

THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXV.—No. 42

Sunday, October 21, 1945

Price Threepence

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Religion and Life

WE receive a great many letters, some of which must be labelled foolish, others are interesting. Perhaps we ought to say that all are, in their way, worth reading. For the fool and the philosopher represent aspects of the human group, and if one wishes to understand the wise, he must have some understanding of the foolish. It is, I think, not by accident that Shakespeare is so tender with his fools, and the care he takes to plant bits of wisdom in their talks where smaller men would pay attention only to their stupidity. Good or bad, a letter or an article is a human document. If it is wise, it is good; if it is bad, then we must count it as evidence of our dullness when we rush to appreciate it. It was one of the wisest of the Greeks who said "Speak that I may know you," and indeed a man more often reveals himself by his speech than by his action. Fool or philosopher, unless we have an appreciation of both we shall end without understanding either.

We recall, for example, the case of a friend who was very angry with a doctor because he referred to a man suffering from a "loathsome" disease as a "beautiful case." But it was not the pain-stricken body that the doctor had in mind, it was the further understanding that would help for the protection of a human body. We may sum up what we have been saying by recognising that if we would protect health we must understand disease; if we would completely appreciate the genius we must have an understanding of the fool.

It was not a fool, but, apparently a serious and intelligent-minded man who wishes us to explain to him why we have so strong an objection to the Bible being placed in the elementary school. Our first reply to this is "Not Guilty." We have no objection whatever to the Bible being in the schools—so long as it is the *real* Bible that is placed before pupils. And what I have said holds good of religion. But in the State schools, elementary or other, the real Bible or religion that is placed before pupils is wholly untrustworthy. In both cases the Bible is made to support this or that sect, in both cases it is the origin and essence of religion converted into a mass of misunderstanding. Anthropology is now an established and authoritative science. But, so far as religion is concerned, Anthropology in our State schools simply does not exist. Even in the upper schools it is handled in a way that is far from satisfactory. Of the age of man, something is told, modern discoveries and decisions also appear. Their real relation to religion is passed by if it is at all possible. It was loudly proclaimed by the late Archbishop of Canterbury that the State schools should be saturated with Christianity—and by Christianity he meant his specific interpretation of

Christianity. Properly used, the Bible might be taken as one of the steps that would help pupils to understand the origin and development of religious ideas. Instead of that, he is taught something as being the first steps in an almost life-long development, which he has to unlearn if he wishes to understand modern thought. We are all alive to-day to the evil of the Hitlerian methods of education. Fundamentally, are the religious methods in this country in any degree more honest to the child and to society?

So far as it can be done, the pattern of the present should fall in with the probable pattern of the future. As things stand, certainly, so far as religion is concerned, the aim is that it shall fit in with the past. Religion is not in the schools to increase knowledge and to broaden views. It is concerned with what is mere instruction. Add to this the fact that this work of preventing pupils adopting new ideas, and that the clergy *must* know they are misleading youth, and the picture is complete. Fairy stories for the young are harmless, and may be instructive. The folk-lore of the Bible is placed before pupils as things that must not even be questioned.

It is not the Freethinker who wishes to prevent children making acquaintance with the Christian Bible or the "sacred" books of other people. It is the priest, and to their shame, our Ministers of Education, and the foolishness and carelessness of parents that prevent this being done. Other things equal, the Freethinker is not opposing the Bible in the schools. The part, the real part, played by the Bible, should be in the school as an instrument of education. As things stand, the Bible is in the school as an instrument of interested, misleading instruction.

Our correspondent asks: "How can we possibly teach pupils the history of their country, or even the history of the world, if we leave the influence of the Bible and of Christianity untouched?" Well, quite frankly, that cannot be done, and we doubt that any responsible Freethinker has ever suggested that it should be done. If we are to deal honestly with history, at least every notable factor must be taken into consideration. The religious factor in life is of very long standing. It was in operation long, long before Christianity was in existence. In some sense it may be said that religion dominated the early history of man to a much greater extent than Christianity has ever done. It might even be said that in relation to the impact of religious ideas on human life, Christianity might well be taken as one of the decaying forms of ancient religious beliefs.

But it is not the Freethinker who needs informing that religion has played a great part in history. We are always emphasising that fact. The issue here is not the power of religion, but whether that particular power has made for good or for evil. Neither is it the fact that Freethinkers would have children grow up without knowledge of religion. Of the power of religion, of the need for under-

standing that power, of understanding its rise and fall, all these are facts and factors that should be part of the education of all. We agree that one cannot present a fair and reliable amount of English history and set religion on one side. With that there is complete unity with all liberal-minded men and women.

But our charge is that what is taught to pupils is, with children in particular, not a genuine history of the origin of religion and its influence on a progressively minded people, but a fantastic series of lessons that not even religious people can trust each other to handle in the field of education. The Roman Church will have schools of its own, and indulges in a perfectly criminal account of the history of mankind. Protestants do not hesitate to say that the schools teaching of Roman Catholics is one long drawn-out falsity. The Roman Church retorts that where Protestant education exists it slanders and lies about the oldest Church in Christendom. Neither of this group can trust the other to speak honestly where religious interests are concerned. There is a real difficulty here, but the difficulty has not arisen as a consequence of Freethought action. It is one of the curses that have their origin in religion. It is being overcome, even though it may achieve victory slowly; but again, the difficulty does not lie at the door of Freethought. It is our religious heritage that is to blame.

