

THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor : CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXV.—No. 35

Sunday, September 2, 1945

Price Threepence

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

How God Helps

ON Sunday, August 19, the King, with the rest of the Royal Family, journeyed to St. Paul's Cathedral to return thanks to God for his winning the war—for us. I put it that way because that is the plain and honest reason, the only reason, for the journey from the Palace to Saint Paul's. If we could have won the war by our own energies, courage and skill, thanking God for our victory would be a pretence where no pretence need have existed. So we assume, for the time being at least, that God won the war and we were mere tools in his hands. As a show the proceedings in the Cathedral were well enough staged; the audience was large; the sermon ran along the usual lines; the singing was first class; the sentiment expressed in the singing was precisely of the same quality as that expressed by the most primitive of peoples. If it could be determined we would wager that a very large percentage of those present had no more belief that God brought about our victory than we have. We are quite certain that one person present—Winston Churchill—was convinced, rightly convinced, that his handiwork played a very important part in securing victory, and on that matter the audience would agree with him. What God did in the winning of the war is pure assumption. What men and women did is obvious to all. The gathering should have been an appreciation of those men and women who faced one of the bitterest wars ever waged with courage and unshaken determination.

We note, by the way, a curious declaration made by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster that "China's population of 450,000,000 would join with us in thanks to God." Some Chinamen may, but if the Archbishop meant what he said and what he wishes people to believe, it was obviously untrue. First, because there is but a handful, in relation to the population of China, that would take an organic part with the thanks to the Christian deity. The majority of Chinamen are followers of Confucius and his advice was to treat gods courteously but keep them at a distance. And that delightful book by Lin Yon Tang, "My Country and My People," he tells us categorically what the general attitude of the people with regard to the Christian religion is, "For the Chinese the end of life lies not in life after death, for the idea that we live in order to die as taught by Christianity, is incomprehensible. Nor in Nirvana, for that is too metaphysical; nor in the satisfaction of accomplishment, for that is too vainglorious; nor in progress for progress's sake, for that is meaningless. The true end, the Chinese have decided in a singularly clear manner, lies in the enjoyment of a simple life, especially the family life, and in harmonious social relationships."

Of course there is plenty of superstition in so vast a mass of people such as the Chinese, but the picture of 450,000,000 Chinese thanking the Christian God for victory over the Japanese is about as truthful as is usual in Roman Catholic propaganda. There is in China much gross superstition remaining among the less developed of the Chinese groups, but once a better view of life is gained only a method such as that adopted by German Nazism can wipe away the belief in higher forms of life.

To get back to our theme. God was officially thanked on August 19 for winning the war. In that case God showed greater liberality than is usual, for the first move towards victory was when Churchill concluded an alliance with Russia, to be afterwards developed to a twenty years' alliance, very much to the open dissatisfaction of many Christians in this country. For Russia was, and is officially, without any religion. The Russian Government offered up no prayers for victory nor indulged in thanks to God when victory came. Readers may remember how frantically the Roman Catholic papers insisted that Christian England had no "alliance" with Russia; we were merely forming a unity of action against Germany while the war lasted.

But from the beginning of the war we did our best to advertise that God was on our side. We had official prayers when war was declared; but instead of a response from God things went from bad to worse. At one moment it became a question whether the Government of Britain might not be forced to retire to Canada. But the appeals to God went on. In addition to a day of prayer there was a week of prayer, without any marked results. It was finally resolved to hold a non-stop week of prayer. The machinery was kept going day and night. That should have done enough to convince God that the people were serious in the matter. Excuses from Heaven were useless. The days of official prayers for God to help weakened considerably, and were revived only when some marked conquest was made. But never had Days of Prayer been so carefully arranged, and never was the foolishness of Days of Prayer so clearly manifested. Then after six years of carnage, destruction and unaccountable suffering, broken homes, distorted human characters—a factor obvious to all, but which few have the courage to face—we have a Day of Thanksgiving to God—for what? For ending the war? But if he could stop the war in 1945 what hindered him preventing the war in 1939? Better still, why did he not prevent the rise to power of Hitlerism? Let us suppose that in 1940 Churchill had in his possession means, or a plan, that would have brought a desirable peace at once, but refrained from using that power because some of the people of this country had offended him. What would have happened? He would have been lynched as soon as the public could lay hands on him—and he would have deserved it. What happened to this God who can do so much in

theory but who does so little in practice? For years the men, women and even children have been doing what they could to bring the war to a triumphant end. Meanwhile, this imaginary God is sitting in an imaginary heaven, waiting for man to gain a victory when He will receive the adoration of his followers for doing—? Of the theatrical performance at St. Paul's the "Daily Telegraph" says that "the service was impressively simple." It was. It was more than simple, it was idiotic. By way of emphasis of the kind of peace we have won, we may note that the triumphant parties are getting ready for another war with, if possible, still more deadly weapons. Already Russia is building herself a larger and more deadly Navy. Of manpower it has enough. America will see to it that its weapons of war are sufficient to defeat any enemy that appears. We shall follow suit, and compulsory military training is almost certain to come. China, which threatened no one outside its area, will have seen the folly of being inefficiently armed. We may be secure from war on a large scale, but so long as we have these national armies able and ready to either attack or defend, wars will be certain. It would be a poor investment of time, money and intelligence to make preparations for a war that cannot arrive. But God will always be on the side that is best armed, and has the toughest fighters. He always has been.

A Queer Democracy

I have space left only for a note on a matter that should concern all who think much concerning liberty of thought, or more pungently, liberty of speech. Next year (1946) the question of the renewal of the Charter of the B.B.C. monopoly arises. The odds, of course, are that the Charter will be renewed. In fact, if it were taken over by the Government the threat to freedom of speech would certainly not be lessened. Every government is more or less afraid of real freedom of speech and publication, and is always on its guard against telling the "People" more than it is absolutely compelled to make public. It is said that we have just won freedom on the battlefield. I prefer to put it that we have won the right to freedom—if we can get it. But we shall have to work if we are to gain a real freedom of thought, speech and action. The English people are in some respects very queer. They often shout for freedom and if they are allowed to keep on shouting they will go peaceably home and consider, not merely that work has been done, but congratulate themselves that what they were shouting for has been gained. I think it was George Meredith who said (unless I said it myself) that if one puts a skein of silk round an Englishman's neck and calls it chains there is a riot at once. But put chains round him and call it silk and he struts home proud of his decoration.

Now there is no institution that illustrates this better than the B.B.C. There is another saying—again either my own or someone else's. The cry of the preacher is, "Who is on my side?" The cry of the searcher after truth is "Where and what is the truth?" Quite obviously, the B.B.C. belongs to the first order. It has said deliberately, privately and publicly, that it will admit nothing concerning the Christian religion that does not endorse what it has chosen to call "The Christian Tradition," and those who wish to realise what the Christian tradition means may find it by listening to the religious broadcasts. It is a form of

Christianity that is on the same level as the Salvation Army—minus the sacred blood-bath. Thousands of times the B.B.C. has enlarged on the value of the Christian religion, never once has it permitted anyone to speak on the other side. So far as the B.B.C. is concerned deliberate, educated opposition to historic Christianity does not exist. So far as the B.B.C. is concerned Darwinism has no meaning; Tylor and the long string of first-rate Anthropologists are a mere pipe-dream; the B.B.C. knows nothing of these things. But every morning, artfully arranged so that one can hardly avoid the drone of the Christian preacher, there is the despicable teaching that man can do nothing for himself, by himself, but must go back to the Dark Ages for inspiration. As the religious doctrines come slithering from the parson's mouth every morning, one wonders whether one is not transported, for five minutes, to the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

Is it too much to suggest that when the question of the renewal of the B.B.C. monopoly of the air comes before Parliament some of the new members, if not the old ones, will be induced to do something which will demand either the dropping of all religious lectures and services, or see to it that the "other side" has the opportunity of being heard. There are more unbelievers in the House of Commons to-day than there ever has been. What will they do?

CHAPMAN COHEN

PROBLEMS OF CHURCH AND STATE

IN his highly controversial "Will to Civilisation" (Secker and Warburg), John Katz deplores the truth that while science has harnessed the forces of Nature, the control of humankind in the interest of peace and progress is still far to seek.

