cent. But why, in the name of all reason, did he not make it 100 per cent.? Of course, the incident of the 90 per cent. of favourable weather is sheer lunacy, but a striking evidence of the weakening of religion in South Africa is that "the Rand Daily Mail" has the courage to say that the theory places "the Deity down to the status of a rain-maker of a primitive tribe." That is really bringing the matter near the truth.

Bishop Poskitt is of opinion that the passing of the new Education Act was Catholicism's Dunkirk—though it is not particularly clear whether this means that the Church suffered a terrible defeat or whether the Church managed to salvage almost all its assets in the affair. Just like old England, the Bishop intimated that they would never give in—never cease demanding, he meant, that the British people be made to pay for an education entirely dominated by Rome without any interference by the State. It is just like asking his Catholic

friend Franco in Spain not only to allow Protestantism to be freely practised there, but to pay for it to be taught. Would Bishop Poskitt fight for that—in Spain?

The Rev. W. H. Elliott informs readers of the "Sunday Graphic" that he cannot pass the phrase, "Those who will not return,"—with reference to men who have fallen in the world war. That people should say so proves that "this country is pagan to the core." We wish that these newspaper preachers would make up their minds as to where and what we are. One moment they inform us that we are Christians without knowing it; the next week they tell us that we are non-Christians to the core. Judging from his writing Mr. Elliott must think they are not far short from being fools. He should join hands with Joad, as they seem to match each other. But it is a method that sooner or later leads to disaster.

Mr. Elliott closes his sermon with, "I know what I am talking about." We think we know what he really means. That should run, "I know the kind of people I am talking to." That really seems to fit the situation. To paraphrase an old saying, any man may succeed in fooling some of the people all the time, but it is risky trying to fool *all* the people *all* the time.

If we may judge from a recent preaching by the Rev. Mr. Pendill of Queen Street, Sheffield, the religious outlook is not rosy. He says it has "to face the unpleasant outlook that for large sections of the population it might as well not exist. Youth club leaders say their lads would no more think of attending a church service than a total abstainer would think of spending his evening in a public house. Chaplains say that the bulk of the men in the Forces consider that the Church has no relevance to the problems of everyday life and look upon church going as a dull and peculiar sort of pastime." And he adds, "May we not be compelled, however reluctantly, to admit that in its present form it has outlived its purpose." That seems to hit the mark. But why does not the man come out of the Church altogether?

Foreigners who do not know how the plan is worked might easily come to the conclusion that the British people are above all things a very religious people. His evidence would be that nearly every paper—particularly local ones—devotes space to the advocacy of religion, and very little is said by way of criticism. Those who know how the matter is worked mainly wink the other eye, and in this, eye-winking on the part of the clergy must be very common.

Here is an example of the type of mentality that expresses itself in the Exeter "Express and Echo":—

"There is something transcendent of power and beauty in a faith which made the defendants of Scotland's freedom kneel in prayer on the eve of Bannockburn, which inspired Cromwell and his Ironsides to do what they dared and did."

But the Royalists also prayed to God, and particularly the King, who deservedly lost his head. In this matter we suggest that God does not act fairly. He has both sides praying to Him, with the result that He can claim to be a winner however the conflict ends. An even with this "backing both sides" kind of sport it was human grit and scientific skill in this war that won, and against one of the most religious outbursts that the world has seen for centuries.

Writing in the "Sunday Express," Mr. E. Taylor makes a suggestion that is likely, if adopted, to help the Churches. He says that in his district, London, E. 7, it is difficult to have a well-earned glass of beer without the unwarrantable interference of a temperance zealot armed with various tracts. So Mr. Taylor suggests that the public houses should send their potmen into the Churches urging the congregation to try a glass of old and mild when they feel tired. That is quite an original suggestion. It would call attention to the Churches, and that is what the clergy are striving to do. And if samples of beer were given—?

"THE FREETHINKER"

2 and 3, Furnival Street, Holborn,
London, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: Holborn 2601.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

The Secretary of the Benevolent Fund gratefully acknowledges the sum of 5s. 8d. from Mrs. E. Payne.