Let us take one or two specimens of the difficulty before a really honest teacher to-day. How could any teacher deal honestly with history? Suppose he was faced with a lesson on the effects of persecution. Would he be permitted to tell the plain truth that in all the generations the Churches prevented free speech, they were really placing a tax on honesty and a premium on dishonesty and cowardice? Suppose in the course of an historical lesson he touched on the "Witch Mania." Would he dare to tell his pupils that this was a consequence of Bible teaching? Or that it was the Christian God who said "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"? Or, again, suppose he was dealing with the slave trade. Would he be permitted to point out that slavery is authorised in the Bible, that the Churches, as a body, upheld the practice until yesterday? Or the struggle for the equality of the sexes. Would a teacher dare to say that here again the Churches were dead against any such reform, and that against it came the Biblical teaching and Christian practice? So might a teacher take case after case, and always with the evil of religion before his class.

Of course, there have been many Christians who were better than their creed. There were Christian champions for better things, but at the back was the fewer number of men who rose above their creed, even though they were not always aware of it.

One final point which may indicate a way in which honesty may have a chance to dominate. There is a claim that we owe this and that teaching to Jesus and others. Let us assume that to be the fact, although it is far from being true. But if a teaching is good, it must be good in terms of the common life that we all have to live and share. And if it is true, its value is quite independent of the individual who first put the desirable truth into words. Roughly, we say that a certain man taught us that the earth moved round the sun. Some other person gave us the idea of evolution, and so did away with special creation.

A doctor discovers the cause and cure of some particular disease, and so on and so forth. Once these truths are established, once the cause of a certain form of conduct is admitted, is the value of anything destroyed because we do not know the person who first showed the way? Obviously, it is not. Truth and value once discovered stand on their own base. The man who discovered how to grow food did a work that set progress going. Who was it? No one knows, and it does not matter. Truth can stand alone. All values can stand alone. It is only religious doctrines that cannot trust their innate worthiness.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

SOME NOTES ON ARCHEOLOGY

IV.

BETTER to understand the position with regard to Archeology and its bearing on the text of the New Testament, a few words on the present state of that text will perhaps not be out of place.

Whatever may be said to the contrary, it is our Authorised Version which is still appealed to as God's Holy Word—the other versions, the Revised, Weymouth's, Moffatt's and any of the rest, being appealed to only when a Christian finds himself opposed to a Freethinker who knows the problem. It is astonishing how quickly the Authorised Version is rejected then.

Actually the Authorised Version is based on all the preceding English translations, notably on that of Tyndale, but the real question is on what kind of Greek text did our translators rely?

The truth is that it was Erasmus who, in A.D. 1516, with the help of Greek texts copied in late manuscripts—few earlier than the tenth century—provided Luther and Tyndale with the "original" from which was made their translations though, of course, they also had recourse to the Latin Vulgate for comparison. And Tyndale certainly depended upon Luther, so much so in fact, that his translation was called at one time "Luther's Translation in English." In any case, it was not long before the value of the manuscripts used by Erasmus was questioned, and later, ones considerably older were slowly being discovered, as well as very early translations in Latin, Syriac and Coptic.

But the more MSS. discovered, the greater the difficulties of the textual critic. It was soon seen that the text of the New Testament was in a hopeless jumble, very few of the manuscripts agreeing and eventually three broad lines of readings emerged, making confusion more confounded.

There is a text known as the "Alexandrian" for example, based more or less on the famous Codex Vaticanus helped out by the other two great codices, the Sinaitic, and the Alexandrine. Our Revised Version, in so far as it differs from the Authorised, follows this text.

Then there is what is known as the "Received" text, that is Erasmus's, based—again more or less—on late cursive manuscripts, which in turn are thought to follow the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Ephraem. The third line is based on the Latin known as the Clementine Vulgate, which is the Latin translation—more or less—of a Greek text, made very early in the second century and corrected by Jerome—if he really did correct much—in A.D. 394. One of these Latin texts is found side by side with the Greek in the Codex Bezae—a text, by the way, which is so hopelessly at variance with nearly all the others that textual critics are almost in tears when they come to study it.

To give an idea how all these texts vary, Dean Burgon, one of the stoutest defenders of the Authorised Version during the time when the Revised Version was being produced—and upon which

he poured all the scorn he could muster—took as an example the way Shakespeare might have read if there were as many codices of his plays as there are of the New Testament. He took the line from Hamlet, "To be, or not to be," and claimed that, according to the Alexandrine MS., it would read "Toby, or not Toby, that is the question." The Vatican MS. would give, "Tob or not is the question." The Sinaitic, "To be a Tub or not to be a Tub; the question is that." The Codex Ephraem. "The question is to beat or not to beat Toby." While the Codex Bezae might say, "The only question is this: to beat that Toby, or to be a Tub." Burgon could have given us a Biblical text fully as muddled as this, but then he looked upon the Bible in its Authorised Version shape as the veritable Word of God and wholly inspired, I think, even in its punctuation. One must never joke with the Lord.

It should never be forgotten that many, if not all, these MSS. are the work of scribes chosen in the main because they could write well and not by any means because they understood what they were writing. It was not always a case of merely copying another manuscript either, for we know that some MSS. like the Sinaiticus, for instance, were written through dictation, the scribe (or rather scribes for there often were several) writing by sound, and not by any means knowing how to spell correctly.

