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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Nemesis of Christianity

NO religion has talked more about morality than has Christianity; and no religion has done more to create and maintain an unhealthy view of life. For the Christian Church had no interest in "morals" as a distinct branch of social science. This was to be found amongst both the Greeks and the Romans, but it was foreign to the Christian Church. When a Greek philosopher talked of morality he thought of a branch of social life. When a Church leader used the same term he meant something entirely different. To him "right" conduct had little or no essential connection with what the world now understands by morality. The main purpose of the Church was to secure human salvation in the next world, and the fear of the next world—not the love of it—was so strong that every phase of conduct was carefully scrutinised for its bearing on man's future existence. The Greeks meant by "right" conduct actions which had a certain consequence in human society. The Christian meant by it something that affected man's situation in the next world. Not that the Christian was anxious to get there, for there never was a Christian yet who would not rather stop in this world. The only attraction about heaven was that it enabled one to keep out of hell. He loved heaven as a convict might prefer a year's imprisonment to fifty strokes with the "cat." This is seen in the characteristic Christian expression "worldly pleasure." The true Christian had no place for it; not because he did not desire it, but because the chief thing was to make sure of heaven. He denied himself the pleasures of this world, only because he felt it would keep him out of hell in the next. Gibbon's famous expression that it was not in this world that Christians expected to be either happy or useful has a very much deeper truth than most people imagine.

The Limits of Malignancy

It is of importance to note that this use of ethical language by the Church brought in time its nemesis. The primary aim of Christianity—one might say, with considerable truth, its only aim—was to judge human conduct as good or bad as it was believed to affect existence in another life. But religion is, after all, only one of the social forces, and it has to reckon with either the assistance or the resistance that it meets from social life as a whole. Society may tolerate an evil as an organism may tolerate a disease, provided it is not of too serious a character. But when it threatens the very existence of the social structure, then either the disease must become modified in its destructiveness or society itself sinks under the assault. Here we have an exact analogy with a disease germ. If the germ becomes too malignant it destroys the organism

on which it lives, and so commits suicide in the moment of its complete triumph. If the organism itself fails to develop a resistance, it is completely wiped out. The probability, nay, the certainty almost, is that there goes on a form of adaptation on both sides. The germ becomes less malignant; the organism develops a stronger resistance. In this way a point of accommodation is reached, and there is established a moving equilibrium of destructive and resistant forces.

We see the same thing in social life. A society may tolerate a grave evil, children may be ill-used on a large and villainous scale—as was the case in this country a little over a century ago—men and women may be robbed of their social right to a decent life, and may be brutally treated if they do not submit; but there comes a stage at which either the human parasitic class must abate its claims or the ill-used class must receive some measure of satisfaction. Readers will not find it difficult to supply examples that illustrate both these situations.

Religion and Morals

An analysis of the purely religious constituents of Christianity shows it, on the one side, to be an embodiment of an extremely primitive form of religion. Indeed, from the point of view of the rationalising that had gone on among the educated pagans, Christianity was more than an embodiment of these primitive elements, it was a reversion to them. Religiously, there was the god incarnate in a man, there was the equally primitive virgin birth, the never-never land where man imagined an inverted earth giving him all he desired in this world, the god ready to heap favours on those who obeyed him, and who was filled with vengefulness towards those who disobeyed him, the revival of primitive demonology on a very wide scale, the sacrificial eating of the god by which the eater became one with the god, the belief that the gods could and would grant anything to those who gained their favour, and so forth. So far Christianity was mere Mumbo-Jumboism on a slightly more sophisticated scale than is to be found to-day among very primitive people.

But, on the other hand, there were the cultural influences of Greece, of Alexandria and of Rome. Some deference, however unwilling, had to be paid to this factor, some concessions, if only in words, to the social nature of morals. Hence we have, along with the primitive mythology of Christianity, the ethical vocabulary of a more civilised age than that indicated by the religious teachings of the Church. The Church stressed the importance of conduct—such simple virtues as honesty, truth, kindness, loyalty, etc., could not be ignored because they are expressions of the conditions of group life. But in actual interpretation good conduct was that which made for salvation in the next world; conduct was bad because it led to hell, unless by a tardy act of repentance the believer bought relief at the

last moment. Ethically the Church was engaged, and is still engaged, in what would be legally called the making and uttering of a false coinage. It *said* one thing, it implied another. Some of the great Churches still have in their catechism the statement that acts, however good they may be, are of the nature of sin unless they proceed from a heart purified by grace. The Church paid a verbal homage to ethical teaching while divesting that teaching of its genuine ethical character. It demoralised through a professedly moralising process.

Playing with Fire

I think this gives the key to a phenomenon that has puzzled many, and has even led sentimental Freethinkers, whose emotions outrun their intelligence, to find supreme ethical values in Christian teaching. The very men who had "truth" most often on their lips have lied with a pertinacity almost unique in human history. They who talked loudest about brotherly love have been foremost in the perpetration of brutalities that shock the civilised sense. It is too facile an explanation to dismiss these cases, existing as they do on so wide a scale, as exhibitions of humbuggery or hypocrisy. Human nature is not built upon a scale that permits so general an exhibition of conscious double-dealing. Excuses have to be made that moralise actions from which the better part of our nature shrinks. Historically the Church lied, and robbed and tortured and killed because of its fanatical ambition to save men's souls in the next world, and counted it cheap to pay the price of social and individual demoralisation in this one for its success.

But this forced indulgence in ethical language by the Church brought what I have called its nemesis. For man had always existed as a social animal, his progress largely consisted in developing a consciousness of the fact—a consciousness that has been so tremendously heightened by a knowledge of general evolution. The process received an enormous impetus from the better aspects of Greek and Roman culture, to be submerged again by the several centuries of Christian rule. The Renaissance and the birth of modern science revived this side of human development. The seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the rise of a science of morals that definitely separated ethics from theology. Ethics took its place as an independent science; not taking its "laws" from, but imposing them on, theology.

The consequences are such as might have been foretold. The Church had made great play with "right" and "wrong," bad and good. But it also claimed to judge right and wrong in terms of the salvation of immortal souls. Society began to call upon the Church to honour its ethical promissory notes, not in terms of another life, but in terms of the present one. The Church had used the language of morality to impose its theology upon the world. It was now the turn of morality to judge the conduct and value of Church teaching in terms of social values. Actually the attack on the Church was two-fold. On the one side was the intellectual attack represented by the whole range of scientific discoveries (a factor with which I am not now immediately concerned) on the other there was the factor of ethical self-consciousness. To recur to our former simile the organism was developing a new resistance to the disease-germ.

The Fate of Truth

The consequences of that revolution are writ large in the history of the last two or three centuries. The Church had talked largely of the goodness of God and his love of righteousness. To the objection that, if God was what the Church had said, then evil should not so frequently be in the ascendant, the reply was that we were as clay in the hands of the potter, and it was not our place to question. The objection was not of the most impeccable quality from a logical point of view, but the answer to it was much worse. Doctrine after doctrine was subjected to this dual intellectual and ethical assault, and resulted in myriads of Christians rejecting doctrines that were once accepted without question.

The nemesis of the Church had arrived. Bred in ignorance and fashioned in fear, religion established its universal rule in primitive society. The Christian Church, compelled to use the language of social life, gave to ethical terms a purely religious significance. It exploited man's social instincts and feelings in its own interests. But with social growth the instincts and feelings to which the Church had appealed, and upon the functioning of which in a primitive form it depended, gained an independent strength. The Church had tied itself to a "sacred" book, it based itself on revelation, and on such a foundation progress is impossible. Theologically, moral terms had one significance, ethically they had another. In Christian theology "right" and "wrong" meant agreement with a supernatural revelation. Scientifically they implied certain principles that were in their application modifiable in a series of changing situations. Forced to make concessions to this later social development (such teaching as the doctrine of hell, of vicarious atonement, etc., will supply illustrations of this) religion was actually suffering from the expression of feelings on which it relied for support. The more the Church demands that man shall do right and shun wrong, the more it is, in a civilised society, awakening criticism of itself. The instrument by which the Church sought to rule is two-edged. It was of benefit to the Church so long as one edge only was used. It became dangerous when the other side was used. And when ethical and intellectual judgments unite in opposition to any form of religion that faith has not long to exist.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

LET US PRAY!