For "THE FREETHINKER."—Mrs. J. Skillings, 4s. 9d.

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

The following appeared in "Stars and Stripes" (a weekly paper issued by the American Forces in England) for July 21:—

"TEACH HISTORY, NOT RELIGION."

To the B-Bag:

With all due respects to Chaplain Stagg—because I am also a firm believer in religious freedom—I feel compelled to challenge his letter as essentially one of opinion. Almost without exception the statements he so calmly passes off as facts wither away in the verdict of history.

E.g.: 'The foundation of democracy is the Hebrew-Christian Faith.' Is the Chaplain familiar with the old age of Taoism? Confucianism? Does he realise that had old Brother Calvin (or the Spanish Inquisitionists) had his way that Christianity to-day would be just about as democratic as Herr Schickelgruber himself? (See 'Castello versus Calvin,' by Stephan Zweig, an Austrian Jew).

Religious education in the public schools is a farce unless it presents all religions: Oriental, Occidental, Australasian, that of the Eskimo and the Red Indian, and finally Agnosticism and Atheism. Although I wouldn't impugn this to Chaplain Stagg, the standard text book usually recommended for religious education is the Holy Bible, some preferring the King James Version, others the Vulgate. I do agree with the Chaplain that we should study our heritage: spiritual, economic, political, scientific, et al; but this can be done only with history—not with religious education.—S/Sgt. Robert M. Jordan, HQ., 94th Bomb Group."

If we may borrow a phrase from the U.S.A. we may say that it is "horse sense." We are quite certain that sensible Christians will not attempt a reply—but foolish Christians—who can tell?

A new book on Spiritualism has just been published written by Fr. O'Neill, which, while admitting fraud and other natural causes for most of the phenomena, "maintains that there is an irreducible minimum of genuine manifestations." But the explanation given by Fr. O'Neill is that most of the irreducible minimum is produced by "diabolical intervention." In fact, the Devil must come in somewhere if the Church is to survive. If a man has a fit, that proves there's a devil in him;

or if it is some other mysterious ailment, from Jesus downwards to the poor parish priest they are all ready to "exorcise" the fiend. The Devil and the Cross have been the Church's Saviours.

Perhaps the Belfast people deserve having a "Brains Trust," although it is a very harsh thing to say they deserve it. But judging from the report in the "Belfast Telegraph" the proceedings were anything but encouraging. The newspaper in question called it a lop-sided Brains Trust, which is not a very cheerful way of describing it, but if it continues it will serve the purpose of the English Brains Trust which is made up of four-fifths of the kind of brain exercise that one might expect to hear in an institution that amused without enlightening.

Professor Joad was there and ran true to form. On a question whether religion should be given to children, Joad advised that instruction should not be given by Atheists and agnostics, which means they should be taught only by those who will not tell the truth. His reason for barring Atheists and Agnostics was that religion was a question involved in the children's happiness in this world and salvation in the next. It never seems to dawn on the poor fellow that the choice is whether we should tell lies or truths about religion. Professor Joad plumps for the lies. But he may change on another occasion.

Those who keep their eyes on what is going on in the Roman Catholic Press in this country and in the U.S.A. will recognise that the tiger has not changed its nature. It is the Church that comes first—and last. A little light was cast on the matter in the "Sunday Pictorial" for July 22. Dr. Salazar is a strong Roman Catholic; he is Prime Minister of Portugal, with the result that the people are living under the most drastic of dictatorships. They are allowed little freedom in politics and, above all, nothing must be said in favour of Russia. The people are not allowed to know that Stalin is very much in the front. On VE-Day the people were permitted to shout "Long Live America," "Long Live Britain," but "Long Live Russia" was not permitted.

The chief of the Portuguese Propagandist Society admitted that "Freedom" in Portugal meant something different to what it meant elsewhere. "This is not England," he explained, "the Portuguese temperament is not the same." The writer of the article saw printed in Portugal—before the collapse—a pamphlet which pictured on the front page portraits of Franco, Salazar, Hitler and Mussolini, as the four great leaders of the world. We should point out that all these men belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. The "Sunday Pictorial" carefully omitted that information.