The oldest Codex is the Sinaiticus (A.D. 340-360) or rather I should say some authorities so consider it. But fragments of parts of the Bible or the New Testament have been found now claimed to be of a much older date. Some of these agree with our "Received" text, others do not. Many other fragments have been found some of which are dated about the same as the Sinaiticus and many much later. They very rarely agree among themselves or with the better known ones, and in fact they have made textual criticism more and more difficult.

To get over this, Dr. Cobern in his "New Archeological Discoveries" gives details of a fourth or fifth century MS. containing all the Gospels and parts of the Epistles discovered early this century, "which in its completeness and age could rank with the three great MSS. (the Sinaiticus, the Vaticanus, and the Alexandrinus) being certainly not later than the sixth century and being probably as old as the Sinaitic Codex." Alas, it agrees mostly with Bezae, thus "adding to the difficulties of text criticism." And it therefore proves, says Dr. Cobern sadly, that there never was a fixed text of the New Testament but that "several verbal types existed peacefully together." And thus it complicates the matter still further on the problem of the "original" text.

This precious manuscript was bought from an Arab dealer in 1906, and no question of its authenticity has ever fluttered the orthodox breast. For all that, it may be a forgery—as indeed some people think the Sinaiticus is, in spite of the experts and its cost of £100,000 to the nation.

It is interesting to note that practically all the latest MS. discoveries "come from Egypt, and almost all from a distant country province." They were poor men's Gospels as contrasted with the great MSS. which appear to be those of the higher clergy. And exactly why the texts of the poor should be so different from those of the rich is never made clear.

But as to the value of any of these new discoveries the authorities seem strangely at loggerheads. Some claim that the papyri texts support what is known as the "Westcott and Hort" Greek, the basis of our Revised Version. Others hotly deny this for the papyri "show a pleasing independence," says Dr. Cobern, without it being quite clear what he means. And so we seem to be nowhere "forrader." What, in the name of all that's holy, was the text of the "autographs?" No one knows. Perhaps there never were autographs in the sense that the Gospels, as we have them, were ever originally written down.

But what has archeology to say about some of the newly discovered versions, that is, the early translations into other

languages like Syriac or Coptic? Do they take us back earlier than the Latin versions or even than the earliest date given for a Greek fragment?

It used to be supposed that the Syriac text known as the "Peshito" was the queen of these texts, very early, and very accurate. But the researches of Dr. F. C. Burkitt have dissipated that theory for he claims now that it is a late type of about A.D. 411, displacing older versions. Our textual authorities, in fact, have played ducks and drakes with most of the conclusions reached by the earlier men, and they are all seemingly still groping in the dark.

H. CUTNER.

EPITAPH

To My Soldier Son—1919 . . . 1945!

Beloved boy, who scarcely yet had crossed
The Threshold of a life that promised much . . .
Diverted from the course you wished to take
And sacrificed to sate the Tyrant Greed,
Bestride the World! And many, like you, died
To "save" Mankind. And now, for "Victory."

Wrung from the tortured bodies of our sons,
An all-consuming priestcraft cries aloud
Its thanks to "God" . . . and then holds out its hand
For money! Pass the plate! . . . Such mockery!
Such Larceny of credit never earned!
Such shameless exploitation of a Myth!

This myth's exploited at our boys' expense;
For victories won are won by Man . . . not God!
And those who win the victory should be paid!
Rewards should go to those who fought . . . not those
Who cunningly spun webs at home . . . and keep
Financial power and superstitious fear
Riding astride a people all too long,
That Privilege may be served in Church and State!

This giving thanks to "God" side-tracks the claims
Of those brave boys who really did the work;
And thus, the Old Gang still retain their grip
And scrounge the just rewards of those who fought
To make a Better World, that never comes
While Selfishness and Greed retain control
And Money and False Piety rule the world!

Big Business once again will ply its trade
And put its God of Greed upon his throne,
And cheat our eager Youth of Life and Love . . .
That some may strut again, in mean prestige
With Millions still unfed; Then, once more, will
The Wheel, another circle turn . . . to War
Which Greed and Grab and Privilege will spawn . . .
Till, at long last, a vast Atomic Bomb
Will blow the Earth to fragments, and Mankind
Into Oblivion! . . . And nought be heard
In Space, but mocking laughter of their "Gods!"

Beloved Boy, your death was all too soon
To see the finish of these Hounds of Greed,
Who've ruled the world too long, and now, still blind,
Will utterly destroy the Human Race
Unless this blight of Superstitious Fear
Be wiped for ever from the minds of Men!

ANON.

ACID DROPS

"There is a fallacious idea," says the Bishop of Southwell, "that the Church is State-aided. That is not so. The Church inherits its ancient endowments. These represent what was thought necessary to support its work." There are many ways of telling a lie, and this, we think, comes under the head of "the lie suggestive." It is true that there are no annual votes of money from Parliament for the upkeep of the Church, but legal release from the payments of rates and taxes is equal to the giving of a very large sum of money. And there are still some levies, such as tithes, that are still in existence. And if a levy on people's earnings is sanctioned and enforced by the State, what is that but State help?