An upright man is Mr. Bertram Bray
(Unless he's playing bowls on the Green)
He lives at No. 9, Laburnum Way,
And goes to Town each morning on the 8-15.
Though on Sunday at the Church he never misses—
On Saturday, a game of bowls his bliss is.
And so it came to pass he cast two mournful eyes
One Saturday upon the dull and clouding skies,
Then to his Maker, sitting high, thus did he pray—
"O Lord, please keep it fine—I'm playing bowls to-day."

Across the street lived Mr. Simon Sayer—
Also devout and never known to sin.
Seeing the clouds, he offered-up his prayer—
"O Lord, please let it rain—my cabbage plants are in!"

SOME NOTES ON ARCHEOLOGY

V.

RECENTLY the papers have been full of a wonderful discovery in Palestine. It was a kind of old Jewish grave with prayers written on it or in it—exactly how is not yet quite clear—from Jews referring to the Crucifixion, expressing great sorrow at their terrible crime and—of course—imploping God to forgive them. As the discovery was at once dated the first half of the first century this was great "news," for here was that outside evidence for the Crucifixion which sceptics have been demanding for many years, and which has never been found until this sensational unearthing of the old Jewish grave.

All this was chapter one, but chapter two had a slightly different flavour. One of the Jews *might* have been a Jewish convert, it seems, and Jesus was called "Master" Jesus, a rather strange appellation for the Son of God who had sprung to life after having been well and truly crucified, and who might even have been seen by the very Jew who wrote his sorrow and regret for the "terrible crime."

Chapter three took a long walk away from both the preceding chapters for, as far as I can make out the evidence, the only thing that is perhaps true about the whole yarn is the grave. There is nothing whatever in it or on it which even suggests the Crucifixion—though some crosses are drawn roughly in charcoal on the sides of the coffin—if there was a coffin. The Director of the Antiquities in the Hebrew University wants six months to make his report and I think he will be a very disappointed man if he cannot produce the Crucifixion in it. After all, the Jews with very few exceptions, like to think that a fellow Jew is still worshipped by the whole of Christendom as a God, and they bitterly resent the myth theory. This rejecting of the non-historical thesis is one of the things which endears the average Christian and Rationalist alike to the Jewish race.

Sir Frederic Kenyon, who is almost if not quite a Fundamentalist, and a great authority on the Bible and the ancient manuscripts, contemptuously rejects any idea that the inscriptions—if there are any—refer to the Crucifixion. "There is nothing," he is reported to have said in the "Sunday Dispatch," "in the details reported so far which bears authoritatively on the Crucifixion." As for the markings of the Christian cross their meaning "appears to be wholly in doubt." And Sir Frederic goes on to say that "If one got a genuine account of the Crucifixion dating from the first century or the first half of the first century, it would be extremely important." Now, is not that clever of such a great authority!

Of course it would be of the greatest importance—in fact, it would prove as well that there had really lived a Jesus to be crucified. And Sir Frederic knows enough of the sources of the Gospels and how they came to be written heartily to wish that some outside reference to his Deity could be discovered if only it were "genuine." That word "genuine" has become a nightmare to the Biblical archeologist for so far nothing whatever has been found in Palestine which can in any way be connected with the Crucifixion. And for a very good reason—it never took place. It is just myth.

From the way in which our national newspapers devoted valuable space to the "discovery" is proof how even a hard-headed news editor senses that there is something fishy in the Gospel yarn, and that the modern mind, however much it might blather about the beauties of faith, craves for just a bit of "genuine" evidence.

Freethinkers do not naturally bother about nonsense like the Virgin Birth, but would even Sir Frederic Kenyon believe it on the strength of a "genuine" signed letter from Mary herself that the father of her child was the Jewish God, Jehovah? Would he consider that "genuine" evidence? Not in these days.

And this brings me to the so-called valuable discoveries of Syriac translations of the Gospels which have nearly always been considered so very genuine because, it is contended, they were translated from early manuscripts perhaps uncorrupted by the many mistakes which so disfigure late copies of the Greek text.

In 1892, the Syriac scholars, Mrs. Lewis and her sister, Mrs. Gibson, found a palimpsest in the convent of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. Being Mt. Sinai of course implies that "manuscripts of the gospels there may have been translated from the originals." From the originals!

However, one of the MSS. bore the date A.D. 778 and the overwriting "proved to be a very entertaining account of the lives of female saints." With the help of Prof. Burkitt, Rendel Harris and other experts, the underwriting was found to be a Syriac version of the Gospels much like the Cureton but probably much older. In his book, "The New Archeological Discoveries" Dr. Cobern gives a large number of verbal differences in phrasing from the Greek we have and, as far as I am able to see, this Syriac version only helps to make textual criticism more difficult than ever.

In it is a reading which orthodoxy hates to think about. It is the famous question by Pilate to the mob, "Which will ye that I release unto you, Jesus Bar Abba or Jesus that is called Christ?" In our Authorised Version it is "Barabas" only, and it comes as a shock to find that Pilate is made to say in this Syriac version "Which Jesus will you have, Jesus the son of Abba (i.e., the malefactor) or Jesus the king?" The problem then is which is the true text, and as no Christian likes to think that the malefactor was also called Jesus, Dr. Cobern (no doubt voicing his fellow Christians) has come to the conclusion that after all this Syriac text "is not as old or as pure as that of the great Greek manuscripts from which our English translation was made." Thus, after all the big splash and torrent of words about the wonderful value of the Syriac texts we are as far away as ever from the "original" texts, the famous and, quite possibly, fabulous "autographs."

As for the Virgin Birth the Syriac reading is "Joseph to whom was betrothed Mary the Virgin begat Jesus who is called Christ . . . And she bore him a son and he called his name Jesus." In face of this Dr. Cobern has come to the conclusion that, after all, "the Christian system does not hang upon the miraculous birth of Jesus." Fundamentalism has had to face hard facts and it looks as if all these wonderful archeological discoveries are having the opposite effect from that which Dr. Cobern expected.

It is curious to note that just as the great Greek texts omit the story of the woman taken in adultery, so do almost all the fragments of the New Testament found in the Coptic language. This naturally does not trouble any believer for the story must be true—it is just the sort of thing Jesus would do, don't you know?

Nearly all the papyri discovered in Egypt are in Greek while most of the manuscripts found in monasteries are in Latin. And of course if the Latin is a translation made from early Greek copies, then the text is of paramount importance. That is being increasingly recognised and a few critics claim that the Vulgate of Jerome is a better text than our own Authorised Version. All the same there are variants of language which baffle even the most hardened textual critic and the explanation given that they come from late copies only makes the problem more bewildering.

H. CUTNER.

Intolerance and religion—to borrow one of Ingersoll's phrases—fit together like the upper and lower jaws of a hyena.

SAINT, DEVIL AND CAMEL

THE mountain was covered with trees from top to bottom; there were many rocks, passages, caves and even ravines. On the western slope of the mountain was an especially nice cave in which a hermit lived. Three times a day he used to pray on his turfy kneeling-stool, but most of the time he spent lying on his turfy sofa, or, on nice days, on the grass in front of his cave. He felt that this was a boring existence. He was too old to chase butterflies, and that would mean tucking up his monk's habit which would not be respectable for a saint; catching any kind of flies is a difficult job so he preferred just to jingle on the little bell he had suspended from one of the trees—jingling is rather interesting, but even that is tiring. There was nothing else for the hermit to do but look forward to Saturday.