After a thousand years of mental stagnation in Western Europe, the Renaissance, the disruption of Catholicism, Eighteenth Century enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, followed in succession. In all these advances empiricism played its part. Observation and experiment are truly indispensable to the reformer and genuine philosopher. As Katz observes: "It is not a coincidence that the four great political revolutions—the English, American, French, and Russian—all fall within the modern epoch. And it is as little a coincidence that England should have been the leader of the world in technology, and the spiritual home of the empiricist tradition in philosophy. Bacon and Harvey, Locke and Newton, Hume and Adam Smith, Bentham and Faraday, Herbert Spencer and Darwin—all these great thinkers and scientists are kinsmen in the spirit of empiricism."

According to Katz, the course of civilisation is from clan to State and from State to Church, and then to universal commonwealth, and he cites as instances of this alleged truth the Chinese, Indian and Roman Empires which it is said were succeeded by universal churches. That such churches were ever really universal needs proof. Buddhism is virtually restricted to the Orient and Hinduism to India, while, if of world-wide dispersal, Catholicism remains the creed of a fraction only of the earth's inhabitants.

As Ancient Egypt and old time India refuse to comply with his order of progression, Katz devotes Chapter viii. to an inquiry into this seeming anomaly. This, he explains by the presence in Egypt's protracted civilisation, of a god-king. Also, he assures us that, "The Mikado, the god-emperor of the Japanese is a witness to the truth of this sociological induction."

It is certainly true that the cults of Assyria, Babylonia and Judea were of this type, for in all these communities the divinity was closely associated with his worshippers. On the other hand, Christianity and Buddhism have departed widely from the cultures in which they arose for the one for centuries practically renounced learning and refinement, while the other has disavowed all allegiance to Hinduism.

Religion and life were closely interwoven in all the ancient Eastern monarchies in which powerful priests officiated. "But in Christianity and Buddhism," urges Katz, "there is no bracing faith in civilisation; these world-religions are, on the contrary, opiates deadening the pains of civilised existence."

Katz traces in Egypt the earliest evidence of the antagonism of theology to science and culture. From 3400 to 2475 B.C., Egypt retained its priority as the first centralised State established on our planet. Then to the consternation of all who trusted to the perpetual integrity of their kingdom, it suddenly reverted to the minor principalities out of which it had arisen. For nearly 1,000 years the pyramids symbolised the endless security of the State. But the social upheaval and the destruction of the statues of the Pharaohs that followed, testify to the disillusionment and despair of the people.

Katz's critical examination of the late Professor Breasted's "The Dawn of Conscience" is suggestive. It has been repeatedly asserted that the Hebrews independently introduced the concept of the supreme deity into religious thought. As a matter of fact, it was anticipated in the Egyptian Ikhnaton's hymn addressed to the single solar deity centuries before the alleged age of Moses. And a thousand years prior to the royal reformer's reign, Nilotic sages acclaimed social righteousness. Breasted concluded that Egypt was the birthplace of the higher ethical teachings, including that of justice. Katz, however, objects that both Kant and Breasted unconsciously transferred the moral standards of their religious childhood into times now remote. Still, Breasted acknowledges that the absence of the injunction "Thou shalt not lie" in the Jewish Decalogue, "he exploited as a child, but made good as a man."

Katz apparently considers that what he terms "the will to persist" is more conducive to the maintenance of civilisation than any ethical code of Greek or other origin. Our author expresses the opinion that Greece and Rome fell because they failed to solve the urban problem. But it seems more probable that these ancient civilisations were reduced to ruin through the devastation and impoverishment resulting from almost ceaseless warfare.

The sullen antagonism of the Egyptian priesthood, supported by popular superstition, are quite sufficient to explain why Ikhnaton was unsuccessful in his attempt to establish a solar monotheism whose beneficence extended far beyond the frontiers of Egypt. Thus, it was the king's fate "to discover that the Egyptians preferred the Sun that only Egyptians see, the Sun associated with the priests of Amon-Re with their local form of sun worship. After all, why should an imperial people share its god with a foreigner? Sharing their god," Katz continues, "was equivalent to sharing the good things of their civilisation. And what is the point of being an imperial people unless privileges are enjoyed from which the subject peoples are excluded?"

Asoka, the first Buddhist ruler of India instituted the cult of Gautama as a State religion. In a land of chronic conflict, its Emperor surmised that in Buddhism there resided pacific principles which would act as an antidote to the Brahmanism that the Enlightened One so severely condemned. The Aryan invaders of India had failed to create a stable dominion, even in the areas they governed, and their insecurity was evident to themselves. They apparently entered the Punjab some 1,500 years B.C., a couple of centuries before the Greeks, whose language was related to theirs, took possession of the Mediter-

ranean Islands and adjoining coasts, which they adorned with their triumphs in art, science, letters and industry.

The indigenous peoples of India, however, were far too numerous to become assimilated by the Aryan intruders as were the natives absorbed by the Greeks in their new settlements. Still, as Katz pertinently notes: "From the recent excavations at Mohenjo Daro on the banks of the Indus river, it is extremely likely that the Hindu Aryans profited from the native Indus civilisation in much the same way as the Greeks profited from the Minoan and Mycenaean civilisations of the Aegean."

Yet, despite these preliminary advantages, the Hindus proved incapable of creating an administration reposing on a uniform social structure. So they seem to have been driven to adopt a caste system which has been so baneful to the peoples they oppressed, as well as to themselves. The inequalities of Indian life—the lordly Brahmins on the one side and the wretched Pariahs on the other, precluded the evolution of a harmonious community. The feeling of frustration which still depresses so many intellectual Indians will perhaps become lightened with the growth of humanitarian Freethought, the gain of self-government and the development of a democratic spirit among the teeming millions of their vast and varied peninsula.

That melancholy which seems to mark so many of our Indian fellow subjects may explain the virtual absence of historical records relating to their country. Apparently, the Hindus are the only civilised people that have ever existed who take no interest whatever in the past history of their native land.

The Buddha's repudiation of caste proved inoperative in India, and Asoka's attempt to unify the State failed. Buddhism's indifference to world demands and its quiescence enabled Brahmanism to quickly recover its former pre-eminence and Buddhism completely died out in Hindustan, the land of its birth. But it spread widely over China and its environs and for some time exercised considerable power in Japan.

Russia and Turkey, until recently, two of the most religious of modern States, have now been secularised. Therein lies considerable hope for ourselves. It is noteworthy that the Russian armies waste no energy in prayer before encountering the enemy in battle.

Our author's appraisal is as follows: "What then is the measure of Soviet Russia's achievement? Surely it is in the fact that a hundred different races, speaking almost as many languages, and practising in czarist days almost as many types of religion, have found a common purpose and end in which they can participate. Russia's millions feel themselves to be the creator of a creative civilisation. Over a hundred and seventy million human beings—a humber nearly three times as great as ever existed in the Roman Empire—have recovered faith in civilisation." So much, however, are men at the mercy of traditional misconceptions that having penned the above, Katz then goes on to declare that when a Russian Rationalist admits that his philosophy does not permit him to explain every problem then, we are told, he remains a religious man. Just as if the brightest freedom-loving intellects throughout the ages have not been foremost in their acknowledgment of the natural limits of human knowledge and understanding. But in no sense does this appear to have made them religious in any accepted interpretation of the term.

T. F. PALMER.

THEOLOGY

For blocks are better cleft with wedges,
Than tools of sharp or subtle edges,
And dullest nonsense has been found,
By some to be the most profound.

—SAMUEL BUTLER.

THOMAS PAINE AND AMERICA

THOMAS PAINE was one of the founders of the United States of America; was, in fact, the prime mover in the establishment of the great American Republic. Had it not been for his great efforts in liberty's behalf, it is quite as likely as not that to this very day this land would have remained under British rule.

Thomas Paine wrote and published in January, 1776, the earliest plea for American independence. This was his pamphlet entitled "Common Sense." Previous to the appearance of Paine's masterly argument urging immediate separation and resistance, the American Colonists, notwithstanding the impositions of Great Britain (unbearable taxations, etc), had thought only of supplications and petitions to George III. for relief. Despite the British monarch's long-continued obduracy and the fact that each new oppression was followed by another, and that he turned a deaf ear to all appeals, the Colonists still hoped on, with never a thought of rebellion. Even Washington, at this time, expressed loyalty to the king.