The Rev. D. Harrison is a super-optimist. He told a Church Union meeting that "The Holy Spirit glowed in that part of Christ's Holy Catholic Church called the Church of England." That may be true, but the "glow" of the Spirit must be of a peculiar quality. If about twenty-five per cent. of the attendants make the buildings "glow," a little increase of worshippers would probably set every Church on fire.

The Churches, particularly the Roman Branch, are very sore at not being called to shed the light of their presence at the meeting of the Allies in Berlin. Some of them have spoken out quite freely, others have fallen back on the ultra-idiotic cry, "Woe betide us if we try to make peace without God." But why? The religious cry should have been that God will not wait for a formal invitation; he, or it, should have been there to influence Churchill and Stalin in the right direction. A decent human being if he had the power to influence people on what he conceived to be the right road would see they got on it. A heavenly father, if he saw his children taking the wrong road should do what he could to guide them. But God seems to sit up aloft doing nothing and says that if he is not to receive the homage and praise of men then they can go to hell in their own way. It will be remembered that the English people did ask God for help when the war broke out, but in the long run they had to rely upon ships, planes, bombing—and the ungodly pluck of our men and women.

THE MYSTICAL SCIENTIST

THE mystery-mongering and sensation-mongering of the B.B.C. and of the Press gives all the indications of deliberate policy. This applies also to the publication of books, even those of a scientific character. No doubt the motives are many and various, but there is also an undercurrent of genuine misunderstanding, what J. M. Robertson used to call "Learned ignorance."

This obscurantism of modern sophistry goes so far as to deny "common sense" and to set up a new hierarchy of "experts and specialists," who alone can expound the esotericism of modern science. Thus "common" sense is identified with unsophisticated ignorance, and the "scientist," complete with old school tie, is an inspired genius. The "reverence" for "science" is applied to the "scientist," who thus achieves the "odour of sanctity" due to his exalted position of "authority."

These "scientific" sophists overwhelm their readers with a mass of detail and journalese, and make confusion worse confounded by trying to square the circle with the idea that there is no conflict between science and religion. But, science can only be understood as an evolutionary process, involving the gradual elimination of superstition. Each of the main branches of science commences with and emerges from a confused mass of superstitious practices and beliefs, and this modern esoteric obscurantism is evidence that modern science is by no means free from this lingering mysticism.

Astronomy provides the best example of all this. Literature on this subject, even works by reputed authorities, appears to deliberately bemuse and confuse. The reader is literally submerged in a deluge of facts and figures of an exceptionally expressive character. Indeed, the authors appear to be thoroughly enjoying themselves. After taking you up and up and up, whirling round and round, they leave you suspended in space and time, as Chapman Cohen would say, like an intellectual vagrant, without visible means of support; faced with the eternal question whence, whither, wherefor, why? and with the certainty of ultimate extinction.

Truly an excellent method of mystical contemplation; of producing unusual psychological states. Nothing so gigantic, nothing so magnificent, nothing so remote. The reader is brought right "out of himself," he forgets the worries, the troubles and trials of this vale of tears; "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." It is all so impressive, the numbers, the distances, the speeds, the magnitudes; nothing could be more calculated to produce a sense of one's own impotence. And the author appears to be equally "lost" in his subject. Surely this is just the right mental atmosphere for religion; just the psychological moment for the entrance of a parson. "The heavens reveal the power of the Lord."

This is the way modern science is transformed into the "supreme mystery."

This "scientific" mysticism shows a desire to escape from the logical conclusions of the scientific development. It achieves its object by playing upon expressive details, while ignoring or glossing over the most vital considerations. It is an exact reversal of the process of scientific development, which has been a struggle to escape from the bondage of superstition.

The evolution of astronomy can be traced back to the inception of its most elementary aspects. We have records of savage tribes who took so little notice of such things that there was no word for the sun in their language. The earliest attention to celestial matters appears among more nomadic peoples, such as the American Indians who counted the number of days by so many moons. This simple fact indicates the first factor in astronomical science, the measurement of time. That these American Indians also conceived the stars as the camp fires of

deceased chiefs in the spirit realm is also an indication of the origin of its superstitious aspect.