Every Saturday he descended from the forest by a steep path into the villages at the foot of the mountain. He carried a big bag on his back and the farmers' wives used to give him bread, buns, smoked meat, and some even a bottle of liqueur to sweeten his life. In return he brought them amulets to put round the necks of their children as a prevention from drowning in the nearby lakes and rivers. These women who had no children and wanted some he promised to obtain some by prayers, and he really did. He was a very religious hermit and the people would call him nothing else but "our saint." At the end of the day, with his bag full of provisions, he returned to his cave—the food was nothing special, but one could just live on it.

On the eastern slope of the mountain was another cave, and a devil lived in this one. The farmers' wives would give him nothing at all (who would support a devil!), so he levelled and cultivated a piece of land. He grew turnips, potatoes, and a few oats, but corn would not grow there as the land was rather high up. But how long does it take to tend a field which is as small as the palm of a hand? So the devil used to get bored, too, and also used to lie down in front of his cave. He had no bell to jingle, but he liked to make a fire in the evenings to bake potatoes, or just for the pleasure of looking at the tongues of flame and flashing sparks. Looking at the fire brought back his memories of the good old days and he used to sigh, knock a flea out of his hairy coat, yawn, and go to bed.

Only once was he so foolish as to go out exploring in the forest. Some children were in the forest clearing, picking strawberries, and he attracted their attention because he wanted to get some excitement by frightening them.

"Look, Joe, hurry up, hurry up, there is a devil here, a real live devil!"

"Don't be so silly, Fred. It's not possible—somebody must have put on an ox's skin!"

Instead of running away and leaving their jugs of strawberries for him the children all ran to the old devil and curious Kay went as far as pulling his hair.

"Really, it is his own skin. Come on, everyone, have a touch! Are you a real devil, uncle? But how can you be when there are no devils now?"

Joe regretted not having his camera with him, but who on earth would think of meeting a devil in these days? He would have liked to send a picture to the papers, and he advised the devil to go on the films as he could get good money there and would not be so thin. The devil felt very shaken by this audacious treatment and dragged himself into the bushes, but the children would not leave him alone. They kept following him, and called other children from different parts of the forest until there were crowds of them. They all grew excited, pulled the devil's hair, asked him where he lived, and a thousand other questions, and were so amused with him that he had great difficulty in shaking them off and escaping back into his cave. After that experience he would not go out again.

The sun must have often laughed at noon time seeing them both lying and yawning, the hermit on the west side of the

mountain and the devil on the east side, neither knowing about the other. But what would a devil not ferret out? He was loitering about the forest one day, heard a jingling—and bumped into the hermit. He gave a greeting, the hermit returned it, then they got talking, finding out all about each other, discovered they were neighbours, and became great friends. After that they never felt bored or lonely, for they used to sit together in front of the hermit's cave telling each other old stories—both knew many stories, and only nice ones. Every morning after devouring raw turnips the devil dragged himself to see the saint, and every evening when he was due to go home he never felt like going and was always postponing it. The saint did not visit him for it was too far, when he had to save his strength for Saturday's journey.

One day it rained all the time so they had to sit inside the saint's cave and while they listened to the rustling and beating outside the devil suddenly sighed, "If only we had cards!"

"What," said the hermit, "you can play cards, brother? Why didn't you say so before? I have some cards which I brought from the monastery."

The hermit looked under the little altar which stood in one corner and came back with the cards—old and worn, but dry and usable. The devil was highly delighted and from that day on life was not just an existence for him, it was a real pleasure. They spent whole days playing cards and having great fun, and the devil was so crazy about it that he grumbled when the saint went to jingle and pray at the appropriate times. But the latter only snorted "No wonder you are tempting me. A Devil!"

"You can pray as much as you like, brother, but what I don't like is that no work is done while you are praying. Couldn't you pray at night when I am asleep?"

Sometimes they quarrelled, which is inevitable in card playing, and many times the devil flung down his cards when the hermit cheated him too much. He ran back to his cave swearing he would not see that praying scoundrel any more, but before long he was back in the hermit's cave again, picking up the cards guiltily. I should tell you that they played for hits at each other for they had no money, and what else could poor men play for? Once the devil suggested they should play for buns, of which the hermit's scoop was full, but the latter would not hear of it.

Although they called each other brother each ate his own food; the devil might offer to share his turnips and potatoes, but the saint was not interested in this fare, and he would not offer the devil a piece of his meat or even a sip of the liqueur.

"You would get drunk, and not even a devil could stand you then," he told the devil, and was most careful not to leave him in the cave alone.

Everything would be all right and they would still be playing cards for blows at each other even to this day, if a camel had not made its sudden appearance in front of the cave. How do I know where he came from? Maybe he ran away from a zoo or a circus, but anyway he was gadding about the forests, picking up leaves here and leaves there, and enjoying the pleasant surroundings. The devil, holding a card, was just victoriously raising his hand to hit the tree-stump on which they were playing, when his glance fell upon the queer animal and he cried out in surprise.

"Well, well, what is it? Don't you know a camel when you see one?" reproved the saint. "I recognised it at once from a biblical story—camels are mentioned in many such stories. But of course—a devil and a biblical story!"

"What has he got that hunch for," enquired the devil, still surprised.

"That is an excellent thing, brother, that hunch," replied the hermit. "Especially is it excellent for carrying loads. I won't have to carry the bag of alms on my own back ever, Saturday now! It is really excellent, brother." And the saint

went to the camel to catch hold of it, but the devil, on hearing what a useful animal it was, stopped him:

"The farmers' wives feed you, but I have to cultivate my own land. That animal will help me to cultivate a bigger plot; I shall even get a plough, like a real farmer. Since you have always been able to carry your buns yourself until now, you'll also be able to do so in the future."

"No!" said the saint. "Since you have always been able to dig your own land alone so far, then you will be able to do it in the future."

This quarrel might have developed into a real fight had it not occurred to them that they could play cards for the camel. The animal was taking no notice of them at all, and was tranquilly grazing a little distance apart instead of running away. The hermit cheated as much as he could, but the devil watched carefully because he liked the animal with hunches so much. It is the way of the world that the bad ones are usually lucky and the good ones suffer for their honesty—and so it happened that the devil won. He took the camel home at once, fenced off a corner of his cave for it, combed it, gave it a nice-smelling bunch of herbs, and regularly took it to the well for water. The camel would have felt that this new home was a paradise except for the fact that he had to work—the devil had made a plough from a bent tree branch, and harnessed the camel to it every day. Ten times the devil enlarged his plot and ten times he reploughed it, so that the land was good enough for gold to grow there, not mere oats. He completely forgot about playing cards.

In the meanwhile the hermit was nearly beside himself with envy and time was hanging very heavily on his hands. Finally he told himself, "In all the fairy tales the hermit is a match for the devil. It would be very bad if somehow I could not get the camel from that scoundrel!" Taking advantage of a moment when the devil was not at home, he stole into the cave. He talked softly to the camel, "Poor little thing, your sides are sore! If you were with me you would not have to draw a plough. We should only be visiting the villages and I should take care of you as I would my own brother. I should share with you every morsel of my food. Come with me, little camel, come!" The camel let itself be persuaded and went with him.

When the devil came home, of course the camel was nowhere to be seen. He searched everywhere, calling it repeatedly, and even went to the hermit to tell of his sad loss—but the camel was not to be found. This was because the hermit kept the camel shut up in one of the caves, bringing it out only on Saturdays when he slung a big bag on each of its sides and himself sat on the hump as though he was riding a horse. So the hermit was able to bring home more things than ever before. And how happy were the farmers' wives and their children because the good God had sent a camel to their saint!