We also admire the remark "The Church, its ancient endowments." What does that mean? Of course, if one goes back to Roman Catholic times in this country, and will take the trouble to read the three bulky volumes of Dr. Colyton's well-documented "Five Centuries of Religion," he will see the sources of Church wealth in the immense drain upon the people. When Roman Catholicism was displaced there were some fine pickings by both Church and State, but mainly by the Established Church. Tithe played a great part in this form of pious robbery. But the Church did not surrender the right to levy tithes, it sold its rights in profitable markets. But it was the people who paid. The Churches and religious buildings are also free from payment of taxes, and that again in effect is an annual gift from the State. And when we leave the undiluted cash support given to the Church, we come to the value of the advertisement given to the English Church by the part it plays in public and State ceremonies.

And in those good old days (we are dealing with the first quarter of the nineteenth century) there were some beautiful pickings for leading Christian ministers. The following figures are taken from the "Black Book" of 1831—a most valuable work written in times when men were not afraid of calling things by their name. Here, however, are a few facts. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York took the neat little sum of £52,903. Twenty-four Bishops accepted £24,185. Twenty-eight Deans accepted between them £44,250. A man of strong family feelings was the Bishop of Ely. He saw to it that his eldest son should receive from the Church an annual income of £1,000. His son-in-law had to struggle for existence on an income of £2,100. It must be borne in mind that a thousand pounds did much more in 1831 than it does to-day. It should be said that the "Black Book," a very rare book, runs to over 500 large pages and is closely printed. It is a very, very scarce volume, and we will return to it on another occasion.

Trust the Catholic Church for using every scrap of publicity possible. It can't compete with Hollywood, and so it is smart enough to get Hollywood into the Church by getting up a team of Catholic film stars, headed by Bing Crosby, to appear in a radio programme entitled "Going Her Way," every Sunday, with a background of music and drama suggested by "Our Lady's life on earth," says the "Universe." Whatever else may be said in the programme, we bet that there will be nothing given of the rude back answers Mary had to endure from her famous Son. It appears that the programme was devised by some priest because a Catholic called Mooring never went to bed without reciting the Rosary, and when he was ill he promised, if spared, he would do his best to get people everywhere also to recite the Rosary. He got better—hence the stars who are going to broadcast in his aid. We wonder what the religious lunatic who broadcasts at 7.55 a.m. will say, faced with such terrific rivalry.

The Pope, who is nothing if not original, in a broadcast the other week said: "The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the purest inexhaustible source of truth." It is also "the source of justice and love." In fact it would be difficult to find what the Sacred Heart is *not*, if the Pope could only broadcast long

enough. No doubt the faithful know what he means, but they would no doubt be very angry if we said that the real meaning is simply that the Pope and the Cardinals and the Bishops and the humble priests all must be kept in their jobs. Directly the faithful think, and think again, the whole caboodle would be out of work.

It is not easy to decide what degree of fraud and what degree of foolishness goes to the make-up of Christian claims. For example, the Catholic "Universe" gives prominence to the following: St. Teresa's Church needed £3,000 for repairs. The Rector, Fr. Davies, informed St. Teresa that he needed the money, and the £3,000 turned up promptly. Of course, the need for the £3,000 was duly advertised, or even St. Teresa might not have lent a hand. The trick, we need hardly say, is a very old one.

A second piece of information—from the same journal—might have been written by anyone poking fun at the Roman Church. In Mainz the Church was bombed by our non-Catholic airmen. A number of nuns and attendants to the Church were killed. But the Mother Superior carried the "Blessed Sacrament" to an underground shelter. But, wonder of wonders, the Sacrament was found intact—in the underground shelter—and the candle was still burning. But why, in the name of all that is sensible, did God not save the men and women instead of concentrating all his magic on the underground shelter? We can get over the stupidity of people who can believe that obvious nonsense, but why does the Church so openly publish such humbug as its teachings? What faith the Church has in the credulity of its followers!

The Catholic hierarchy in this country—which by no means was ready to accept Newman after his conversion very readily—is doing its utmost to boost him up now for the benefit of would-be converts and those who have not read the whole case from contemporary accounts. But one of the gems uttered in his honour is that by Mgr. Knox:—

"Newman was led to the discovery of Catholic truths, but the readiness to keep his eyes blindfolded, to look to God's will here and now, was an attitude which adhered to him all through his life in the trials and difficulties he encountered even after he entered the Catholic Church."

Of course Newman was blindfolded—how otherwise could he possibly have entered the Church? And it was not only his eyes—his reason was shackled and blunted. Had he put one-tenth of his power of logic and reason to the service of Truth, unshackled by religion and blindness, Newman would have perhaps joined his brother, not the Theist Francis William, but the Atheist Charles, whose name, by the way, is never uttered when John Henry is about.

Bishop Poskitt is one of those optimists who are always hoping. This time tired, no doubt, of hoping for the conversion of England, he is hoping for the conversion of Russia. In fact, he declared that our whole future depends on the conversion of Russia, and by conversion, he does not mean to the Orthodox Church, but the whole hog, to the Roman Church. To carry on the good work, prayers and Masses are offered up wholesale, and to make matters surer, Pope Pius XI. put Russia under the protection of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus. "She has done wonderful things," declared the Bishop joyously, "and Our Lady and St. Teresa will see that things are done." Yet, in spite of this glorious help, the "Universe" seems never to cease attacking Russia. It is all very mysterious.

Professor Laski has seriously offended the Vatican by saying that the Pope has been backing a Royalist restoration in Spain. The Vatican spokesman repudiates the statement, and adds that the Holy See has always held itself strictly apart from the Spanish question. The Holy See appears to have quite forgotten how it backed the combined forces of the Spanish Royalists and the Italian and German forces in the recent revolution.