But men only began to take a more active interest in the celestial bodies when they began to cultivate the soil and gather the crops. Then, the need for calculating the change of the seasons, and the time for seed sowing necessitated some attempt at the construction of a calendar and astronomy began to appear. But it is as well to remember that science as understood to-day is quite a modern concept. Our semi-civilised ancestors conceived these things in animistic terms. These celestial bodies were living things and the effects of the sun and its movements upon the growth of vegetation was magic. These celestial influences were far more potent than the camp fires of dead chiefs, they were identified with, and worshipped as gods; and the ritual and ceremonial was magic and divination. That these people were not conscious of measuring time can be shown in the case of the Peruvians who thought that their dawn ceremonial made the sun rise.

The sky gods became more and more important, and, as they superseded and absorbed other gods they also took over the powers attributed to them, so that, not only did their magic affect vegetation, but gradually came to dominate the lives and destinies of men. In Egypt, in Sumeria and Babylon, we can see the development of an increasingly complicated mystical system. In its practical aspect it gave comparatively accurate methods of observation and calculation. But in its theoretical aspect we find a hopeless tangle of beliefs of such a mystical character as to baffle interpretation. The character of this hopelessly extravagant mysticism can be seen in the apocalyptic parts of the Christian Bible.

Poetic metaphor developing into symbolism and allegory, further confused by an inability to think in abstract terms. Thus, time and space were spiritual entities, personified and conceived as gods. Cronos was time and Uranus was the heavens. Only with the advent of the Greek philosophers did these things begin to be conceived as abstractions, and Cronos became the god of time, Uranus the god of celestial space. The development from superstitious mysticism to philosophical abstraction was a slow and painful process. The intellectual confusion of the period may be seen in the astrological mysticism of the Christian Gnostics.

But astronomy had become philosophical, and out of this confused mass of astrological mysticism the science of astronomy began to emerge. Only by separating the wheat from the chaff have we been able to follow its development; to realise what men have been doing as distinct from what they have been thinking about it. Men were using astronomical observation in measuring time, in navigation, in geography; but their minds were too filled with superstitious and mystical notions for them to have been consciously developing a science. It was the social need of a growing civilisation which determined the development.

Such men as Ptolemy, Tycho Brahe and Kepler were astrologers, to call them astronomers is to lose sight of the fact that astronomy had not been liberated from the bondage of this astrological mysticism. Ptolemy's epicycle theory was frankly part of a system of astrological mysticism, and we have only to think of Kepler's fantastic efforts to devise a system of angular planetary orbits to see that his ideas were distinctly mystical. That even Isaac Newton was sympathetic towards such things is shown by his attempts to interpret apocalyptic biblical prophecy.

The social need for greater accuracy, and observation over a greater geographical area, made the epicycle theory increasingly complicated. It was the practical difficulties which necessitated a simpler and more comprehensive theory. If the heliocentric theory of Copernicus had been just another mystical system there would not have been so much trouble. The real jolt came from the essentially practical considerations of the rotundity of the

earth, and with Galileo's telescope demonstrating the similarity of the earth and the planets, the whole mystical system collapsed. These things could no longer be conceived as spiritual. Established institutions and ideas were challenged. The conflict was both sociological and psychological, and it was in the very bitterness of this conflict that men learned to consciously strive to avoid intellectual confusion; and our conception of scientific method is a consequence of it. The scientific method is, in fact, a system of check and counter-check designed to avoid the dangers of the unrestrained imagination and emotion of superstitious mysticism. The evolutionary development of science is thus seen to be one long struggle to escape from this host of mystical fancies and metaphysical abstractions.