"Exactly like a Bible story," they used to say. But the camel did not like it at all. He got hardly anything to eat and was told he could graze on the Saturday journey. The hermit used to say: "I won't leave you outside, for the devil could see you. If you have a good feed you can easily make it last you until next Saturday—the week passes so quickly."

But nothing can be kept secret for always. One Saturday the devil met his brother the hermit just coming back from his trip. The devil stared until his eyes nearly fell out, and then he started using extremely bad language, cursing the hermit roundly. He took the camel by the bridle and shouted into its left ear, "It is better being with me, little camel, isn't it?" and pulled the animal towards him.

"It is better being with me, little camel, isn't it?" shouted the hermit into the poor animal's right ear, pulling it the opposite way.

But by now the camel had had enough. He kicked the devil with his left hind leg, sending him into a thorn bush, and then kicked the hermit with his right hind leg, sending him into a

creek. He threw off the heavy bags viciously—he went completely mad. Not satisfied with merely kicking his torturers, he started chasing them both all over the forest so that they could not hide. They ran right out of the forest and were so frightened of the furious creature that the thought of returning there made them tremble. So the camel now happily gambols about the forest with his head and tail proudly up, grazing where and when he wishes—in other words, he has his own way. And even so he sometimes curses—"We don't need any saints or devils," he says.

And the two old ones? Taking each other's arms and weeping bitterly they left that pleasant place. Ever since they have been wandering like beggars, battering their way through the world. Their greatest sorrow is that they left their playing cards in the saint's cave and it is impossible to go back for them!

IVAN KRAHULIK.

UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE

LOVE everybody no matter whether the loved one be good or bad is an important part of the moral teaching attributed to Jesus Christ; and those who call themselves his followers are wont to become æsthetic over the precept. In reality, however, it is contrary to nature and subversive of ethics. There have been and still are bad people capable of exciting affection, but this is because of amiable qualities discovered in their characters.

If there were such a person as the Devil who figures in the Bible he could never be an attractive object. For even those who desired his salvation could not pretend to do so because of his loveliness. There is a vast difference between pity and love with respect to both nature and cause. A kind person will avoid giving needless pain to beings the sight of which is abhorrent. Theologians, asserting a distinction between bad acts and bad agents, declare it possible to hate evil deeds, and yet to love evildoers. But the fact is that bad people do bad things because they themselves are bad. Hence, being the source of the mischief, they deserve more hatred than the mischief itself.

Just punishment, invariably administered, is the best safeguard of society. This does not exclude adjustments made with reference to the degrees of responsibility exhibited by criminals. Measures such as the sterilisation or the sequestration of persons invincibly inclined to anti-social conduct should be applied in the proper cases. The principle of vindictive punishment ought to be abolished. It is a relic of the time when legal order was not established and when, from this absence of social protection, individuals had to defend their rights personally, and in doing so were guided only by fear and revenge. Deterrence is the true aim of all penalties in a civilised state. Let it be made clear that certain conduct cannot be pursued without rendering the pursuers liable to specific penalties; let suitable means be taken for the discovery of delinquents; and let the respective penalties be regularly applied; then, and then only, will crime be overcome.

As regards the Christian doctrine of universal benevolence the fact that the Christian Church, whensoever and wheresoever it was in power, mercilessly shed the blood of those who differed from it, is sufficient to prove that it has never been sincere in proclaiming lovingkindness towards all men as a divine rule of life.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Whatever is off the hinges of custom is believed to be also off the hinges of reason; though how unreasonably so, for the most part, God knows.

—MONTAIGNE.

ACID DROPS

Whatever else may be written about religion in the Army, there is one thing which invariably holds the scene. It is the numerous Atheists and Agnostics who are always cited as yearning for religion, and ready to lend a hand in its speedy propagation. For example, the "Church Times," giving an account of the way religion is being handed out to soldiers in Assisi in chunkfuls, adds that "a bricklayer who described himself as an Agnostic" thought the religious course excellent, "but suggested that it needed a few extra days." These hungry-for-religion Agnostics are naturally never named, but they always appear in the "Church Times" and similar journals. In real life, at camp or elsewhere, they never turn up—but what wonderful propaganda merely mentioning them makes!

Said Colonel Backhouse to Kramer, one of the gang of torturers who are being tried in Germany, "Do you believe in God?" To which Kramer promptly replied "Yes." The Colonel should have known better. The vilest crimes that have ever been committed and the most sustained of cruelties have been done by very religious men, and under strong religious impulses. Colonel Backhouse must have small understanding of the operation of religion on human nature. The chief distinction to be noted is that in cases of religious cruelty the criminal counts what he does to righteousness.

The Bishop of Chelmsford appears to be impressed by the discovery that there is a declining demand for the commodities in which he deals. The market is a bad one, and he is trying to stir things up by threatening disaster if his wares are to drop out of use completely. He advises the people, if they wish to have real happiness, they should put themselves into the hands of the "Prince of Peace." But, alas, that Prince of Peace also carried a sword, and the use of *that* weapon has always been more in evidence than love and brotherhood. In this two-sided leader one could never be quite sure whether he would cause people to fall on each others neck and embrace them, or drop a very heavy bomb and blow each other to pieces. Generally the latter form has prevailed.

In the end the Bishop falls back on the one feature that has been constant with the Christian Church. He asks £300,000 in order to bring people to worship the unfortunate Prince of Peace. But, alas, we have had that plea and that promise many, many times. We suggest that the people should adopt the policy of pay as we go plan—promise to provide the money *when* results are forthcoming. The other plan reminds one of a confidence trick.

Addressing the Church Army, the Bishop of Rochester confessed he was shocked at the way in which people looked on the Jesus story. He says people "look upon Christ as a myth, like King Arthur and his knights." The Bishop went on to explain that this proved "how woefully ignorant they were of religious matters." We beg to differ. The fact that men and women are now looking at the stories of Jesus as they should read them is one more proof of the famous saying of Lincoln that "while one can fool *some* people all the time, one cannot fool *all* the people all the time." After all, the Jesus myth is developing in the way that all other myths have developed.

Those who are sufficiently influenced by age-long stories of the impossible to murmur "There must be something in it," might consider the length of time "spooks" have haunted houses, and the way people—some people—wag their heads and wonder whether the ghosts are real or not. For our own part, we are hospitably inclined and would do what we could to make any ghost comfortable. They should have with us the finest ghostly chair that could be found, and drink the finest ghostly wine that is made. And we would make no nasty remarks if the visitant from another world got "ghostly" drunk. That, we think, is a fair and good offer to ghostly visitants.

But several of our newspapers have been publishing accounts of the haunting of Borley Rectory, Sussex. The Rectory has been

announced as "the most haunted house in England," and we are so far generous that we are quite ready to affirm that the ghosts at Borley Rectory are as good and as real ghosts as can be found anywhere. But there are folk who are not so easily convinced, and Mrs. Eric Smith declares that while she and her husband were living in Borley Rectory they were haunted by rats and local superstitions. Mrs. Eric Smith should be ashamed of herself. We feel sure the Brains Trust would be with us if we say that no self-respecting ghost can be expected to "materialise" if onlookers treat it as a rat.

The Bishop of Bradford has discovered that we must have longer and better education than we have. We agree, although that agreement must be qualified by the consideration of the kind of education that is given. The only real good the Churches can claim to have done in the field of education is to put religion back in the schools, which will inevitably lower the type of teacher that will develop. A school that is "saturated with religion" means a type of teacher that, while not believing in Christianity, will be forced to teach it. Of course, it is promised that a teacher who wishes may be relieved teaching it. But we question whether many will run the risk of injuring their chances of promotion by declining to teach religion. The framers of the Bill and the clergy know that full well. The new Act brought us back—where religion is concerned—to pre-1870.