"THE FREETHINKER"

Telephone No. Holborn 2601.

41, Gray's Inn Road,
London, W.C.1.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

BENEVOLENT FUND N.S.S.—The General Secretary N.S.S. gratefully acknowledges a donation of 3s. from the Blackburn Branch N.S.S. and 5s. 8d. from Edith Payne to the Benevolent Fund of the Society.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, and not to the Editor.

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 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, by the first post on Monday, or they will not be inserted.

SUGAR PLUMS

To-day, Sunday, October 21, Mr. Chapman Cohen will be lecturing in the Town Hall, Stratford, on "Will Christianity Survive?" Discussion will follow the lecture. Chair taken at seven o'clock. Admission free.

What is it that has made "Sunday" cleaner, more sober, and generally better than it was, say, a couple of generations ago? Not the churches and chapels. They are steadily emptying. The common complaint from preachers and pious men is that the churches are emptying. Meanwhile Sunday offers the opportunity of a pleasant day in the country or at the seaside, and places of entertainment. The fact staring us in the face is that the churches and chapels dare not give free access to the healthy countryside or to clean entertainments on the "Lord's Day." But we are a free people—of a kind. That is one of the yarns that our political leaders give us. We are impelled to say that next to the clergy we would place a large section of our professional statesmen as running the clergy close in falsifying facts.

It is well to have sense of proportion no matter what we are dealing with. It will save the philosopher from appearing as a fool, and it will prevent a fool posing as a philosopher. For example, we have been deluged with the cry that there has been fought one of the greatest wars in human history. What is or should be meant is that we have fought the *largest* war in human history. That puts the facts in their proper place. War is war whether it is fought with fists, bows and arrows, or with big guns, on foot, on horseback, or with the most developments possible. The chances are that when the next war arrives it will be larger and more deadly than this one, but it will not be *greater*. It is possible that the courage to see war as what it really is will serve as a factor to abolish—large or small.

The Glasgow Branch N.S.S. had a very successful opening for its winter syllabus of lectures at the Cosmo Cinema. There was a full house and Mr. Rosetti's lecture on "God and the Atomic Bomb" was followed most attentively, even by some who mistook the meeting for a Christian one. There were many questions and one confession of faith in God from an elderly but sincere lady.

The Primo Minister of Bavaria is Dr. W. Hoegner, in succession to Dr. F. Schaeffer, a "distinguished" Nazi as well as a Catholic. Dr. Hoegner, as the son of a Catholic mother and a Protestant father, and knowing the religion of his mother at first hand, so to speak, is now definitely anti-Catholic. He is reported to have said: "I am against the opening of Catholic schools as instruments of the Church. That is one reason why Bavaria went Nazi." There may be other reasons, of course, but at least one is the Pope and his Church; and that comes from a man who, we repeat, is talking at first hand.

There is on foot among the clergy of the Established Church a movement for the increase of payment for retired parsons. If this agitation aimed at paying off *all* clergymen and refusing to appoint any more in their place, we would give hearty support to the plan. As it is, the agitation is just a trades union affair. The increase is asked for on two grounds. The main one is that the amount now given is inadequate for the dignity of the clergy. But their leader—Jesus—had nowhere to lay his head, and depended upon being fed by the faithful, yet founded a sect. The clergy say a man must eat if he would live, a position with which we agree—other things equal. But the clergy should remember that they have told us we must trust in God, and it looks bad when the teachers of that doctrine insist upon a guaranteed retiring allowance. It is also true—religiously true—that God in his goodness once fed one of his servants by sending birds carrying food. But either that breed of birds is extinct or God does not think the present race of parsons worth working miracles for. Something might be done if the clergy "downed tools" and refused to operate until the retiring money was increased. It is a delicate situation. "Have faith in God," says the layman to the clergy. "We prefer cash down," says the clergy to the layman.

But if the clergy are given larger retiring allowances, that will certainly create difficulties in other directions. Those who enter the Church as preachers will demand an increase in salaries. They will ask for a minimum payment of at least £1,000 a year. There is no doubt but that a plentiful supply of parsons may be found if the salaries are attractive. But even then it is very doubtful whether even a larger salary can attract a better type of preacher, and it is quality rather than quantity that the Church needs. It must be distasteful to many preachers to go on pretending to believe in *real* religion, and it is a very thin game to go on substituting mere social theories as though they were religious doctrines.

We find this opinion endorsed by the Bishop of Chelmsford. In a recent speech he said that the Church was losing its hold of the people, and that "If the Church is to recover its influence of the people, it must produce a much better article than it has done hitherto." "If better preachers can be found?" But the decline in the quality of the pulpit is not a thing of yesterday. It is a movement that has been going on for many generations. Here and there there may arise a preacher of greater ability, but big intellectual figures are getting scarcer and scarcer. The Christian Church is dying—slowly perhaps, but dying all the same. There is nothing that can be done to save it.

A Mr. Vesey Sawyer, writing to the "Church Times," is very unhappy to see that London can find £140,000,000 so easily in one Thanksgiving Week, and is unable to subscribe £100,000 in many months for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. "Surely," he cries despairingly, "we ought to find a million or two to bring home the message of Christian Fellowship." Yes, but what the heck is "Christian Fellowship?" There has been nearly 2,000 years of Christianity, it is true, but—"Fellowship"? Why, the Roman Catholic journals simply loathe everything connected with the Anglos, and both more than loathe the Protestants, and the three of them have—or at least had until recently—nothing but contempt for the Orthodox Greek Church. And we hesitate to put on record what they all feel about the poor heretic. Christian Fellowship, indeed!