When Isaac Newton gave us his dynamic gravitational theory, it was said that he had "turned god out of his own universe," but there still remained the assumption of such intangible things as forces of gravitation and inertia, of time and space as separate metaphysical entities. The parson could still say, "The heavens reveal the power of the Lord"; that a Great Machine was the work of a Great Mind. And now, Einstein appears on the scene. "Lo and behold a Great Mystery," say our mentors, "A mystery which can only be understood by experts." But again, they are completely reversing the facts. The mystery lies not in Einstein's theory of relativity but in the metaphysical and mystical notions which we have inherited, and from which we have been striving to escape. Thus, space and time are two aspects of experience and cannot be separated in fact; like gravitational forces they are abstractions. So far from producing a mystery, Einstein has swept them aside as unnecessary. "The aim of science," says Einstein, "is to produce an explanation with a minimum of assumptions." So he gives us a theory with but two assumptions and a mathematical formula. The two assumptions are, first, the estimated speed of light, and second, that light travels at the same speed in all directions. By using Riemann's geometry, using the time factor as a fourth dimension, we are calculating events in space-time. The supposed mystery of "curved space" disappears if we realise that, in Riemann's mathematic, a straight line is zero curvature, and that we have a method of calculating a curved path of light, such as that through a gravitational field, without the assumption of forces gravitational or any other.

What now becomes of the "eternal verities"? If Newton left us the ghost of a god, even that has now gone. The religionist is faced with a problem, but to the Atheist, who is concerned with understanding experience, there is no "Riddle of the Universe."

We can well understand the feelings, the emotional reactions of our semi-civilised ancestors, we can even trace it in a book on modern astronomy. The remoteness, and yet, the intimacy. They were in constant contemplation of celestial events and we can understand that the development of these ideas connected with them mark a culture stage in man's social development.

But we are more fortunate, we have only to look at our clocks and watches, our calendars, our nautical almanacs and maps. We have only to look at the signpost and keep to the roads which we have built. We have no more need of guidance from the heavenly hosts.

H. H. PREECE.

FETTERS

I regard with horror all those whose business is to keep the human spirit and the human intellect in fetters. I include among these almost all ministers of religion, a large proportion of school teachers, 90 per cent. of magistrates and judges, and a large proportion of those who have earned the respect of the community by their insistence on what is called a rigid moral standard.—BERTRAND RUSSELL.

HITLER AND LUTHER

I WAS very glad to read Mr. H. Cutner's helpful review of Mr. Peter F. Wiener's book "Martin Luther, Hitler's spiritual ancestor" (Hutchinson, 2s. 6d.). Amongst the many attempts to come to the root of the German trouble Mr. Wiener's is the only one which points to the true source of the German and our catastrophe: religion. It points in other words to the German Reformation, of which Luther was the guiding spirit.

Hitler, though a Catholic, has followed the Lutheran tradition and that quite consciously, for he said: "The German Church, without a Pope and without the Bible, and Luther, if he could be with us, would give us his blessings."

Strange to say that even the mentality of Hitler has something of Luther's. Both could only speak well when in a rage. Luther's rages were followed by deep depressions, which he used to attribute to the Devil. Hitler too was plagued by the Devil of Depression, during which he used to break out in hysterical weeping fits. Luther threw an inkpot at the Devil, Hitler used to bite carpets. As we must be just even to enemies, we must not forget the counterpart to these maniac-depressive states: both Luther and Hitler were deeply impressed by music. It seems to have been the escape valve for their dark broodings. Hitler was a confirmed Wagnerian, who much deplored that after the attempt on his life his drums were perforated, so that he could no more hear the higher notes of "Tristan and Isolde." When an English colonel once asked him why he was so enamoured of Wagner, Hitler replied: "Er spielt meinen Glauben" (he plays my creed). Wagner also gave an intellectual lead to the Fuehrer with his prose writings, which, though translated into English, have never been taken into consideration over here. Wagner too was a Nationalist, a Socialist, an Antisemite. Wagner's son-in-law's, Houston Stewart Chamberlain's book, "The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century," was the bedside book of both William II. and Hitler. It preaches what enthusiastic critics on Right and Left greeted with rapture in 1911 (the date of its English publication): a muscular Christianity—the muscularity appealing to the Right and the Christianity to the Left. Thus religion, and nothing but religion, is the root of our trouble. Politics and economics are only secondary reasons.