Like a thunderbolt from the sky came Paine's magnificent argument for liberty. It electrified the people, and its stirring words swept like wildfire through the country. No pamphlet ever written sold in such vast numbers, nor did any ever before or since produce such marvellous results. Paine donated all the financial proceeds of the pamphlet to the cause of liberty (as he did with all of his other works).

Washington, now converted, wrote to his friends in praise of "Common Sense," asserting that Paine's words were "sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning." Jefferson, John Adams, Franklin, Madison, all the great statesmen of the time, wrote praisefully of Paine's "flaming arguments."

In July, six months after "Common Sense" had awakened the people, the Declaration of Independence, embracing the chief arguments of Paine's great pamphlet, and much of its actual wording, was signed by the committee of patriots in Philadelphia.

The great Revolution commenced at once. The oppressed Colonists took up arms at a great disadvantage, by reason of lack of food, clothes, money and munitions of war; but, inspired by the forceful message of "Common Sense," they fought bravely and well. When winter set in, however, the ill-clad, poorly nourished little army had been greatly reduced in numbers by desertions from its ranks. Many of the soldiers were shoeless, and left bloody footprints on the snow-covered line of march. All were but half-hearted at this time, and many utterly discouraged. Washington wrote most apprehensively concerning the situation to the Congress.

Paine, in the meantime (himself a soldier with General Greene's army on the retreat from Fort Lee, New Jersey, to Newark), realising the necessity of at once instilling renewed hope and courage in the soldiers if the cause of liberty were to be saved, wrote by camp-fire at night the first number of his soul-stirring "Crisis," commencing with the words:—

"These are times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country, but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like Hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated."

Washington ordered the "Crisis" to be read aloud to every regiment of the army. The effect was magical. Hope was

renewed in every breast. Deserters returned to the ranks. Men who had half-heartedly withheld from joining the patriot army took courage from Paine's thrilling words, and shouldered muskets with the rest. The great cause, tottering on the brink of dissolution, was saved. Paine's "Crisis" did it.

Following the first number of the "Crisis" came others—thirteen in all—the last commencing with the words: "The times that tried men's souls are over."

Paine was not only a great author and statesman, but he was distinctly a pioneer, an originator, an inventor and creator. To him we are indebted for many of the world's greatest ideas and most important reforms. It was Paine who first proposed the abolition of negro slavery; Paine was the first to suggest arbitration and international peace; Paine originally proposed old-age pensions.

These are a few of the other great ideas he fathered: He first suggested international copyright; first proposed the education of children of the poor at public expense; first suggested a great republic of all the nations of the world; first proposed "the land for the people"; first suggested "the religion of humanity"; first proposed and first wrote the words "United States of America"; first suggested protection for dumb animals; first suggested justice to women; first proposed the purchase of the Louisiana territory; first suggested the Federal Union of States.

For a century the world has ignored this brilliant mind. Indeed, Paine's name has been branded by bigots and fanatics with all imaginable obloquy. He was called an Atheist, a Freethinker, a blasphemous, simply because he could not believe in some old traditions which to-day are known to be allegorical, and which few intelligent minds regard seriously.

Some of the world's greatest men have paid tributes of praise to Thomas Paine, and their testimony is worth recording.

Napoleon said, in toasting him at a banquet, "Every city in the world should erect a gold statue to you."

General Andrew Jackson, the "Hero of New Orleans," and the seventh President of the United States, said to the venerable philanthropist, Judge Hertell, of New York, upon the latter proposing the erection of a suitable monument to Thomas Paine:—

"Thomas Paine needs no monument made by hands; he has erected himself a monument in the hearts of all lovers of liberty. *The Rights of Man* will be more enduring than all the piles of marble and granite man can erect."

George Washington, first President of this great Republic, in a letter to Thomas Paine, inviting that author and patriot to partake with him, at Rocky Hill, wrote:—

"Your presence may remind Congress of your past services to this country, and if it is in my power to impress them, command my best exertions with freedom, as they will be rendered cheerfully, by one who entertains a lively sense of the importance of your works."

Major-General Charles Lee, of the American Revolutionary Army, speaking of the wonderful effects of Paine's writings, said that "he burst forth on the world like Jove in thunder."

John Adams said that Lee used to speak of Paine as "the man with genius in his eyes."

Joel Barlow, poet, patriot, and statesman, and an intimate friend of Paine, wrote of him as follows:—

"He was one of the most benevolent and disinterested of mankind, endowed with the clearest perception, an uncommon share of original genius, and the greatest depth of thought."

He ought to be ranked among the brightest and undeviating luminaries of the age in which he lived.

As a visiting acquaintance and a literary friend, he was one of the most instructive men I ever have known. He had

a surprising memory and a brilliant fancy. His mind was a storehouse of facts and useful observations. He was full of lively anecdote, and had an ingenious, original, pertinent remark upon almost every subject.

He was always charitable to the poor beyond his means, a sure protector and a friend to all Americans in distress that he found in foreign countries; and he had frequent occasion to exert his influence in protecting them during the Revolution in France. His writings will answer for his patriotism."

Thomas Olio Rickman, author, poet, biographer, writing of Paine, said:—

"Why seek occasions, surly critics and detractors, to maltreat and misrepresent Mr. Paine? He was mild, unoffending, sincere, gentle, humble and unassuming; his talents were soaring, acute, profound, extensive, and original; and he possessed that charity which covers a multitude of sins."

Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, and co-author with Thomas Paine of the famous Declaration of Independence, wrote to Paine in 1801, tendering him a passage to the United States from France, in a national vessel. Jefferson's appreciation of Paine may be noted in this paragraph of his letter:—

"I am in hopes you will find us returned generally to sentiments worthy of former times. In these it will be your glory to have steadily laboured, and with as much effect as any man living. That you may long live to continue your useful labours, and to reap the reward of the thankfulness of nations, is my sincere prayer."

James Monroe, fifth President of the United States, in a letter to Thomas Paine, wrote as follows:—

"It is not necessary for me to tell you how much all your countrymen—I speak of the great mass of the people—are interested in your welfare. They have not forgotten the history of their own Revolution; and the difficult scenes through which they have passed; nor do they review its several stages without reviving in their bosoms a due sensibility of the merits of those who served them in that great and arduous conflict. The crime of ingratitude has not yet stained, and I hope never will stain, our national character. You are considered by them as not only having rendered important services in our Revolution, but as being, on a more extensive scale, the friend of human rights, and a distinguished and able advocate in favour of public liberty. To the welfare of Thomas Paine the Americans are not, nor can they be, indifferent."

Let us reiterate the hope expressed by James Monroe, that the crime of ingratitude shall never stain our national character. It is time indeed that the world awakened to the merits of Thomas Paine—(From "Lest We Forget," by Ella Wheeler Wilcox.)

"HAPPY AND GLORIOUS"

MANY of our readers know Mr. Wilfrid Walter as a successful actor who is always worth seeing whether in Shakespeare or in modern productions. He is also a playwright and has produced three plays: "Excursion," "Oh! Hang!" and "Happy and Glorious" ("Happy and Glorious," a play by Wilfrid Walter, published by Pendulum Publications Ltd., 10, Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, London, W.C.2.; price 4s. 6d.), which was produced first in 1930 at the Gate Theatre in London and afterwards in America; but this is the first time that it has been made available in book form.

Mr. Peter Cotes, also an actor, who has written the foreword, says truly: "'Happy and Glorious' will, I venture to suggest, 'live' when most of the rubbish now being produced in the commercial theatre is on the scrap heap."

It is a grave reflection on theatre goers and theatre management that a play so vivid and so good was produced only at small theatres such as "The Gate" and the "Little Theatre," before small and select audiences.

The play deals with the period from 1913 up to the end of 1930, and is concerned with the lives of a man and a woman. The greatest thing in the woman's life was Woman's Suffrage, one of the burning questions of the day. After the first world war women were granted the vote and to-day we look back upon the time when they had to fight for what is now their right as almost belonging to the middle ages.