Mr. A. E. Russell, in the "Church Times," simply cannot understand why Spiritualists "share the outstanding characteristic of all modern 'isms' in a complete lack of consciousness of sin and the need of atonement." We have noticed this ourselves—mediums, even if caught red-handed in "sin," always loudly proclaim their innocence, and object, if sentenced to atonement, most violently. Perhaps a Spiritualist, though quite ready to sing hymns galore to get the right atmosphere, has not yet discovered Christ in the Happy World Beyond. Or perhaps, if he discoursed too much on sin from the depths of the Spirit World, there would be fewer clients—and fees.

THE NEW IMMORTALITY

IN reference to a book entitled "The Serial Universe" by J. W. Dunne (Faber and Faber) the "Daily Telegraph" is quoted as saying "Here is perhaps the proof of immortality." There is much virtue in that perhaps its writer could never have read the book, for our author quite definitely repudiates any idea of life after death. That, to him, is meaningless. There is nothing in the book that is of any use to a theologian, and it comes as something of a shock to find him referring to the present day dread of immortality, but when it is realised that he is actually referring to the fear of the future it will be seen that he is like old Omar Khayyam, living in the Eternal Now. But with a difference. For him, our author, it is not:—

"Unborn to-morrow, dead yesterday,
Why fret about these if to-day be sweet."

To him there is a definite relationship between past, present and future. Whereas, with old Omar:—

"There was a door to which I found no key."

To our author it is nothing but a succession of doors. To open one is to find another. To answer one question is to tackle another, to define one term is to discover the need for another definition, to solve one problem is to be faced with another. "We have curious—very curious—beginnings but no ends." It is great fun this opening of doors. "And I am all for adventure."

This book is an exposition of a theory called "serialism" which has also been dealt with in an "Experiment with Time," "The New Immortality" and "Nothing Dies." He is trying to face up to the problems of philosophy and modern science. By way of introduction he roughly surveys the development of philosophy, pointing to the persistent antagonisms of empiricism and rationalism, materialism and idealism, intuitionism and voluntarism. This is all wrong.

Readers of the "Freethinker" will be surprised at his denunciation of materialism and determinism, but he is considering the antithesis of the subjective-objective controversy of Berkeley and Hume. He does not appear to know Chapman Cohen's "Materialism."

In considering the development of modern science he again observes antithetical concepts, waves, particles, space-time, quanta. "In the tale which our science offers us to-day, the irrationalities are far too numerous." In trying to straighten things out he argues that we must face up to and accept the basic fact of duality which is seen as a relationship in the second term of an infinite regress.

Experience is an infinite regress and the basic duality extends also to time. The physicists are wrong in using time as a fourth space dimension. An examination shows the need for a re-consideration of our concepts of time, which is shown to be multi-dimensional. There is a difference between past, present and future. Here he has a knock at the Bergsonian idea of constant change, for the past does not change. As Chapman Cohen would say "You can't un-pull a man's nose." The past is immutable, the present is change, the future—if it can be said to exist—does so in anticipation. Thus, time is seen to be psychological and not physical. So far as science is concerned, past, present and future is memory, observation, and calculation respectively. Again, the "Now" cannot be conceived as a nothing separating the two vistas of past and future, but must be considered as a more or less definite period stretching between. Further, the "Now" is not fixed, but is to be conceived as "travelling" along towards, yet never reaching, the future horizon. If the future is unreachable and imaginary then we have a dual concept of time; the past, or pseudo time, and the present or real time.

All this appears quaint and mystical. Our author sets out to demonstrate. It is no use arguing metaphysics or psychology to a physicist, the only language he understands is the language

of physics. So be it. He sets out to show that his theory of "Serialism" is implicit, though not explicit, in the methods of modern physics, and that his method enables him to discover the source of misunderstanding.

Mathematical readers will be intrigued, those with an understanding of the nature of the problem will be interested, and even the uninitiated and unmathematical reader will get a glimpse of what all the bother is about. Relativity is considered and his theory gives an understanding of the facts. The quantum is dealt with and it pertains to the instrument and not to the object. The particle-wave controversy is examined. There is no doubt about the evidence, the question is one of interpretation. The result achieved is determined by the instrument used. "Set a trap to catch a particle, you catch a particle; set a trap to catch a wave, you catch a wave." The same again with Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty. There is no doubt of the evidence, it is again a question of interpretation. "The irrationalities" are shown to be, not in nature but in the instrument, and it should be realised that part of the instrument is our concept of time. Analysis in terms of time is completely artificial, and our concept of time is a mathematical device. Finally, the evidence from the psycho-physiological laboratory shows that "The whole of physics is a trend running right through to the psychological observer himself."

And so our author saves the rationality of the universe by denying the rationality of the psycho-physical observer; rationality lies in an infinite regress. We cannot find the thing in itself, we are constantly chasing shadows.