The year 1870 registers the beginning of the State taking education in hand, and it did so, not from the *desire* to initiate State education, but because our schools were the poorest in the principal countries of Europe. What school education existed was dominated by the Churches—State and Nonconformist. The Government, it is true, gave the Churches an annual grant of about £40,000 annually. A Royal Commission reported that the Government was not getting value for its money. The deadly fact is that the Church never had any real desire for an educated people. Its aim then was to gain supporters of religion, and that secured, their real interest in education ended.

We are faced, says a religious paper, with "militant Atheism." That is a very common expression, and its significance is peculiarly Christian. In its way it indicates the willingness of Christians, nowadays, to come to an agreement with Atheists. It is no longer possible to frighten Atheists or to imprison them for not believing in a God, and even when the bigoted Christians suggest "rough" treatment of Atheists, a more liberal-minded Christian may stand up and protest that the Atheist must be allowed to air his opinions. So leading Christians must, to-day, be content that militant Atheists are about. What they would say if to-morrow the Christian Churches regained their power is quite another story.

Some of our readers are aware that a few months ago there was issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission a document entitled "Towards the Conversion of England." That title deserves notice. The aim of the Archbishop is to convert England. For centuries the Church of England has had every possible chance of filling this country with Christians. It has had at its command enormous sums of money, it has grabbed children and trained them to believe that Christianity is the most valuable of all religious systems. It has followed the children to manhood, and by a hundred and one ways bribed adults to at least pretend they believe in Christianity. It still spends many millions annually to keep that belief in being. And now a special commission solemnly declares that the great work before the Churches is to convert the English people to Christianity. Such a mixture of humbug, falsity and impudence would be impossible to anyone but a body of parsons on the warpath.

What poor puppets are a certain type of human being! Here is the editor of the New York "Daily Worker," who has given up his editorship—with his wife—to join the Roman Catholic Church. He has adopted a full set of religious doctrines and sacrificed a batch of political and social beliefs. Of course, he will be able to announce himself as a "Democrat"—of the Papal type.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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SUGAR PLUMS

We have no doubt that within the life of many now living it will be held that German Nazism may be regarded as greatest of religious outbreaks, and they may pay "The Freethinker" the compliment by admitting that it was in its pages that this truth was first stressed. And as we like to be just and have no political axe to grind, we add that this much was accentuated by Hitler from the moment that he rose to power. His handling of education, his destruction of books, his constant declaration that he felt himself to be a minister of the people, his making heresy towards the Nazi Bible a crime justifying the death penalty, and the worship he demanded from his people, all go step by step with the attitude of the Christian Church in the height of its power. Fortunately, it was proved possible to break the Nazi power in the course of a few years. But to break power and destroy the ideas on which it builds are different things, and it would be foolish not to recognise that there are bodies of people who are still believers in the Nazi philosophy. For the moment they are silent, but silence does not of necessity indicate death. And Nazism may have more than one form.

The Bishop of Bradford believes that, "broadly and roughly," the war "will have proved harmful to religion." Well, that is something, and we leave those preachers who have taken an opposite view to settle the matter with Dr. Blunt. The war has given men and institutions a shake, and has caused them to contrast established values with those of other types. When that occurs old ideals are examined and many go into the mental waste paper basket. We are not foolish enough to expect Christianity to disappear, but it will be taken nearer its proper social and scientific values. The blindest of those who do any thinking must bethink themselves that a religion as old as Christianity, if it had been of any social value, should have made its value plain to all. The Churches will not disappear. Religions never do. But they fade away.

Catholics have never forgiven Mr. Alfred Noyes for his book on Voltaire, which was nearly put on the Index by his fellow Catholics. A Miss O'Flaherty has set herself to dispose of Mr. Noyes once for all, and to show that the picture he gave of a Voltaire at heart a true Catholic was all nonsense, and that he was a disgusting blasphemer against the principal dogmas of Catholicism and an unscrupulous propagandist of faith-withering scepticism." How sardonic would be the laughter of Voltaire if he could read these two books, both coming from a Church he loathed! In any case, the reputation of one of France's greatest writers and the defender of Calas and La Farge need fear nothing from people whose names and books will be forgotten easily in a decade.

Tremendous discontent is being shown by the established Church concerning the refusal of Parliament to permit "a clerk in holy orders" to disguise himself as a teacher. For once in a way, and we do not say it as an Atheist, justice has been done; for it is obvious that "a priest in holy orders" simply cannot but function as a priest while being engaged as a teacher. . . . It is something to be remembered that the Government should have acted as it did, but the clerical papers are talking of injustice, etc. We wonder what would have been said if an Atheistic teacher did his "job" in such a way as to discredit the Christian religion? We expect he would get the "boot" without any waste of time. It is worth noting that the refusal was moved by a Presbyterian, seconded by a Roman Catholic and supported, among others, by a Congregationalist. A clear instance of the fact that when rogues fall out honest men are likely to get their dues.

Commenting on this matter, the "Universe" R.C. says in a leading article, "So far as we know there is no clergyman of any denomination whose religious beliefs could have any effect on the teaching of secular subjects." Oh simplicity, thy name is surely "Christian."

The "Church Times" professes great hope that Christianity may now make headway in China. In sober truth the impress made on China's four hundred and fifty millions was very slight indeed. With a culture that was established long before Christianity was heard of—in name—the number of converts are comparatively very, very few. The C.T. admits that "the great enemy to the Church's progress in China was the profound indifference of the educated minority." That is true, but the way in which it is put is misleading, and we should be loth to charge the editor with ignorance. In other words, it was stating the situation in such a way as to distort the facts.

First, it must be noted that China has already a system of morals. That gives, and is intended to excite, not the unintellectual morality of the Christian priest, but the inspiring teaching of the philosopher. Second, religious intolerance is not a prominent feature of Chinese life. China is not chargeable with the bloodshed and intolerance characteristic of Christianity wherever it has wielded power. Confucius is still the commanding figure in Chinese culture, and his advice was to keep the gods at a distance. To put the matter briefly, but soundly, the Chinese have enough of the home material, without coming to that of other people. The fact staring the student in the face is that the Chinese have enough superstition at home, and the better educated are not likely to sink to the level of western religion. One well-known Chinese writer, who knows both East and West puts the situation well by saying:

"There is no doubt that the Chinese are in love with this earth, and will not forsake it for an invisible heaven. . . . Christianity as a way of life can impress the Chinese, but Christian creeds and dogmas will be crushed, not by a superior Confucian logic, but by ordinary Confucian common sense."

There is much significance in the point of view. For example, the "Church Times," commenting on the football pools remarks: "Some people create an additional tax on their earnings by gambling on the hope of winning a fortune from the football pools." True, but after all there is evidence, solid evidence that some people do win some heavy prizes. The prizes given by Christianity appear only in the next world, and about that pool nothing is reliably known.

The fitness of Cardinal Innitzer to control anything may be gauged by noting his description of Nazism as being primarily "a war against God, religion and the Church." But Nazism was nothing of the kind. It was essentially religious, both in regard to its teaching and methods, and outdid even the Christian Church at its greatest. But its chief teachings march step by step with the Christian religion as expressed by the Roman Catholic Church. The revolt against Rome of necessity led to a little more freedom than the older Church tolerated. When history comes to be written with strict accuracy, that will stand out as one of its most important truths.

FREETHINKERS, REBELS, AND S.H.

“ . . . and bless'd are those

Whose blood and judgment are so well co-mingled
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please.”