The man forms one of the army of millions who were swept into the war cauldron and becomes one of the mud-caked, lousy occupants of a trench in France where, a few yards away are Germans, also lousy and mud-caked. Each side has one thought—to kill the other. A very vivid piece of writing is in Scene 4, which describes a trench at night where there is a dead man, half skeleton, entangled in the wire, and a conversation between a British and German soldier who discuss the absolute stupidity of war.

Then the man and woman meet again after the war—that period of frustration, of unemployment and the break-heart task of looking for a job—any kind of job, and when it is found, the dull monotony, the irksome restrictions, the wretched pay—the knowledge that under these circumstances marriage and home and children are impossible for them.

The hideous mockery of "the land fit for heroes to live in," the soul-crushing drab existence, the complete absence of all those things which make life worth living, beauty, art, scenery, comfort. The terrific effort to keep alive, just alive so that one could carry on, knowing that there is practically no future in store, nothing really worth working for.

This play shows the longings which every man and woman has for the little simple joys which would mean so much if not everything to those who do not possess them.

Is it to be wondered at if, in a world comprising millions of men and women like the two shown in this play, nerve shattered, soured and pessimistic, the gospel of a Hitler or a Mussolini afforded at least some action, something positive.

It was from material such as this that Fascism grew and the lesson to be learned from this play is that human nature being what it is, the same danger will confront us tomorrow if we do not realise that the unemployed man becomes unemployable and the frustrated man becomes desperate.

"Happy and Glorious" has been produced in many out-of-the-way places in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It was played three times in Wormwood Scrubs prison where, in the words of the author, "an uproarious reception seemed to prove it no mere piece for the high brows, though I was a little dashed when the Prison Governor remarked, "You hear how they like it. We have the most intellectual audience in London."

Where this play could and should appeal to amateurs who do not have to be concerned with the pay box, is that the characters number only eight and the scenery is very simple. It could be produced in practically any small hall with very little expense.

So many plays depend, not on the quality or value of the play itself, but on the elaborate stage scenery required by the producers, rather reminding one of those elaborate barbers' shops with expensive fittings, but where the assistants cannot shave their customers properly.

Those who may not see this play may derive a great deal of enlightenment from reading this book.

ACID DROPS

The "Methodist Recorder," in a leading article, says that "The Times" is crying out for a new order in the Churches. Well, we have heard loud cries for a number of things, but we have never heard or felt the atmosphere disturbed by loud cries for a new order of Churches. If the people hungered for a new order of, or in the Churches, there is no one who could prevent them. The fact is that the main body of those who wish to make the Church better and stronger are those who see that the Churches can no longer rule the people as they would wish.

Sir Cyril Norwood, President of St. John's College, Oxford, says that the attraction of Communism to the younger generation is that it appears to promise freedom from want and fear. He adds, as one might expect, that there is nothing in this that is inconsistent with Christianity. Well, there is one thing that prevents those with some historical sense agreeing, Christianity has had a good run for a great many centuries, and all it has given people—in theory—is safety when they get to heaven. That should be enough to damn the Christian religion as a reliable guide in this world.

Sir Cyril also confesses that "the Christian Church is a much smaller body than it used to be." We agree, but we would add that it is not yet as small as it deserves to be, and will be.

The Bishop of Chichester has discovered that "God has let the German people wander through the dark valley." All we can say on that is that as it is God's business to look after his "children" the responsibility of God for the world war should be borne in mind by those who consider what punishment shall be given to the German people. Most countries have definite penalties for those who do not properly look after their children; and that law is backed up by all right-minded men and women.

The Archbishop of Canterbury asked by the "Daily Sketch" for a statement on the ethical implications of the atomic bomb, says in his reply that "Man has discovered a new great secret of the universe which God made." While fully conceding that heaven must be a rather monotonous place in which to live, it is a pity that God could not do something better, or at least have kept the secret to himself. But one never knows when something unpleasant will happen when God interferes.

Considerable interest has been shown and some unpolite things said to the Dean of St. Alban's, because he forbade a service of thanksgiving for peace. We agree that his conduct was very un-Christianlike. But it did show more sense than was displayed by those who publicly thanked God for ending the war—or some of it. To make peace dependent upon God's grace is to insinuate that God could if he would have ended the war long ago or might even have prevented its occurrence. There are occasions when people apply common sense to their religion, and God comes out a loser in consequence.

In "The Promise Hitler Kept," a Hungarian author gives an account from the mouth of, perhaps, the only survivor, of the way in which 160,000 Jews at Lvov were exterminated by the Germans between 1941 and 1943. It is interesting to note that it was not only Germans who were responsible; the Polish and Ukrainians did their share with the same thoroughness as the Hitlerite thugs displayed. It is curious that the only comment made by the "Church Times" is that "the author tells his story with remarkable objectivity." We should remember that the Vatican regards the Roman Catholic Church of Poland as an instrument to further its designs against the Russian orthodox Church.

The Rev. K. A. Vieli, who has spent five years in Japan, has written an interesting article in an American magazine of the progress of Christianity in that country. But the strongest part of his articles is the need for money to carry on his work. This demand for more and more is a regular feature with overseas evangelists. In India they have a name for the quality of the converts gained. They are called "Rice Christians." Rice, it should be remembered, is their staple article of food.

Bromley (Kent) appears to have a Town Council which is not afraid to say "no" to Catholics. They have refused to "guarantee Catholic representation on their Education Committee" as their policy is not to make any specific representation of "individual interests" but to secure as far as possible general representation of all interests. This is as it should be. If Catholicism is represented, why not Atheism or Agnosticism or Deism or Christian Science or the other fancy religions which, while claiming to be Christian—like Mormonism—are opposed to the English Church. At the same time we think it would be rather fun if they all had a seat on each Education Committee—the whole 500 of them. What a delightful religious uproar there would be!

The National Union of Teachers has produced "A National Basic Outline of Religious Instruction." It is designed to lend a helping hand to the administration of the new Education Act. The pamphlet emphasises that "the fundamental truths of Christianity must be taught," which is a fairly large order. Ever since Christianity existed, its followers have been quarrelling about what is "Fundamental Christianity?" A Roman Catholic priest in criticising the pamphlet rightly insists that "fundamental Christianity" might mean anything that is taught by the two hundred different Christian sects. If the teachers had shown more courage than they did when the plot for putting the clergy back in the schools was being hatched, the clergy would not have been there.

"Cures" at the shrines of famous (or not so famous) shrines fall into two classes—the official and the unofficial. The official ones are generally those performed in the past, and the further back we go the more certain are the official cures. But the unofficial ones are always trumpeted about as if they really were just as good as the others though leaving a loophole of escape in case anybody became too obstreperous and insisted on evidence. Just now it's the unofficial cures that hold the carpet, and two are claimed for Canada where a little boy of three, very ill, started to walk about like a 20-year-old, and a youth of 18 got rid of inflammatory rheumatism as the result of a "weenie" prayer to St. Anne de Beaupré. The authorities at the shrine, however, "have made no official comment." Probably even they find some lies too hard to swallow.

At St. Benoit-sur-Loire the relics of St. Benedictine, hidden from the Germans in 1940, will, no doubt, be used to cure incurable diseases when carried in procession or slobbered over in prayer. The only snag about it is, that the Catholic Encyclopaedia is—for once—by no means certain that the relics are really those of the saint, which might have been moved to some other monastery in the seventh century. But this little matter will never affect the cures surely? The Almighty is always impressed with sincerity, and cures always automatically follow if the patient really believes in the relics—even though they may be the bones of a pig. You can never catch the Catholic Church this way.

Brigadier-General F. D. Frost was once, as the description implies, in the British Army. He has now retired. On that we congratulate the Army—that is if his service as a soldier was on a level with his religious outlook. He belongs to the "Advent Testimony and Preparation Movement," and is evidently held in high estimation by the Advent, etc., etc., etc. Now General Frost does not believe in such things as the Hague Convention, League of Nations and such like trash. He warns the people of the "Wrath to Come," and foretells that soon Russia will join forces with Persia, Germany and Turkey in order to make war on the Jews settled in Palestine. We congratulate the Army that the Brigadier-General has devoted his time to religion. The man must do something.