It is difficult to say whether all this is an indication of the modern trend or whether it portends the development of a new branch of science, psycho-physics, but it is an interesting example of the intellectual confusion prevailing. Without a doubt the case as stated could be riddled philosophically. Nowhere does he indicate any appreciation of the social or cultural aspect of philosophical or scientific development. That he is still carrying a ghost of a god is shown by such statements as "Mind makes laws, nature obeys them," and "A particle obeys the laws of relativity." Nevertheless, his case does not depend upon but is only confused by the persistent and extensive use of anthropomorphic and theological language. Perhaps he does not see the danger of being misunderstood and misrepresented. Perhaps also, being a lover of adventure, he is being provocative and, like old Omar, is having a quiet dig at the "Two and seventy jarring sects," for the type of immortality he gives us is of no use to religion.

H. H. PREECE.

"NOTHING VENTURE"

YOUNG Timothy Flynn was in a fix. Out of the kindness of his heart he had offered to take care of two cats belonging to an old lady, while she went on a short holiday. In due course she had returned, and finding her pets well cared for, had promptly dug into her purse and presented Timothy with a crisp ten-shilling note.

Now Mrs. Flynn, Timothy's mother, was what is known as a Good Catholic; she firmly believed that one must share any worldly goods with the Church in order to reap any heavenly benefits which might be forthcoming. Hence Tim's dilemma. He was quite aware that his proper procedure was to sacrifice a large portion of his prize, which is no doubt what would have happened had he laid the ten shillings before his mother. But Tim was also aware that this was his own money, dutifully earned; and, after great deliberation, he decided in his own favour, spending five shillings and hiding the other five. (He had decided that any future chastisement would be well worth it). Before long he was found out and sent to confess to the priest what he had done.

"And have ye no shame," said this gentleman, "spendin' ten shillings on your own selfish enjoyment? And what was it ye bought with it?"

The boy confessed that he had bought himself an exciting-looking book and some sugar candy. (He was careful not to correct the impression that all the money had been spent). The book, which he had brought with him, turned out to be a school History edition.

"Now why could ye not have bought a Holy Book?" said the priest. "And as for the sweets, have I not told ye all these things will be yours in Heaven some day?" At which the little boy opened his eyes very wide, and declared his repentance.

He later left the priest, who was happily unaware of a few facts, namely, that Timothy had almost replied that, after all, the stories in the History book had *really* happened; that everyone knew that you couldn't eat sweets when you were dead, and that, finally—Oh happy thought!—there still remained five bob!

Which shows that some children have their heads screwed on.

BEATRICE FRANCIS-JUPP.

RELIGION OR DOPE

"These superstitions, sacred books and creeds,
These cults and myths and other noxious weeds—
So many lies are crowned in every age

While truth beneath the tyrant's heel still bleeds."

—ABUL-ALA.

"WHAT is Religion?" How often has the question been asked, its import conceived and variously answered! Opinions of its nature and meaning are so many and conflicting that one despairs of arriving at any tangible agreement. Here's a few definitions chosen at random:—

BUTLER: "Religion implies a future state."

MATTHEW ARNOLD: "Religion is morality touched with emotion."

COMTE: "The worship of Humanity."

CARLYLE: "The thing a man does practically believe, the thing a man does lay practically to heart and knows for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe and his duty and destiny therein."

RUSKIN: "Our national religion is the performance of Church ceremonies and preaching of soporific truths or untruths to keep the mob quietly at work while we amuse ourselves."

J. S. MILL: "The essence of religion is the strong and earnest direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object recognised as of the highest excellence, and as rightly paramount over all selfish objects of desire."

VOLTAIRE: "An absurdity to keep the multitude in subjection."

One might easily quote a whole volume of definitions, but each addition would serve only to make the issue more confused and uncertain. It is computed that there are about 1,480,000,000 people professing some kind of religion, yet it is exceedingly questionable whether five per cent. of that vast number could agree as to what constitutes "Religion" proper. In spite of this juxtaposition of ideas, the weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth among the "holy," the noblest and most comprehensive ideas on the matter were uttered by one whom the vulgar termed "Infidel"—Thomas Paine.

When almost hounded to death by his vile persecutors he valiantly said: "The world is my country, mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion." How puerile, vain and childish seem the sophisticated emanations of priests when compared with the human philosophy of the great English reformer. "To do good," that is sum-total of all real religion, and yet how sadly lacking is such in what the multitude call "religion."

"EPICTETUS RENKLUAUF."

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

Report of Executive Meeting held September 30, 1945

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, A. C. Rosetti, Seibert, Ebury, Silvester, Page, Barker, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Quinton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting read and accepted.

The President drew attention to the death of Mrs. Silvester, the wife of a very old member of the Executive and movement generally. A vote of sympathy with Mr. Silvester was passed, the meeting further endorsed the warm tribute to his services expressed by the President.

The Financial Statement was presented, and new members admitted to Bradford, West Ham, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol Branches and to the Parent Society. Satisfaction with the accommodation in the new premises was generally expressed. Correspondence was dealt with from Blackburn, Manchester, Glasgow and London districts. A report of proceedings of the London Committee of the International Freethought Union was submitted and decisions taken. The sub-committee dealing with a proposed N.S.S. handbook presented a draft of selected matter to date. Lecture reports, future arrangements, and a number of minor matters were discussed, instructions given, and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI.

"THE UNIVERSE. WHAT IT IS AND IS NOT." Price 7d., 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 WOOD, HART, and PAGE.

LONDON—INDOOR

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square).—Tuesday, October 23, 7 p.m., ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON, M.A.: "Science and Man."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m., a lecture.

