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## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### The God Who Takes No Heed

AMONG the many ancient Roman religious inscriptions brought to light by the patience and enthusiasm of antiquaries is one that runs, "To the Gods who Take no Heed." At first the inscription, or the intention in the minds of those who raised it, is puzzling. An altar "To Unknown Gods" is understandable. The catholicity, if not the fears, of polytheism had no desire to overlook any probably existing deities: and after erecting altars to all the gods who were known—or, what amounts to the same thing, to all the gods they thought they knew—another altar was erected to any others that might have been overlooked in the work of cataloguing. Gods were then plentiful enough to excuse an error of omission, and altars were cheap enough to invite recognition of a god's existence. And an altar to any gods that may have been overlooked has an air of large-hearted hospitality and tolerance about it that appeals to one's better instincts.

But an altar to "The Gods who Take no Heed"! If there were really gods of the Lucretian variety, who dwell in unruffled calm, far apart from the affairs of men, why not leave them alone? Perhaps there was a fear that the gods would be offended if their existence was not acknowledged, and they might take heed of man in a more or less unpleasant manner. Or perhaps the altar was erected as an elaborate act of sarcasm. Some may have recognised that when the gods did interfere in human affairs the results were as often as not unpleasant. They may have noted that a large part of man's efforts were directed towards repairing the ills caused by the gods and that even their benefits involved lengthy and costly acts of recognition. And anyone, whether he lived in Roman times or in our own day, might justifiably conclude that as the happiest nations are those that have no history, so the best gods are those that do nothing. To one who looks at human history from the proper point of view, "Lord, leave us alone," is a far more intelligent prayer than "Lord, help us."

Times change; the gods to whom this ancient altar was erected are gone and forgotten—if they were ever actually known; but the God who does nothing—if there be one to do anything—is as prominent as ever. If we were all logical in thinking, and honest in expression, "The God Who Takes No Heed" would be the only one who would receive recognition—with the practical result that we should soon cease to recognise the existence of even him. For we are coming to the pass of seeing—even religious people are reaching this conclusion—that natural forces are all we have to reckon with; that if there be a God, he must work through natural forces, and that these are absolutely insensible to human desires or to human welfare. Science declares this in a thousand different ways, and supports it

by innumerable proofs. In the cosmic structure man is only a fragment of a whole, a product of forces that create with serene impartiality the organism that lives and the conditions that hurl it to annihilation. To man himself, his well-doing or ill-doing, his pains or his pleasures, are matters of supreme moment; to nature at large they are of no greater value than the fall of a stone down the side of a hill. The indifference of nature to human welfare or to human tests of value is one of the supreme facts of modern science.

Advanced religious believers warn us nowadays that we must not look for any miraculous manifestation of God's care for man. God, they say, works only through natural law, and any alteration of the established order is not to be looked for. Well, I agree as to the futility of expecting any alteration in the natural order of things; but what part does God play in the process? Are we merely to thank him for having created a machine which, once created, can work for ever without his interference? If so, what is this but practical Atheism? The Atheist says, I do not believe in a God, and see no evidence for his existence. Natural forces seem adequate to produce all I see around me, and I am unable to get beyond them. The Theist replies, Yes, I agree that natural forces are adequate to produce all natural phenomena; I agree that an interference in the cosmic order is not to be looked for or expected; still there is a God who is responsible for the existence of the whole cosmic structure. Maybe; but where, in practice, is there any substantial difference in the attitude of the two towards life? Both believe in the supremacy of natural law; neither believe in the actual interference of Deity in natural processes; each, therefore, cancel the operations of Deity so far as the affairs of life are concerned. God cannot interfere without a contravention of natural order, and the Theist tells us that God cannot contravene natural order without departing from his character as deity. Truly he becomes one of "The Gods who Take no Heed."