Canon Goodliffe of Cheltenham asks people to leave off criticising the clergy. He says: "The Church and its ministers have been ready if people wanted them." What a lot there is in that "if!"

"THE FREETHINKER"

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

Telephone No.: Holborn 2601.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. GORDON.—Glad to learn you are well. Shall be pleased to meet you when possible. Thanks for compliments.

G. BURGESS.—Thanks. They will be helpful.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY N.S.S. gratefully acknowledges a donation of £1 from Mr. H. Ellis, brothers and sisters, to the General Fund of the Society.

For "The Freethinker."—E. Drabble, 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

"Artifex"—unless a second writer has adopted it—is the pen-name of a well known Manchester cleric. If it is the same "Artifex" that signs an article in the "Manchester Guardian" for August 14, then he leaves us in some doubt as to whether he is in earnest in what he writes, or is he just—as a cleric—pulling the legs of his readers? For his plea for we humans not to be too hard on God for his obvious failures reminds one of the notice that in the old mining days of the U.S.A. was hung over the bar-room piano, "Don't shoot the pianist, he is doing his best." Substantially, this is the plea put forward by "Artifex." He explains, at some length, that God has always been doing his best to keep things straight, but somehow he has a good record of failures. Still he tries, and we should be kind to one who has tried so hard to keep things as they should be, but who winds up with a complete catastrophe. We have said very often that if things go wrong God should at least take his share of the responsibility, but we never expected a highly placed clergyman to come to the same conclusion. Perhaps he reads "The Freethinker" regularly.

"Artifex" reveals the "fact" that "in the opening year of the century God tried hard to form a great revival of religion. No revival came. But I am none the less sure that God tried for it. And because there was no revival we had the war of 1914." Then, it appears, God tried for another revival. That we might expect, for gods live on revivals and their like. Then, says "Artifex," God tried once more after the last war, "but no one will pretend there was anything remotely like a spiritual turning to God." And one may ask: if people will not reply to the calls of God, how is God to live?

The Provost of Portsmouth Cathedral says in the spirit of Christian brotherhood, with regard to the atomic bomb:—

"We may thank God that it was to us rather than to our enemies, that such power was granted. This in itself is a testimony that there is a moral order of the universe."

That is an exceedingly nice piece of information—from headquarters. Most people are thinking that it was a great pity that so dangerous a power came into human hands in view of the fact that none of them were sufficiently civilised to be trusted with it. So we may take the complete picture. God, who controls everything, decided to encourage someone and finally decides to

give the secret to the U.S.A. with England as a kind of second string. But God gave no guarantee that others may not learn the secret. In that case, what? There is also a little difficulty in the fact that the Japanese are also God's children, and it really does not look nice for the father of all humans to give one group the power to knock the other into smithereens. Perhaps the logic of the situation is that the Provost doesn't care a damn who gets killed so long as it is not him and his relations.

One of the bunch of curious people which the B.B.C. collects to preach religion to the lower strata of Christians said in the "Listener" for August 9 that Professor Julian Huxley said that "the modern man has a God-shaped blank in his consciousness." We are not quite sure what the Professor meant, but we take it that his real meaning was that the modern intellectual man has no room for God. Of course the Rev. Micklem reads it as something wanting in man. But that is his business. To him a man who does believe in God is no more use than a man who has lost two legs is attractive to a bootmaker.

The Bradford Branch N.S.S. after an active open-air season has lost no time in getting to work indoors. To-day (September 2) Mr. J. T. Brighton will lecture in the Mechanics Institute on "Woman, Worship and Woo" at 6.30 p.m. Mr. Brighton has been busily engaged on our platform around County Durham and should be in good form. His subject promises full scope for his cheery good humour and wit and local Freethinkers should make a point of bringing friends with them.

All things considered it looks as though the angels who came "hovering" over the place where Jesus was said to have been born, and singing that the birth indicated there would be "peace on earth and goodwill to man," were either unwarrantably optimistic or were terrible liars. For since the birth of Jesus the world has never ceased from war. But the angels keep on with their singing and the Christians join in while they are thinking how many they can kill in the most economical manner. Consider how much war has been made by Christians. Suppose that all Christians really believed in peace, who would be able to go to war in, say, Europe? And then look inside all our Churches and note the number of monuments given to war. In times of peace the Churches have done little or nothing to prevent war, and they have given of their best to encourage and to sanctify the wars that emerge. The ancient Romans had the decency to close the temple of peace. The Christian keeps his temple open, and declares that he is carrying out the will of God. Belief in God never prevented war; it never humanised war. Its chief feature was to add humbug to slaughter.

One of our weekly religious papers wakes up with the very familiar assertion that Materialism cannot explain the existence of consciousness. That is just blather. Admitting that the Atheist cannot explain the origin of consciousness, the obvious reply is that where science stops—if it were true—tells as much against the godist as it does to the Atheist. But a man is either a fool or a rogue who would to-day deny the possibility of reducing complex mental phenomena step by step until they are finally lost in chemical reactions. The question is not why does consciousness exist but what are the conditions for its existence? Given existence and understanding of all that occurs is a question of time, patience and understanding. And in this respect we can say without hesitation that the more we know the firmer stands the Materialistic position. Against it there is nothing but a wall of blank ignorance. Religion not only fails to lead us anywhere, it treats understanding as the greatest of religious offences.

Lady Snowden, to paraphrase an old quip, has given up the follies of the Church of England in order to embrace those of "The Society of Friends." We agree that the Quakers have been the least objectionable of all the Christian creed, but they have never been strong enough to do the evil that other Churches have accomplished. Perhaps one of its best features was that it had no official priesthood. Given that and there is no limit to the scoundrelism that may not be developed for the "greater glory of God."

THE ARCHBISHOP DECLINES

HIS Grace the Archbishop of York.

MY LORD,—I send herewith a copy of a recent issue of "The Freethinker." You will observe that the front page article includes a quotation from a letter from the director of Religious Broadcasting. I propose to quote this letter in an anthology of Freethought I am preparing as an interesting example of Modernism to which, some of us think, Freethought propaganda has led.

May I ask whether the letter was countenanced by you as Chairman of the Religious Broadcasting Committee, and represents the general opinion of the Committee?

May I also ask if the Committee do not think that in view of recent broadcasts by politicians of the Left, e.g., Mr. Harry Pollitt, it is time those on the Left in religious matters were given an opportunity?

If not may I ask how this refusal is reconciled with the religious freedom proclaimed by the Atlantic Charter, and in view of the fact that on the admission, even of some of the clergy, Christianity is seriously accepted by only a very small minority of the population, and ignored by our Russian Allies who have done so much without any national religion, or any national days of prayer?

Also I should be interested to know what sort of an answer it is suggested my religious friends should give when sceptics suggest that their faith is so weak that the B.B.C. dare not risk a really free discussion of religious issues over the air?—Yours, etc.,

W. KENT.

Bishopsthorpe, York.

July 13, 1945.

DEAR SIR,—The Archbishop of York directs me to acknowledge your letter, and to say he has no comments to offer either upon it, or upon the remarks of the Director of Religious Broadcasting as quoted in "The Freethinker" of July 8, 1945.—Yours, etc.,

G. A. ELLISON, Chaplain.

71, Union Road,
Clapham, S.W.4.

July 16, 1945.

The Rev. G. A. Ellison,

Chaplain to His Grace the Archbishop of York,
Bishopsthorpe, York.

DEAR SIR,—I have your letter of the 13th inst. I note that the Archbishop of York has no comment to make upon my letter and enclosure. I must be permitted to make some comment upon the letter he has instructed you to write.

Some short letters are very significant. Their brevity is most communicative. It indicates that the writer is stricken with fear. He can see no safe move. That, I am sure, is the feeling of the Primate of England. I am not surprised.