English critics, but also the French Professor, Edmond Vermeil, of the Sorbonne, have objected that Calvinism is not Lutheranism and that the former creed has not led to a general catastrophe. But let them not forget that Calvin's Theocracy of Geneva was likewise a reign of terror which even continued after Calvin's death: "Within 60 years of Calvin's advent the registers of Geneva show that 150 poor wretches were burnt for witchcraft, that the application of torture was an incident of almost all criminal trials and that 31 people went to the stake for the fantastic offence of spreading the plague," says the historian, C. A. Beard. As a matter of fact Calvin, as the head of a State, gave to us with his Theocracy the first example of a Totalitarian State, with this difference—that in our time the religious Redeemers were replaced by National Saviours.

When will we get rid of Saviours?

When will we get rid of Christianity and its Jewish fountain-head: a faith which declared a whole people as "chosen," as "Herrenvolk" which was sent by Providence to rule the universe? . . . Only by honesty, by sobriety, by understanding. Only by following Spinoza's advice: "Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere" (not to laugh, not to mourn, not to hate, but to understand).

It is for this understanding that Mr. Wiener's book has been rightly recommended by your reviewer. It should enlighten even those who still hope for a true Christianity against what they think a sham Christianity. How can anyone, with our experiences of the two world wars, still expect anything from

Christianity, which now has had a run of 2,000 years, and finally produced a Luther, a William II., a Hitler? Can the leopard change his spots, or Christianity its intolerance?

"Scratch the Christian and out comes the Fanatic." Now a fanatic cannot change without losing his entire balance. That is the reason why, in spite of all experience and evidence, some people will go on expecting the miracle of a "true Christianity." Which reminds me of a Spanish story:

Two men in a cafe were discussing how a lion roars. One said it roared in B Minor, the other in G Flat. They could not agree so they went to the Zoo, poked the lion and the lion roared exactly as Spaniard No. 1 said. Whereupon No. 2 Spaniard shouted at the animal: "That is not the way to roar for a lion!"

That is not the way to roar for a true Christian!

That may be the answer of many a stubborn believer to Mr. Wiener's excellent book.

OSCAR LEVY.

(Editor of the authorised English translation of Nietzsche's works).

"LENIN ON RELIGION"

THE review, July 15, 1945, by S. H., of "Lenin on Religion" is interesting and quite correct, within limits. Still, to understand Lenin's attitude and policy in relation to the "anti-religious struggle"; and still more, relatively to the Sociological (economic, political, moral, etc.) evolution of the "U.K. at home, overseas and abroad"; a much deeper and more exact analysis is required—if results are to be reliable. Perhaps a comment may be helpful; even if it be a jump ahead of the task in hand and head.

"Freethinkers" are something more than mere disbelievers in Religion (Godism) and are not necessarily Rebels: never merely Rebels. They are those—a small minority—who want to understand the Human World into which they have become Individuals—so far as it can be understood. Lenin was a Freethinker, but the scope of his Freethought, at any given time, was conditioned by his experiences in family, school, peasant life in Volga districts, University, etc. His eldest brother, a member of the People's Freedom Party, was executed in 1887, when Lenin was 17. "Liberal Society" in Simbirsk "shunned" the Ulyanov family. "This . . . taught him (Lenin) what the high-flown chatter of the Liberals was really worth." "Narodism (People's Freedom Party) still exercised enormous influence over the revolutionary minded intelligentsia." "Many of them began their revolutionary thinking as Narodnaya Volyaists (People's Freedom Party). Nearly all of them . . . worshipped the terrorist heroes."