IN “The Freethinker” of August 19, 1945, S.H. made a kind and very mild criticism on my contrast in the article on “Lenin,” between Freethinkers, Rebels, and merely Rebels. In fact, 'twas scarcely a criticism at all. Still, as this difference of opinion concerns a “Basic Idea” in a Scientific Atheist Philosophy, some further analysis of the difference may help towards a clearer understanding; so far as that can be done briefly. The delay in doing so, in this case, is not due merely to my almost all-absorbing interest in the Current Affairs of the Human World, but to some other voluntary tasks that had to be tackled. However, I can still “catch the bus”; and, as the Bounder used to say, “Be just in time and Fear not.”

Most people take “Freethinker” to mean one who disbelieves in, or is a “mental rebel” against, any or all forms of Godism (i.e., Religion, Supernaturalism, Belief in Spiritual Beings or Forces). Knowing this, I gave my “Idea” of what “Freethinker” connotes and denotes. I had the embryo of this idea by 1894; and, naturally, it has developed during the mentally-never-quiet, developing, years. I have also stated it more than once in the “Freethinker.” Frinstans, in “Freethinker,” April 12, 1936: “I suggest that the essential of the Freethinker, as Freethinker, is the same as that of the Scientist, as Scientist. It is the desire to know, to understand, to seek Truth.” (By “Truth” I do not mean some metaphysical abstract Idea, but the “truth,” relative to some phenomenon, some definite Force and/or Process, arrived at by dialectic, that is analytic, reasoning). “This very desire compels or obliges us to appear propagandists—to a greater or less degree. Still, many of the best Freethinkers have no desire at all to be propagandists.” (It's very much easier for me to find a specific sentence of mine in the “Freethinker” than it is for C.C. to find one of his!)

Again, in a Northern Paper in June of last year, there was a discussion with a London Economic Individualist who was using “that great book,” Dr. F. A. Hayek's “The Road to Serfdom,” to defend the Anarchic “system” of unrestricted competing in land, trade, industry and finance. One passage from his opponent was: “. . . What counts, is the nature of the ‘facts’ used as basis, and the truth or error in the processes of reasoning. In discussing any problem in economics, politics, etc., a desire to defend a particular ‘case’ or ‘interest’ should not dominate the argument. An analysis, in a sociological problem, should be as *impersonal* as in a problem of chemistry, physics, biology, or any specific science.” That, of course, is a “counsel of perfection,” but the real Freethinker who is born with “the compelling urge,” or even the lesser Freethinker who sincerely strives to act in this way, should not go far wrong—within the limits of his/her “mental” faculties. (Incidentally, after two rounds another gent from London chipped in to defend the Stock Exchange and Money Market by the Ten Commandments! As no reply appeared—I'm sure there was one—some Archangel, 'twixt God and the Editor of a “Liberal” Paper, had intervened to stop the latter's non-intervening!)

Such was the basis, c. 1908, on which I framed or reframed the Motto of Freethought into “La Verite Oblige”; in the Intercom. (Interkom.) of the World's Common People, to-day, “La Vereco Devigas.”

Here, readers should remember that telling or seeking the Truth in Social Questions does not signify saying all the nasty things of which we can think—as too many men and women believe and practise—especially in “Politics.” Their Practice is “Publicity in Private Affairs, and Privacy in Public Affairs,” which suits

so many interlinked corporate Interests—Economic and Ideologic. The only safe guiding Principle for Democratic Social Existence is: “Privacy for Private, but Publicity in Public Affairs.”

From all this we conclude that there are two Types of Freethinker: the first, according to the popular or general “Idea,” that a Freethinker is one who has no belief in any form of Godism; such is a “mental rebel” and may be merely a rebel; the second is one in whom the mode of reacting to sensations or impressions—external or internal—is not only what we term “analytic,” but is *abnormally* so; in this Type, other modes of reacting, e.g., to what we term “sound,” “colour,” “form,” etc., may be below, above, or on the average of sensitivity. Naturally, both these Types *may be* “conditioned” (or re-conditioned) in varying degree by methods which we can term Sociological—even if it includes surgical operating. Thus, both Types vary and there are “innumerable” possible “permutations and combinations” in terms of Biology—not to mention those of Sociology.

This seems a suitable point at which to “put in” the three Principles of that Scientific Atheist Philosophy, of which Chapman Cohen (“C.C.” to me and others) has been and is the chief exponent. I had intended to reserve it for a later specific article, but it fits in here. C.C.'s “Determinism or Free Will” is the text book, and, in the Preface, he states that a publishing firm refused it—because he wouldn't expand it to 7s. 6d. size, peace time rates. He published it himself in its unexpanded form, and I have “unexpanded” it more into three Fundamental Principles. Still, the book itself should be read and mastered. Unfortunately only a small percentage in *all* classes are interested in Philosophy of any kind—Metaphysical or Scientific, Godist or Humanist, but for those who are, I recommend this book. Besides, we have come to the end, the horribly painful end, of 50 years of Mental Dishonesty and Hypocrisy in Public Affairs, which began in the increasingly desperate and unscrupulous efforts of Christian Apologists, “To hold what we have,” in Economic and Ideologic Interests, which bred Fear and Political Cowardice among the People, and which finally drifted us into the two Worst World Wars ever. After this ghastly Failure, the bulk of People are not even asking the one-time arrogant Apologists, “My God! Why has *It* forsaken us?” But, all are agreed that *our* Part of the New World must be built only under the guidance of Science—in Sociology, no less than in Engineering, Architecture, etc.

Chapman Cohen in this book deals with the Individual Human Existence, i.e., the individual Person, but it is equally applicable to Social Human Existences, e.g., families, groups, combines, Parties, Nations, etc., in their inter-relations as Human Social Entities. First Principle, page 111: “An absolute beginning is no more conceivable in the mental or moral (social, A.Z.) sphere than it is in the physical world. The sum of all that is, is the product of all that has been, and in this, desires, feelings, dispositions, are included no less than physical properties.”

Second Principle, page 12: “Determinism asserts that, if we knew the quality and inclination of all the forces bearing upon human nature in the same way that we know the forces determining the motions of a planet, then the forecasting of conduct would become a mere problem in moral (social) mathematics.”

Third Principle, page 105: “. . . our inability to say what a person will do under given circumstances is no more than an expression of our ignorance of the quantitative and qualitative value of the forces operating. *The possibilities of action are co-extensive with the actualities of ignorance.*” (My italics.)

This contains all that is Scientifically useful in Hegelian Materialism, without pandering to the Pantheism, Immanent Godism, and Mysticisms (several in number), which are the booby-traps used to-day by the retreating and defeated Professional and Lay Apologists for the Economic cum Ideologic Corporate Interests of Godism—all varieties.

The "Principles and Objects of Secularism" may not be a Scientific Atheist Philosophy, but they are a simple, clear, practical statement of that Philosophy which every ordinary man and woman can understand. *And*, we cannot repeat too often, it is not only Simple and Scientific, *but* it is the only Philosophy suitable to Democratic Existence.

I have finished my paper and haven't reached the Rebels yet, so they will have to wait—a thing that Rebels hate to do!

ATHOSO ZENOO.

RELIGION IN PRISON

ONE of the most interesting aspects of prison life is the careful attention that the authorities pay to the "spiritual welfare" of the inmates of such institutions. Far more importance seems to be placed upon a man receiving the right religious care, than on such fundamentals as an adequate diet, sanitary conditions and constructive labour.

On reception at a prison a man has to give a whole load of details for record purposes, amongst which is his religious faith. There are only three main religious categories in British prisons—Roman Catholic, Church of England and Jew. Each man is given a long card which is hung up outside his cell on a board; these cards are of different colours according to the man's stated religion—a red card is R.C., a blue one is Jew, and a white one is C. of E. Red, white and blue, quite a patriotic selection! Such categories as Baptist, Methodist, Jehovah Witness, or Atheist, etc., are given a white card with the name of the appropriate faith written across it. Any man who is not sure what his brand of Christian religion is, is automatically put down as C. of E. When the officer asked me what religion I was, I replied "Atheist." The effect was startling! Two other officers looked up quite sharply and many of the men present stared in surprise. Who was this heathen amongst them? I insisted that I be classified as Atheist, and with some muttering the officer did so. Not exactly a welcome reception from my future guardians!