I note that, as Chairman of the Religious Broadcasting Committee, presumably presiding over its deliberations, he is not prepared to declare himself an ally of the Director in the matter of the story of the Temptation of Christ as recorded in the New Testament. Presumably, therefore, he believes in a personal Devil, forty days in the wilderness, the transportation to the pinnacle of the Temple, and the other incidents which Matthew Arnold—who dealt so charmingly with the hierarchy of his day—would have called "Aberglaube invading." Upon this I will only say how surprising it is that when the Church of England is so distressed at lack of support as to be compelled to consider all kinds of carnal means of attraction (I adopt an old Puritan adjective!) no attempt to make its doctrines more credible appears to be in the programme. I need hardly say that the Director of Religious Broadcasting, who probably shares my feeling in

this regard, would have the strong support of Dr. W. R. Inge, Dr. Barnes, Dr. Major, Dr. W. R. Matthews and many others.

In quoting the Director's letter in my anthology I propose to add that the Archbishop of York was invited to concur in the view intimated by the former, but declined to do so.

I note, too, with great satisfaction that the Archbishop of York is not prepared to say anything whatever in defence of the position which was attacked in Paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 of my letter. This is better than the disingenuous defence sometimes made by the Director with whom perhaps here also the Archbishop is not in harmony.

I shall use any endeavour in my power to make public the unwillingness of the Primate to justify the acceptance of licence fees from all classes of the community whilst in a nauseating way there is thrust upon the subscribers a religion which is accepted only by a very small proportion and repudiated even by some of the clergy, notably the Modernists listed above. I can only hope that a system the Archbishop is unable to defend he will some day feel moved to amend.

I note also that the Archbishop can say nothing to my suggestion that religious people feel that all this protection of their faith is likely to be taken as an admission of its feebleness, and that those who are outside the Christian faith can hardly feel that the national religion, as it is conveniently called, is characterised by courage—at any rate of the intellectual kind.

I am sending copy of this correspondence to the Editors of "The Freethinker" and "The Inquirer," the organ of the Unitarian Church.—Yours, etc.,

W. KENT.

Bishopsthorpe, York.

July 17, 1945.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 16th inst., and to say that you are at liberty to quote my reply to your letter of 12th inst., provided you quote the whole of it.—Yours, etc.,

G. A. ELLISON, Chaplain.

The Rev. G. A. Ellison,

Chaplain to the Archbishop of York.

DEAR SIR,—I hope you will not mind me saying that I much enjoyed your letter of the 17th inst. You grant me permission, quite unasked, to quote a letter consisting of one sentence provided I quote the whole of it! Really, I am not in the habit of cutting sentences in half when I quote them. Perhaps this is intended for a bit of funning. If so, I must say that humour from the clergy is always welcome. It might do more to attract one or two extra people to church than cinemas, newspaper advertisements and the other means proposed in despair.

At any rate it suggests that I am right in reading much into your letter of the 13th inst. that you treat it so seriously.

For my own part I am very glad I opened the matter. I have had more than I expected. What I looked for was that stereotyped phrase about the "stream of Christian tradition"—some of us would like to see the water analysed! Instead, on offering a direct challenge to the Archbishop of York to justify the present attitude of the Committee on religious broadcasting, I find he is unable to find a defence. Judgment must go against him in default. If I made a leading ecclesiastical uneasy in his conscience about a practice that seems dangerously to resemble that we pretended so much to detest in Nazi Germany, I am very glad. Perhaps some day we shall hear of a professed leader of a Church that purports to follow a crucified Lord doing something other than what is just safe and respectable.

If it is too much to expect that representatives of the Rationalist Press Association—despite the most impressive list of intellectuals that are amongst its associates—will be allowed to broadcast, there have been many men of light and learning in the Unitarian Church, and it's difficult to understand why they should be treated as outcasts.

I regret to have to conclude that the Archbishop of York does not agree with a famous predecessor, Dr. Temple. The latter said in 1942: "We have gone on with the idea of developing each individual to think freely upon the facts before him, and certainly this is an indispensable element in the education of a free people." I am not sure that we are entitled to call ourselves free whilst we tolerate the B.B.C. censorship. As to this, I will quote a passage from "B.B.C. Religion" by "Clericus":—

"Our struggling Churches, which are always lamenting their empty pews and dwindling membership and the increasing indifference and paganism of the mass of the people, should be deeply grateful to an organisation which applies to systematic propaganda a substantial share of the money provided by that unregenerate mass."

I am confident such gratitude is forthcoming from the Archbishop of York.

I am obliged to him for instructing you to write as he did. He has handed me a weapon for future warfare. I note, too, that neither of you deny the inferences I drew from it.—Yours, etc.,

W. KENT.

(In case the Chaplain decided to keep the last letter from the Archbishop, a copy was addressed to him marked "Personal" and registered.)

MATERIALISM RESTATED

ARISING out of what I wrote concerning Einstein and Clerk Maxwell, the question has been put, I suppose it was bound to come: "In what way does this affect Chapman Cohen's 'Materialism Restated'?" The answer could be given very briefly by saying that it makes not one iota of difference, and yet; well, let me try to explain. But before I start, I should like to pay a heartfelt tribute, which I think will be echoed by all Freethinkers, for his contribution to our philosophical understanding.

His general attitude towards philosophical considerations can, among other things, be accounted for by the fact that he was brought up on Spinoza, and was later influenced by Spencer. Both of these philosophers were inclined to be verbose, which can be explained as being due to the fact that they were both striving to escape from a metaphysical tangle; being compelled to use the language of their predecessors, and yet make sense out of nonsense. Chapman Cohen reacted against this, and set himself the task of always using the simplest possible language and the simplest possible instances. This simplicity is misleading to newcomers. He has often remarked how many people mistake profundeness for profundity, and many people do not appreciate the profundity that underlies this simplicity.

He was, as he says, very careful in the selection of his parents, but even the utmost care in the selection of the date of birth would not obviate the passage of time and the continuance of scientific development. In those days nobody foresaw the consequence of Michael Faraday and Clerk Maxwell, and Einstein was unheard of. The history of philosophy is a story of continual modification. Hence the necessity for restatement. No doubt the process will continue, so long as there are sophists there will be a need for Chapman Cohens, to simplify and dispel confusion. As he himself would put it, there is a need for debunking.

It is, perhaps, because of his profundity that there has been no genuine criticism. So far as I am aware there have been only two attempts, those of C. E. M. Joad and Archibald Robertson; both of which were too trivial for words. Joad pointed to ambiguity of one word, and Robertson wanted the removal of one letter. But the change or removal of one jot or tittle does not produce the collapse of an idea that has persisted for so many centuries.

Such trivialities merely show that the main point has been entirely missed. It is difficult to see how this should be for Cohen has carried it through, both in its applications and its implications, historically, philosophically and scientifically. He has, insistently and consistently, in his books, his articles and in his speeches, pointed out that the materialist is not tied to any one conception or theory, either of "matter" or "force" that any particular theory or conception does not affect the case, provided the one basic proposition remains. There are many minor points which could be fruitful subjects for discussion; differences of opinion are to be expected. There are many such. Indeed, I have no doubt that if he and I were together uninterrupted for any length of time, we should have some really glorious arguments. And here, in challenging his statement of causation, a subject which appears to be of the greatest importance, I am not disputing his main contention, which is that "nothing comes by chance, only by a calculable necessity." Perhaps I am only calling him back to his own proposition. We shall see.

In considering the subject of causation he disputes David Hume's idea of invariable sequence and in taking Hume's billiard-ball example, points out the combination of factors. There is more to it than Hume saw because he does not carry his investigations far enough. I think we can do the same with Chapman Cohen. Now, the example as given is that one ball stops and the other goes on, but a billiards player would have to strike his ball in a very particular manner to achieve that; to avoid "follow-on" or "screw back." The example leaves out the subsequent behaviour of the first ball, and it assumes that the movement is transferred from one ball to the other.

It seems that Chapman Cohen has not been a billiards player, or he would know that the speed of the cue ball, the amount of "side" or "screw" are of very vital importance; these, together with the "angle of incidence," control the movement of the object ball after collision. He goes too far in asserting that "the two balls are in causal relation to each other at the moment of collision only. Prior to this they are entirely unrelated." There is a relationship between the two balls even before the cue ball is set in motion, the distance between them, and the speed of the ball is change of position in relation to time. And if the collision is considered as instantaneous then it is not a calculable factor. The only calculable factors are the before and the after, but the collision is not an instantaneous event. If the balls were made of rubber, what happens would be much more easily observed. The balls have a degree of elasticity, so that they sink in to each other, the one ball gradually coming to a stop while the other begins to move. Like David Hume he does not carry his observations far enough, and is making far too much of the idea of contact.