Out of all this, Lenin, as one of the first Marxists in Russia, started to study Marx in order to get a Scientific Understanding of the Principles applicable to Human Social Evolution, and Darwin did the same in Biology in order to get a Scientific Understanding of the principles applicable to "The Origin of Species" and the "Descent of Man." Having attained sufficient Scientific Understanding, each was able to "tell the World," as Laplace told Napoleon, "We do not need the hypothesis of Godism." ("Hypotheses" is more correct; for their name is Legion!) They did not begin as Atheists: their Scientific Atheism was the outcome of their understanding in Biology and Sociology: it is the Ideologic side of Atheism. The Economic side is the Practical side, when the "Common People" realise, by bitter experience, that no Godism is any good to them. (It's generally expressed in much stronger "langwidge"; but even "our" Editor has a blue pencil!) If or when the two—Ideologic and Practical—become welded into a Political Unity, there emerges an Irresistible Force which can shift and scatter any

previously Immovable Mass of Minority Privilege—in Peace or in War.

Conditions compelled Lenin and the Party to work underground, in secret. Lenin, the great Leader, in organising the Party and controlling its activities had to act in many different capacities. On the one hand Christian Godism was a Social Phenomenon still of great force, especially among the Peasants; and as such, had to be recognised as a factor. On the other hand, all sorts of Ideologic theories were confusing and politically castrating various sections of "Middle Class" people: Dream Anarchist-Communists, Terrorists, Liberal Parliamentarians, Mystics, etc., in a decadent, disintegrating, Society had to be fought by dialectic means, as much as the police and other forces of Tsarism. It was against these elements, chiefly, that Lenin took part in the "anti-religious" struggle; because he saw he had to fight the fancy philosophic-idealists, the mystics, political trimmers, etc., as well as the forces of the Church, before he could achieve the necessary Unity. He succeeded, in spite of many mistakes, some effects of which still remain.

Something of the same analysis applies to Stalin; and few appear to realise how near Stalin and the other U.S.S.R.ian Leaders were to "missing the bus" before they corrected their errors. What we have to realise and understand is that the change in policy which "Stalin" made, because it had to be made, was—in a way—the exact opposite of the change in Policy made by G. W. Foote, and which has been steadfastly maintained and developed by Chapman Cohen.

"Stalin's" change in Policy has brought success to the U.S.S.R.ian hands. Foote's change in Policy is now bringing success to Secularism, as the only Philosophy compatible with the Principles of Democracy. "Educated" people have no need for the Hypotheses of Godism. The Common People are giving "Almighty God" the bird—although it has taken two World Wars to convince them that, of all useless Beliefs and Practices, Godism is the worst.

"Glory to Man in the Highest,
For Man is the Master of Things."

ATHOSO ZENOO.

"HOW IT STARTED"

ACCORDING to Genesis, in six days God created this world, and one man out of nothing, and after all the nothing was used up, with not even a bone, there was Adam—in the Garden of Eden—all on his own!

And it was noticed that Adam was lonely, although he never made any fuss, he just hung about—like a man waiting for a bus. But God decided to take a chance and put Adam into a trance, and while in this state doth separate Adam from one of his ribs, or a cutlet as a Frenchman might say, and from this rib was Eve adorned, and considering the amount of material used, 'twas the first operation performed.

Well, after he'd got the woman done, she was introduced to Adam, not to see how she approved of him, but to see how he approved of her; of course Adam "fell" for Eve at first sight, so they took up housekeeping that night! And although everything in the Garden was lovely, there was a tree of forbidden fruit, and also a snake in the grass, and if Genesis had only chosen a parrot, it might have sounded more plausible. But no, this was a talking serpent, controlled by the Devil himself, and this snake-charmer influenced Eve to tempt Adam to the Apple Tree, and from there the trouble started! It was a "lark," for they were both chucked out of the park by an invisible policeman who paced about to keep them both out.

And from that day to this all kind of troubles have thrived; from wars, strikes, black-outs and lock-outs, mumps, measles, hiccup—and wives!

ALEX. S. KNOX.

DUM (PER) SPIRO SPERO

I hope to see the day come when
Our life's not built on flukes;
When Dukes are made from Noble men,
Not "Noblemen" from Dukes.

For noble is who noble does,
And honour should be shown . . .
And life's rewards should go to those
Who finer things have done!

I hope, some day, that Priests confess
(With candour, perhaps, odd),
That while they wish men's work to bless,
They nothing know of God.

And cease to Speak For God, as though
They know what's in His mind!
For only Greater minds can know
The thoughts of lesser kind.