West Ham Branch N.S.S. (Stratford Town Hall, E.).—Sunday, 7 p.m., Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN: "Will Christianity Survive?"

COUNTRY—INDOOR

Blackpool Branch N.S.S. (173, Church Street).—Sunday, 6.45 p.m., "Crimes of Christianity," Part I.: Constantine to Hypatia.

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6.30 p.m., Mr. HAROLD DAY: "Rebels and Progress."

Leicester Secular Society (75, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6.30 p.m., Mr. T. F. PALMER: "Does Man Survive Death?"

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

HATE

I.

ATTRIBUTED to the Apostle Paul, the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians contains fine-sounding rhetoric, ranking love as the highest virtue. Saint John the Divine, in his first Epistle, expands the thesis "Little children, love one another." The poet, Leigh Hunt, takes up the tale and tells us of Abou Ben Adhem whose name led the list of those whom God had blessed because he loved his fellow men.

The wisdom and advice supposed to have been uttered by Jesus Christ stresses love both of God and man. Buddha is elevated to godlike stature because he resigned his princely status, suffering as a common man for love of common man.

So the flood of advocacy of love sweeps on, Preachers and moralists, teachers and saints, parents and poets; all who are interested in religious or ethical advancement glorify love. That form of it beloved by novelists, dramatists and songwriters may be disregarded, being variously disguised sex trifling, written about for profit.

Love which is considered as godly is that which exists on such a large scale as to ask no return, expects no reward, and embraces all people living. Some enthusiasts extend it to include the whole of sentient nature, perhaps even pests and vermin.

A staggering demand to make on human virtue. One is not surprised to find mankind failing to love. No other motive for goodness, not even faith, has received so much advocacy and advertisement. Results are startling. Hate, to which few openly subscribe, few pay lipservice, continues in practice to secure adherents; appears at times to be the most powerful incentive of humanity, losing no influence with the passing of centuries, gaining impetus rather.

There is no department of human activity where hate cannot rage and range, actuating man to do what he would never otherwise do, outlying love, hunger, sex, fear, greed, jealousy, ambition, money or any other inspiration as a mainspring of action.

II.

Law Courts the world over, particularly those dealing with crime and marital relations, would lose more than half their business without hate. In their records, also brought to our notice in other ways outside legal cases, we see hate starting, growing, becoming dominant, leading to terror and violence.

Among husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, families generally, neighbours, partners and colleagues, fellow workers, employers and servers: wherever human beings mingle and associate hatred often flourishes among other emotions, frequently outtops them, leading to many forms of unfriendly behaviour, not seldom culminating in murder.

Governments which rule by a variety of methods, least of which is love, and the commonest force, find hate a valuable ingredient in inspiring the populace to war. Mass hatred is too well known to be dwelt upon in detail, as is racial hatred. Consider in the latter connection the centuries-old persecution of Jews, because hate is so easily engendered and cultivated. Except for that the hundreds of wars over thousands of years of man's history would not have been possible. But so readily do nations spring to hatred in their reactions towards other governments, so find it easy to send millions of men to hideous death at the tap of an empty drum.

Hate is so lasting, too, continuing when love is dead. Thousands of Irish to-day hate England, not for anything England did recently or is doing now, but for what the English of Elizabeth and Cromwell and other remote rulers did.

Ever since Disraeli returned from the Berlin Conference in 1878, boasting of peace with honour, having removed from the

Will Christianity Survive?

A LECTURE

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN

AT THE

STRATFORD TOWN HALL,

ON

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1945

Doors open at 6.30 p.m. Chair taken at 7.0 p.m.

ADMISSION FREE

Stratford Town Hall may be easily reached from all parts of London by 'bus or train.

Balkan States the hated Turkish dominance, those peoples have fought and killed each other. Hate reigns over them perpetually. No political or social changes eradicate it.

Various ideologies which gather millions of followers find hate gives them a zest—both for and against—otherwise lacking. Similarly thinking individuals with ideas have to contend against massive hatred before gaining a hearing for their pioneer thoughts and inventions.

III.

Sometimes we see hate not only racial but allied with a sense of shame. So United States hate negroes though the latter's ancestors were the victims of the former's tyrannical forbears. We notice this queer aspect of hate occurring whenever white peoples deal with coloured, especially black, particularly when the last are subordinate to them.

So the Spaniards expelled the Moors from Spain as cruelly as possible. The Crusaders went into Asia Minor glorying in the slaughter they inflicted.

When, as in the last example, religion hallows it, then hate rises to its supreme triumphs. Thus the Holy Inquisition swept through Europe heresy-hunting, imprisoning and torturing and burning from obscure individuals up to Bruno, as the Church did Joan of Arc. Reformation and counter-Reformation competed in bloodthirstiness. The Teutonic Knights of Christ rivalled Knights Templars for deeds of destruction as well as straight fighting—if there be such a thing.

Wars in the Low Countries and between England and Spain were doubly fierce and murderous because religiously inspired. Heretic-chasing and witch-smelling were variants of the same hate which spread to the New World and wherever the white man took his religion, justifying Kipling's tremendous sneer: "Hating each other for the love of God."

Medical science and psychology have recently inclined to pronounce hate as being innate, a form of intense repulsion beyond control and not amenable to reason. So it is called allergy, and the sufferers are said to be allergic to what they loathe. This is poor excuse for the manner hate has swept its way through the world for millenniums as the most immense power, transcending all other forces. A. R. WILLIAMS.