The day following reception each man was taken before the Governor and the Chaplain to check details in the large record book. The chaplain was naturally interested in the religion of each man, and when he saw "Atheist" against my name, he appeared a little perturbed. He said, "Of course, you know, if you don't go to church on Sundays you will be locked up most of the day." This was an obvious invitation to change my mind, with the implication that if I remained firm I should be penalised every Sunday. I remained firm.

There are ministers for all branches of the Christian faith. The Home Office booklet "Prisons and Borstals" (published by the Stationery Office, June, 1945, price 1s.), says on this point:—

"RELIGION.

47. A Chaplain of the Church of England is appointed to every prison. At the larger prisons he is a full-time officer, though to preserve freshness and individuality, the prison period of service is not usually extended beyond about five years. At smaller prisons a local clergyman gives part-time service. At every prison also the Commissioners appoint Roman Catholic priests, and Ministers of the Methodist and other denominations are specially called in as required. Wherever possible provision is made for a prisoner of any denomination, however small, to receive the spiritual ministrations of a minister of that denomination.

48. Church of England services are held every Sunday morning, at which all the Church of England prisoners attend unless they receive permission to be absent. Voluntary services are also held on Sunday afternoons and on a mid-week evening. Provision is made for regular services for other denominations, and at the larger prisons

there are separate Roman Catholic chapels and Jewish synagogues.

49. In addition to holding services, the chaplains and ministers visit members of their congregation individually in their cells. Prisoners may be prepared for confirmation, and confirmation services are often held in the prisons. The chaplain is also generally responsible for the educational and welfare work of the prison." (My italics.)

On the point of attendance at religious services, a rules card hung up in each cell states that a man will attend the service of his own particular denomination unless he has permission from the Governor to be absent. This may seem a perfectly fair attitude on the part of the authorities as apparently any man who wishes to be absent has only to ask. But anyone who has been in prison for any length of time soon discovers the snags in this.

Firstly, seeing the Governor is a tedious business. One has to apply on the previous day by giving name, number, location in the prison and place of work to a "leader" (a "leader" is a man who is trusted, and who is put in a position of authority over other prisoners). Next day you are fetched from the shop or workparty where you are working, and taken to the large hall to which the Governor comes. Here you are supposed to stand in single file with a yard between the man in front of you and the man behind. You may have to wait up to an hour before the Governor arrives in a gloomy and cold hall; *talking is forbidden*. Then the great man arrives, and one by one you go into his office to ask for what you want. You are hustled in and out at the fastest possible rate by a "screw" (prison warden) giving you no time at all to put your case. Then you go back to your cell for dinner which is, in most cases, cold when you arrive.

Secondly, one soon becomes aware of the psychological attitude of the prisoners towards the authorities. A man is allowed to make any complaint that he thinks reasonable, but the vast majority of men are cowed by the knowledge that to complain is to invite trouble later in the form of victimisation. Although many men did not wish to go to church, particularly during the summer when the opportunity of getting a little sun was presented, nevertheless, I know of only two who went to the Governor and received permission to be absent. This in a prison holding 600 men!

Thirdly, Sunday is a dreary day at the best of times, being composed of one and a-half hours of exercise, and a service in the morning and afternoon. For the rest of the time you are locked up in your cell, the final locking-up taking place at 4 p.m. till 6.30 a.m. next morning! So that there is every incentive to go to church, if only to get out of one's cell.

It is interesting to note that although all brands of the Christian faith are catered for, people who embrace such religions as Mohammedanism, Bhuddism, Hinduism, etc., had to rely on their own resources as no minister was provided. Rival religions to the Christian one were not encouraged apparently! The C. of E. being the State Church, naturally had the largest building, and was very well equipped. One of the preachers, a Church Army man, seemed to take a delight in rubbing in the unfortunate plight of the relatives of the prisoners. He seemed to think that the men would lead a better life in future if it was emphasised to them that their relatives were suffering outside. This greatly incensed the men and could only have an embittering effect on them in the future.

Another point of interest was the separation of the Jews in the large dining hall where men had their meals in association, after a period of probation in their cells. The diet of the Jews was different at some dinner-times, and it was to facilitate the serving that they were put on to two tables of their own. Instead of pork (popularly known as "floating fat"), the Jews would be given corned beef! This can hardly be called Kosher meat!

The separation also tended to emphasise and encourage anti-Semitism which was rife in the gaol.

Altogether the business of religion was a pretty deadly one, and one wondered at times whether it was part of the punishment! One thing seems clear, anyway, prisons must have been built for Christians mainly, as only three other men registered as "Atheist" in the whole twelve months that I was there!

T. W. BROWN.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

(Lines suggested by a discussion arising out of a Workers' Educational Association Class (August, 1945)).

I KNOW but I. In fact I only know that I in part.
All conscious knowledge of both Man and men
Is centred round this ego from the start.
Said Piltdown: "I kill Mog to get his wife
But Og I help because he saved my life,
Therefore, this Something which I cannot see
That makes the trees to fruit and brings me game,
That speaks with thunder, pours down hail and rain,
Shrieks in the wind, then warmly smiles again,
Must be a man like me,
But greater, and if pleased or crossed will act the same."
So raised he up a God, like to himself,
With all the power that he himself desired
To make or break; to aid or to retard;
Capricious like him also, cunning, hard;
And bound "The Lord Said" on himself and his.
As he had purpose in his chase or war,
His shaping tools or wanderings afar,
His choice of cave, or searching for a wife,
So "God" had purpose in "creating" life.

Time passes, and by very slow degrees
Man learns to know and use the things that are.
His mills now grind by energy brought far;
Earth, Minor planet or of a medium star,
No longer claims pre-eminence with Ra.
Himself no longer fulcrum of "Creation"
Like every other link must take his station
Within the changing chain of evolution.
Yet though his self-esteem now wanes
Now powers he gains.

Man's purpose is to gain his own desires,
Yet still like Piltdown and his shaggy crew,
Himself the centre of a narrow view,
One's purpose still the Other's purpose mars.
Purpose of Powerful frustrates hope of Weak,
Who, waiting chance, on Powerful vengeance wreak.
Then means of Joy in magnitude abound;
The way to use them also has been found,
But Vested Interest hedges them around.

Thus Man has purpose in affairs of Men;
But has Life Purpose? What, or where, or when?
Space without limit, time or start or end,
Filled with a Tenuous Something. Change. Then send
More Solid Something changing on its way
In ordered sequence. Change on change, nor stay
In any form, nor inconsistent move,
But ordered, so one step the next shall prove.
At every step is chose of the next way,
At every choice conditions interplay.
But having ta'en a road; that is the track,
Diverge again on that, but go not back,
Thus out of Space came Universe, came Sun,
Came Earth, came life, came Man, and more must come,
But as to PURPOSE; Whose or whence? Why, NONE.

BEATRICE FRANCIS-JUPP.