Now, if we consider the modern theory of the electronic composition of matter; of the minutest of minute specks surrounded by immense relative distances the very idea of contact appears ludicrous, but leaving that out as being hypothetical we still have to face up to the facts of electro-magnetism, such as radio or the transmission of light and our idea of causation must exclude contact. Indeed, it would appear that the idea of contact as a causal factor is nothing more than a survival of contagious magic. So let us reconsider the position.

We commence with two stationary balls. The cue ball is set in motion; it does not jump straight into "top gear," there is a period of acceleration. It gradually increases speed, then slowly the speed decreases. Then comes the "collision." The one ball gradually comes to a stop, while the other begins to move. As with the first ball it accelerates and then slows down, eventually coming to rest. We end with two stationary balls. The result of all this is a change in the relative position of the two balls, which is a consequence of all that has happened. Now, if the cue ball had not reached the object ball, we still have a change in the relative position of the two balls, which

would also be a consequence of what happened. We have been observing a series of happenings or events; changes in position and speed of the balls. The causal factors are continuous. Just as space-time is continuous, so also is causation. Like Einstein, we are calculating events in space-time.

Now Chapman Cohen was not denying sequence, neither am I denying contact nor am I denying the combination of factors. There is more in it than that. What I am trying to point out is the comparison. We are comparing the before with the after. It would appear strange if, with the first ball travelling at say, 10 miles per hour, the second ball jumped off the table and across the room at an hundred miles per hour. This fact would be explained by the differences in the two balls, the first being a billiard ball and the second, a rubber one. What we are really doing is "balancing the accounts."

Chapman Cohen has adequately dealt with the metaphysical absurdity of trying to separate in theory what cannot be separated in fact, but I think we can now go further. There is no longer any need for the Atheist to "carry the baby" of causation. If we describe the interrelatedness between things, what more do we want? The very basic concepts of cause and effect are mixed up with the question of origins, confused by Natura, goddess of birth; that the cause gives birth to the effect. The type of relationship implied in causation is that of sex; a Phallic-magic concept of parental responsibility: That the before is the parent and the after, the offspring, for which the parent must be held responsible. But it is not a question of which came first the chicken or the egg, but of the relationship of eggs to chickens.

Now all this exactly fits Chapman Cohen's basic proposition, but perhaps he is no more of a mathematician than he is of a billiards player, or he might have seen that he was mistaking necessity as the primary term in the proposition, whereas it should be calculable. It is the difference between guessing and calculating. The whole question is a matter of mathematical calculation. Necessity is satisfied if "the accounts are settled." If this is seen there appears to be no reason why we should not use mathematical terminology instead of that of causation. In doing so we should be combining David Hume's sequence with Chapman Cohen's combination of factors, rounding them off with a word so often used that it needs no introduction. Thus we have the combination of at least two factors in sequence and consequence. We can give a simple example of a mathematical sequence to show how this works. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, is a sequence but as such is not causal, 1, 2, 3 is not the cause of 4, 5, 6. It is the addition of 1 to each number in succession which produces the sequence. The sequence is the consequence of the addition of 1 to each in succession: 1 plus 1 equals 2, 2 is the consequence; 2 plus 1 equals 3, 3 is the consequence, and so on. So that the sequence is a sequence of consequences. Our sequence is both a consequence and a sequence of consequences. Now this fits in with everything Chapman Cohen has said about emergence, for at each stage in the development of the sequence we have a new number which is different from those which preceded it: 2 is different to 1, 3 is different to 2, and so on. The combination of factors produces something different from the factors involved.

Our experiences are cumulative in the same manner as a mathematical sequence. Experience is a sequence of experiences built up as sequences of events or happenings. Mathematical calculation is a method of understanding the consequential relationship of our experiences. As Chapman Cohen has said, we cannot get outside our experiences.

The application of the mathematical method of calculation is only possible with the setting up of standards of mensuration. Different standards are required for different types of experience. We cannot measure weight with a yard stick, any more than we can describe the colour of a smell. We can calculate both sonic and supersonic wave form of electro-magnetic transmission,

but "sound waves" are not sound to a deaf mute. The problem is that of stating the relatedness of the different types of experience. We either set out to describe the consequential relationship between the different aspects of experience or our experience remains inconsequential.

The relationship of the before to the after in our billiard ball instance is that of the past to the present. We must use the method of analysis as well as that of synthesis. We must relate the present to the past as well as the past to the present. People do not behave as they do to-day because our ancestors behaved as they did. We have a combination of two distinct sets of factors. On the one hand there is the present-day needs, methods and conditions, and on the other there is the ideas, customs and institutions which we inherit from the past. A realisation of the relationship between them is necessary to the solution of our present-day problems. In accounting for this relationship we can distinguish the anachronisms and thus remove many of our differences and difficulties.

A clear recognition of all this is not so much, as Chapman Cohen has so ably argued, a condition of thought. I think I should prefer to say a condition of sanity, for even a lunatic thinks. The difference between guessing and calculating is that of two different ways of thinking. And yet I am only saying in another way what he has been saying for years. There is no middle course, it is the difference between Ignorance and Knowledge, between Freewill and Determinism, Theism and Atheism.

H. H. PREECE

SCIENCE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

THE eminent scientists who have recently been the guests of the Soviet Government have testified to the remarkable developments which have taken place in that country since the revolution of 1917, and even, in the purely scientific field, since the outbreak of the present war. There can, in fact, be little doubt, as Dr. Julian Huxley has pointed out, that scientific research and discovery in the Soviet Union has progressed by leaps and bounds in recent years, and is likely to continue to do so. Freethinkers will see in this a result of the anti-religious philosophy which has been adopted as the official policy of the Soviet Government, and which, in spite of sundry misleading statements circulated in religious circles in this country and elsewhere, has never been abandoned.

An interesting sidelight on this is thrown by a recent book, entitled "Twenty-Five Years of Soviet Natural Science," which has been written by A. E. Fersman, Member of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. and published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow. This is obtainable from Collet's well-known bookshops in this country at a shilling, and it is excellent value for money. It shows how the philosophy of Dialectical Materialism, which is the official philosophy of the Soviet Union, links up with scientific development, and how the successive governments of Lenin and Stalin planned the scientific work to be carried out, so that each group of research workers, centred round a prominent personality, should be given a definite task to carry out, which would nevertheless fit in with the general forward march of science.

Some of the more reactionary minds among the scientific workers in Great Britain (yes! there are reactionaries, even in the world of science) have suggested that it is totally impossible to plan scientific research, since this is essentially the function of individual minds, working along unpredictable lines. But it is surely not accidental that when, in a British University, the Professor of Chemistry is interested, say, in the X-ray examination of organic acids, the majority of the research students take up some sideline of a similar nature. In fact, a great man in science attracts around him lesser men who are able to

work in detail the research plans which he develops in outline. The great man will settle his own particular line of country quite early in his scientific life; and the number of original minds in science, as in art, is comparatively few in any one generation.

The difference between scientific research here and in Soviet Russia is that here the whole affair is done in a higgledy-piggledy fashion, so that no concerted plan is available, whereas in the Soviet Union the exact reverse applies. Also in this country we spend more money making parasitic gentlemen called priests and parsons at the expense of the general educational scheme, whereas in Russia if it is desired to create a number of priests the expense has to be borne by the Church on whose behalf those priests will officiate.

In other words, it is the difference between a sane, secular civilisation and a stupid, religious one. In these days, with Soviet Russia one of the victorious Allies, we are not told this, of course, except in the more foolish of the Romanist organs of the Press; but it remains the essential difference nevertheless, and I think that it is up to Freethinkers to point out this fact. Some of the readers of these columns will not agree with all the tenets of orthodox Communism (I do not agree with them all myself, as my readers of the last few years will readily realise), but I think that one and all can come to agree that the world influence of the Soviet Union, with the supreme emphasis on scientific development, is bound to be far stronger than that of Britain, as long as everyone, from the Prime Minister downwards (or should it be upwards?) stresses the value of religion in national life. One civilisation looks forward to the future, the other backward to the past, and that is really all that can be said about the matter.

S. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

OUR FUTURE.

Sir,—The reaction to Mr. Chapman Cohen's brief article on the atomic bomb is one of profound reflection. Before, however, any measures can be planned whereby to delay and to mitigate war, agreements need to be reached on the main question of whether war is or is not a natural law.

In the year 1938, while on an occasional visit to Hyde Park, I quite innocently put a platform speaker into a state of high indignation by asking him this simple question: "Did not he agree that war is a natural law?" A further and obvious question which arises from the first question is: "What happens to the nation whose nationals refuse to take up arms in defence of their proper rights, national and individual?"

I know by experience and observation something of the pains and miseries of the two world wars, as who does not, and the urgent need where practicable of an alternative to war. If war is a natural law then no time need be wasted in futile dreams of a world brotherhood or of perpetual peace. Mr. Chapman Cohen's suggestion as to the efficacy of education is, I think, quite a useful one but with this proviso: that education in the sense of book-knowledge is much over-rated; rather should attention tend to the development of character in men, and of a spirit of chivalry. This is put forward as a practical suggestion.—Yours,
J. EDWARDS.

MASS OBSERVATION

A summary of one of those Mass Observations that are common is dealt with by the "Church Times." Naturally it is concerned with religion and Church attendance. We have not seen the report, but it looks black enough—for the Churches. The test supports the usual figures which make clear that not more than twenty-five per cent. of the people will have anything to do with the Churches. And although no one would be so absurd as to count all who did not attend Church as Atheists, the returns appear to endorse that definitely unbelievers now form a fairly large proportion of the population. Church attendances are returned at the usual twenty-five per cent.

OBITUARY

FANNY SILVESTER.

It is with sincere sorrow that we record the death of Fanny Silvester, wife of Mr. H. Silvester, a member of the N.S.S. Executive and Board of the Secular Society Limited. The death took place on August 20 after a long and trying illness, and breaks a hitherto uninterrupted chain of family happiness. The marked features of her personality were essentially womanly in the best sense; affectionate, tolerant, understanding and loyal. As wife and mother she found happiness, and gave it by her untiring efforts to make her home a place for mutual affection and family welfare. Her husband, with a long record of active service in our movement found that service made sweeter by the warm-hearted sympathy and helpful encouragement which he received from his life's partner, and although his loyal service to the movement will in no way diminish he will sadly miss that affectionate interest which has always been given during the many years of his married life. Our sympathy is with the members of the family in their great loss, and on behalf of his colleagues on the Executive of the N.S.S. and Board of the Secular Society Limited, we assure him of their deep sympathy in his time of trouble. The remains were interred in the City of London Cemetery, Manor Park, London, on August 23, where before relatives a Secular Service was read at the graveside by the General Secretary of the N.S.S.
R. H. R.

EVOLUTION. WHAT IT IS AND IS NOT. By GORDON HOGG. Sevenpence, post free. Factual Knowledge (Education) Bureau, 35, Doughty Street (top floor), London, W.C.1.

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., Messrs. SAPHIN, HART, WOOD and PAGE.

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. J. V. SHORTT will lecture.

Blyth (Market Place).—Monday, September 3, 6.45 p.m., Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON will lecture.

Bristol Branch N.S.S. (Durdham Downs).—Sunday, 6.30 p.m., Mr. G. THOMPSON will lecture.

Edinburgh Branch (Mound).—Sunday, 7.30 p.m., Mr. GRANT will lecture.

Enfield (Lancs.).—Friday, August 31, 7.30 p.m., Mr. J. CLAYTON will lecture.

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

Lumb - in - Rossendale.—Wednesday, September 5, 7.30 p.m., Mr. J. CLAYTON will lecture.

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

Oswaldtwistle (near the Library).—Thursday, September 6, 7.15 p.m., Mr. J. CLAYTON will lecture.

COUNTRY—INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanic's Institute).—Sunday, 6.30 p.m., Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON (Co. Durham): "Woman, Worship and Woe."

FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

A Pioneer of Two Worlds

THOMAS PAINE

By CHAPMAN COHEN

An Essay on Paine's Literary, Political and Religious Activities

Price 1s. 4d., post free

THE BIBLE

THE BIBLE: WHAT IS IT WORTH? By Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1d.

MISTAKES OF MOSES, by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 3d.; postage 1d.

THE MOTHER OF GOD, by G. W. Foote. Price 3d.; by post 4d.

CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTIANITY—WHAT IS IT? By Chapman Cohen. A Criticism of Christianity from a not common point of view. Price 2s.; postage 1½d.

AN ATHEIST'S APPROACH TO CHRISTIANITY, A Survey of Positions, by Chapman Cohen. Price 1s. 3d.; postage 1½d.

ROME OR REASON? A Question for To-day. By Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 4d.; by post 5d.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH, by Colonel Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1d.

THERE ARE NO CHRISTIANS, by C. G. L. Du Cann. Price 4d.; postage 1d.

PAGANISM IN CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS, by J. M. Wheeler. Price 2s.; postage 2d.

FREETHOUGHT

DETERMINISM OR FREEWILL? By Chapman Cohen. Price in cloth, 2s. 8d., post free; paper cover, 2s. 2d., post free.

HENRY HETHERINGTON, by A. G. Barker. A Pioneer in the Freethought and Working-class Struggle of a Hundred Years Ago. Price, 7d., post free.

SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, by Lady (Robert) Simon. Price, post free. 2s. 8d.

CHALLENGE TO RELIGION (a re-issue of four lectures delivered in the Secular Hall, Leicester), by Chapman Cohen. Price 1s. 3d.; postage 1½d.

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING, by Chapman Cohen. First, second, third and fourth series. Price 2s. 6d. each; postage 2½d. The four volumes, 10s. post free.

A GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT, by Chapman Cohen. An outline of the philosophy of Freethinking. Price 3s. 6d.; postage 4d.

THE FAULTS AND FAILINGS OF JESUS CHRIST, by C. G. L. Du Cann. (Second Edition.) Price 4d.; by post 5d.

THEISM OR ATHEISM, by Chapman Cohen. Price 3s. 6d.; postage 2½d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1d.

GOD AND EVOLUTION, by Chapman Cohen. Price 6d.; postage 1d.

WILL YOU RISE FROM THE DEAD? By C. G. L. Du Cann. An enquiry into the evidence of resurrection. Price 6d.; postage 1d.

PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN THOUGHT, by Chapman Cohen. Price, cloth 3s. 3d., post free.

THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH, by Chapman Cohen. Price 2s. 6d.; postage 3d.

THE MORAL LANDSLIDE. An Inquiry into the Behaviour of Modern Youth. By F. J. Corina. Price 6d.; postage 1d.

FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST, by J. M. Wheeler. Price Cloth 4s.; postage 3d.

SHAKESPEARE AND OTHER ESSAYS, by G. W. Foote. Price, cloth 3s., postage 3d.

GOD AND THE CO-OP. Will Religion Split the People's Movement? By F. J. Corina. Price 2d.; postage 1d. 12 copies 2s. post free.

MATERIALISM RESTATED, by Chapman Cohen. Price 4s. 6d.; postage 2½d.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR FREETHINKERS. Price 2d.; postage 1d.

REVENUES OF RELIGION, by Alan Handsacre. Price Cloth 3s., postage 2d.

THE RUINS, OR A SURVEY OF THE REVOLUTIONS OF EMPIRES, to which is added **THE LAW OF NATURE**. By C. F. Volney. A Revision of the Translation of 1795, with an introduction. Price, post free, 3s. 2d.

THE RESURRECTION AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS, by W. A. Campbell. Price 1s. 6d.; postage 2d.

Pamphlets for the People

By CHAPMAN COHEN

What is the Use of Prayer? Deity and Design. Did Jesus Christ Exist? Agnosticism or . . . ? Thou Shalt not Suffer a Witch to Live. Atheism, Freethought and the Child. Christianity and Slavery. The Devil. What is Freethought? Must We have a Religion? Morality Without God. Gods and their Makers. The Church's Fight for the Child.

Price 2d. each.

Postage 1d. each.

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