For centuries, "Omniscience"
Has managed to despoil;
And dukes and priests, in arrogance,
Usurped our fruits of toil.

And let us hope All men will try
(Although it may seem funny),
To work to help their fellows by
And not for greed of money.

And Politicians too, may be
For honesty extolled,
And work to make the people free
And not to corner Gold!

Thus, Paradise on earth may come
And Parsons may be truthful . . .
And possibly there might be some
Who'd think of being useful!

And no more unctious words exude
With artificial voice,
To make their verbose platitude
Seem Wisdom that is choice!

And let us hope, and let us strive . . .
(And see that we achieve it),
So beautiful a World contrive
That none will want to leave it.

For "Other Worlds" that parsons tell
Have never been explored;
While many make this world a Hell
By cruelty and fraud.

They put us off with spurious tales
Of "Pie up in the sky,"
And then consume our cakes and ales
And fool us till we die.

R. S. BOYS.

OBITUARY

MR. WILLIAM ELLIS, OF LEEDS.

Another old Freethought stalwart has left our ranks from the Leeds district in the death of Mr. William Ellis, of 147, Meanwood Road, Leeds. Mr. Ellis, who was aged 82, was a lifelong Freethinker, being the son of an Atheist who was one of the keen rank and file of the Bradlaugh generation. Like his father, William Ellis had the pleasure of knowing the fighting leaders of the stormy Victorian period. An ardent "Freethinker" supporter since it was first issued, Mr. Ellis believed that this journal and its writers form the spearhead of the militant Freethought movement. He leaves five sons and three daughters, thus constituting a third generation of Freethinkers in the same family. Mrs. Ellis died some years previously. According to his expressed wish, there was a Secular funeral service, this being at Harehills Cemetery on July 28, Mr. F. J. Corina officiating on behalf of the N.S.S. F. J. C.

A FREETHINKER'S VIEW OF TEACHING

The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards; and curiosity itself can be vivid and wholesome only in proportion as the mind is contented and happy. I know Jeanne! If that child were entrusted to my care I should make of her—not a learned woman, for I would look to her future happiness only—but a child full of bright intelligence and full of life, in whom everything beautiful in art or nature would awaken some gentle responsive thrill. I would teach her to live in sympathy with all that is beautiful—comely landscapes, the ideal scenes of poetry and history, the emotional charm of noble music. I would make lovable to her everything I would wish her to love. ANATOLE FRANCE ("The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard").

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

LONDON—OUTDOOR

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Sunday, 12 noon, Mr. L. EBURY. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30 p.m., Mr. L. EBURY.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Hyde Park).—Sunday, 6 p.m., various speakers.

COUNTRY—OUTDOOR

Accrington (Market).—Sunday, 7 p.m., Mr. J. CLAYTON will lecture.

Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Sunday, 7 p.m., Mr. F. J. CORINA will lecture.

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Car Park, Broadway).—Sunday, 6.30 p.m., Mr. HAROLD DAY, and various speakers.

Bristol Branch N.S.S. (Durdham Downs).—Sunday, 7 p.m., Mr. G. THOMPSON will lecture.

Cornholme (Lancs.).—Wednesday, August 8, 7.40 p.m., Mr. J. CLAYTON will lecture.

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (Mound).—Sunday, 7.30 p.m., a lecture.

Kingston-on-Thames Branch N.S.S. (Kingston Market Place).—Sunday, 7 p.m., Mr. J. W. BARKER will lecture.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Platt Fields).—Sunday, 3 p.m., Mr. F. J. CORINA (Bradford) will lecture.

Nottingham (Old Market Square).—Sunday, 7 p.m., Mr. T. M. MOSLEY will lecture.

Oswaldtwistle.—Thursday, August 9, 7.30 p.m., Mr. J. CLAYTON will lecture.

Todmorden (Market).—Saturday, August 4, 7.30 p.m., Mr. J. CLAYTON will lecture.

Worsthorne (Lancs.).—Friday, August 3, 7.30 p.m., Mr. J. CLAYTON will lecture.

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