THE LEES (or an Inheritance)

WE are bankrupt. What! "The Freethinker?" No, no, of course not. Everybody is bankrupt in the sense that we have spent our money in riotous warfare and must now live in the shadow of our former greatness. In short, the British Empire is bankrupt. An eminent politician has declared that he is glad to have it so. Now we know where we are, so to speak. Discussing the situation in the cosy parlour of our favourite "local" not very long ago, an acquaintance remarked that the circumstance did not worry him in the least. He had been always bankrupt, in fact he could not remember the time when he was not scared of being confronted by a dun. He smirked and picked up his glass and blowing the froth preparatory to taking a drink, said "Really, it is our understanding that is bankrupt. Our imagination is pretty low too." He seated himself in the best chair in the bar and then looked around as though inviting comment. No one made any remark and then he added, in a provocative manner, "I doubt whether we have any more imagination than our primitive ancestors." At which a horrified bystander exclaimed "What! No more imagination than a savage? Rubbish," and hastily drained his glass which he replaced on the counter with a bang. The barmaid misunderstanding the action came forward and taking the glass said "Same again, sir?" "Er . . . no, no thanks," he stammered. She eyed him suspiciously, and resumed her knitting, muttering to herself. The first speaker resumed, "The savage, as you call him, lacked the technological advantages that we possess and that is where we rise above him, but in many other respects we are no better off than he was." "Rubbish," again expostulated the interrupter as he rose to take his hat and stick. "If I don't hurry I shall miss 'Tina.' The savage didn't enjoy any advantage anyway. The idea of such ideas as that. I'll leave you to it. Goodnight." The other smiled broadly and went on to say, "It is not necessary to review the numerous amenities which the savage lacked, and which we now enjoy, but we appear to have failed in utilising our wonderful inventions and discoveries to the benefit of all mankind. Nor can it be said that we are really any happier in possessing these resources. In fact, in war time they operate to our disadvantage inasmuch as the application results in a colossal waste of material and widespread destruction of property, not to mention lives." Another man took up the challenge: "Perhaps so, but man still remains an imperfect animal, and the possibility of a future war cannot be ruled out. I have read somewhere that fighting is one of the primary instincts in man." "Yes, I know, and my point is this: our moral progress has not been in proportion with our technological progress otherwise we should settle our differences in a peaceful manner and not resort to the barbarity of war. I imagine that the trouble is the result of self-interest—the bug-bear of humanity—and appears to be incapable of solution." "But you can't alter human nature," said another. "But what wants to? Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds, said George Eliot, but at bottom lie the motives. In the motives self-interest is almost always detected." He paused significantly and emptied his glass—which he carefully placed on the counter—and remained silent. The hint was taken. "Thanks," he said. "Yes, that's it, motives. The motive which causes a child to lie and that which causes, say, a politician to lie is the same. It is self-interest and the only difference is one of degree." A dreamy-looking individual who had not spoken hitherto, but had listened carefully to the conversation, now remarked: "Can this self-interest be sublimated?" "Sublimated?" repeated the other. He paused and looked around thoughtfully and muttered the word again as though deliberating, and said: "'Tis true that a man without self-interest would be sublime, but is he to be found anywhere on earth? No, I do not think such a thing is possible—that

entirely. But it can be controlled. What do you think?" He looked at each one of us in turn, perplexed, but expectant that someone would offer an opinion. At length the questioner said: "The vast majority of mankind is concerned with one thing only, how to live, which involves food, clothing and comfort. The sublimation of self-interest is to most people ultra vires. It is sufficient to understand the shortcomings and limitations of oneself as well as others, and to remember always 'that man wants little here below nor wants that little long.'"

"Time, gentlemen, please," bellowed the landlord. The strident voice came as a shock to our musings. "Self-interest that is," said the first speaker with a laugh as he took up his glass. "I'll tell you how it is. Man, in certain circumstances, may not differ greatly from his remote ancestors. He is the residual product of all that has gone before. On the whole he is not so bad. See," he said, raising his glass for all to see "that's clear enough, isn't it?" The dreamy looking individual eyed the contents and replied: "Yes, pretty clear." He paused, pondering over the conversation about the savage, and added enigmatically, "but don't disturb the lees!"

S. GORDON HOGG.

"THE MOST GOLDEN MEMORY OF MY LIFE"

THE "Sydney Bulletin" (N.S.W., Australia) publishes the following paragraph written by a New Zealand contributor, regarding the death of a highly-esteemed identity in this part of the world whose name must be familiar to readers of "The Freethinker" through the many articles he wrote for that publication:—

"Henry Hayward, who passed on in M.L., owning 60 theatres, hailed originally from Wolverhampton (England).

"Son of an eminent violinist, he always had a gift for the picturesque in the way of amassing coin. As a young chap left to battle on his own, he staggered the manager of a shipping concern by proposing that one of its biggest vessels should be turned into a floating theatre. The manager ordered him off the premises, regarding him as a crank; but Hayward was so persistent that the company decided to give it a try, and it brought in £200 a concert.

"By the time he was 30, Hayward had also been a tobacconist, a newspaper owner, proprietor of market stalls and of sideshows, and other things besides.

"Turning to the movies, he eventually cast up in Dunedin (N.Z.) with £800; and after other theatrical ventures—one twelve-months' tour netted £13,000—he set up the Dominion's first picture show. He became a Rationalist and wrote many books in support of his ideas, but was always accepted by others, including clergymen, as a fine type. Hayward and his two brothers married three sisters, members of one of his touring companies."

The reference, "wrote many books in support of his ideas," is a very timid attempt to dismiss the actual fact that Mr. Hayward was, for the whole of his lifetime, most active in courageously and vigorously giving voice to his repudiation of Christianity and religious superstition generally.

Indeed, the word "ideas" as here used would appear to be intended to imply that his deeply-held convictions were just amiable eccentricities!

Even more inane is the statement that he was a Rationalist, followed by the remark to the effect, "But he was always accepted by others as a fine type." Quite obviously it was a surprise to the "Bulletin" contributor that a man could be "a fine type" without embracing the Christian faith. Or was it that, writing for what he knew to be a Catholic directed and controlled paper, he felt forced to indulge in such clownish fatuousness to ensure publication of what, apart from the portions to which I have taken exception, is a well-merited complimentary paragraph?

Appreciation of Mr. Hayward of a full-hearted character is expressed in "The Film Weekly" (Sydney, October 11) by a New Zealand intimate, O. N. Gillespie, who thus concludes a 1,000-words tribute:—

"It is not usually known that for half his life he fought a serious physical disability; and he did this with such success that no one could suspect any frailty in his ever-active, virile, keen-minded leadership.

"When the depression caused him irreparable losses, he set to work with vim and genius to build up the fine business he controlled in New Zealand. I don't want to appear learned, but Nestor, one of Homer's figures, said in allusion to the past, 'Never did I behold such warriors—nor ever again.' That applies to Henry Hayward.

"A man who lived to be 80, and all that time was guiltless of a sharp or cheap deed, or a second-class thought, or uncharitable saying, is a precious possession for any industry. I, who knew him for 30 years of his fruitful life, can say that my friendship with him will always be the most golden memory of my life. That thought will be shared by all who knew him."

J. Y. ANDERONEY.

SCHOOLS AND ATHEISM

We are not familiar with the routine of the Caterham Adult School, but from a brief account in the "Caterham Weekly Press" it should be worth noticing. The paper mentioned gives a summary of an advocacy of Atheism before the school, by Mr. R. Pricker, followed by a discussion. There are not many schools with which we are acquainted that would permit so open a championship of Atheism. We congratulate the students of the school. Their education is probably healthier than is given in many "educational" institutions.

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South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m., a lecture; Tuesday, Conway Discussion Circle, 7 p.m., A. D. HOWELL SMITH, B.A.: "What the Bible Really Is."

COUNTRY—INDOOR

Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Public (Lecture) Hall, Blackburn).—7 p.m., Sunday, Mr. C. McCALL.

Blackpool Branch N.S.S. (173, Church Street).—Sunday, 6.45 p.m.: "Crimes of Christianity—Monkery."

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6.30 p.m., Mr. R. J. H. DAY: "Not for Outward Application."

Leicester Secular Society (75, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6.30 p.m., Mr. J. McCABE: "The Failure of the Twentieth Century."

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