In using this argument the Theist really commits suicide to escape slaughter. But he does not die without a struggle. God's care for man, we are informed, is shown not by a series of interferences in the natural order, but by the order itself. Destruction and disease are facts, but a more perfect form of life is produced out of the carnage. Hatred is evolved, but so is love, and the latter becomes the more permanent factor in the life of man. All this may be granted, but it confuses rather than clears up the issue. If God's care for man is shown in the removal of obstacles to human development, what is shown by the creation of these obstacles? Is it carelessness or cruelty? All that is shown is that some benefit by the cosmic process, and this no one disputes. A tiger benefits by dining off a sheep, but the injury to the sheep is none the less real. And in the evolutionary process it does not happen that individuals are perfected through suffering. Some suffer and others

profit. Myriads of animals are born and die before the assumed perfect form appears. Consider the generations of men that have lived cherishing degrading superstitions, practising brutal customs, butchering and being butchered, before their descendants began to glimpse a more rational and more human mode of life. And why should we excuse, because good appears at the end, all the carelessness or cruelty that preceded its appearance? Surely we have a right to demand—if there be a God—that even though progress be slow it should not be paid for by the sufferings of thousands of people, each of whom has a clear claim to the benefits that are vouchsafed to a favoured few.

Does God heed and encourage earnest human endeavour? Much is said by sentimental preachers about the power of love in the world, and it is true that, thanks to man's social heredity, love is a stronger bond than hatred, and men will persistently dare more in defence of right than on behalf of wrong. And yet nature—or God, if there be a God behind nature—cares nothing whether we act to establish a right or to perpetrate a wrong; whether we act in hatred or in love. It is the *act* alone that matters. Says Maeterlinck:—

"If I am guilty of a certain excess or imprudence, I incur a certain danger and have to pay a corresponding debt to nature. And as this success or imprudence will generally have had an immoral cause . . . we cannot refrain from establishing a connection between this immoral cause and the danger to which we have been exposed, or the debt we had to pay. . . . And we are content deliberately to ignore the fact that the result would have been the same had the cause of our excess or imprudence been . . . heroic or innocent. If on an intensely cold day I throw myself into the water to save a fellow creature from drowning, or if, seeking to drown him, I chance to fall in, the consequences of the chill will be absolutely the same, and nothing on this earth or beneath the sky—save only myself, or man, if he be able—will enhance my suffering because I have committed a crime, or relieve my pain because my action was virtuous."

It is not merely the ease of right failing to overcome wrong. That alone was serious enough. What Maeterlinck is emphasising is that the endeavour to do right often leads to disaster; the desire to help others may entail swift punishment. Mentally or physically, we meet with the same truth. Atheists are railed at for not believing in God. But if they are wrong, with whom does the fault lie? Certainly not with them. Had they been less careful in their search for truth they would have remained Theists. Unbelief is usually purchased at a far higher cost, mental or social, than mere belief. Not many Theists have striven so hard to find out what is true as have those who reject all theisms. And if, after all, Atheists are in the wrong, the real fault lies with the God who shows himself so indifferent to human needs as to refrain from showing the truth to those who most earnestly seek it.

To think that God decrees any particular catastrophe is to go against all common sense, says one of our leading preachers. May be; although, if there be a God, the catastrophe must be part of his "mysterious" plan. But if God did not decree it, God does not prevent it. And though we save his credit with the statement one moment, we damn it the next with the undeniable fact. What is the

use of the providence of God if it does not protect man from disasters that he has no hand in producing? If man is left to reap the full consequences of his folly or ignorance, what is the use of praying to God for this or that? Or what is the use of a God at all? Believers talk of the hopeless outlook for man if God is dismissed as an outworn theory, and the universe left as the theatre of unconscious forces, with life as a mere iridescent bubble. But far more gloomy and disheartening is the contemplation of a universe which, if it suggests a presiding intelligence, suggests, as Mr. W. H. Mallock puts it, "some blackguardly larrikin kicking his heels in the clouds, not perhaps bent on mischief, but indifferent to the fact that he has caused it."

Many years ago, Carlyle lamented that "God does nothing." It was an overdue discovery. "God" never has done anything. He has not ceased acting, people are simply ceasing to expect him to act. Stripped of its "haughty Lord," nature is adequate to produce all we see around us. Cleansed of its superstitions and armed with sufficient knowledge, human nature is equally adequate to the task of properly organising and guarding human existence. Ignorance and superstition are at the bottom of nine-tenths of the troubles by which we are surrounded; and the same time and energy spent on these that are now squandered on religion would see a substantial reduction of our difficulties in the course of a single generation. But in the name of God we make mysteries of problems, and despair of their solutions. We create difficulties where none need exist, and ignore those that are only too palpable. Man has looked to his gods to help him when he should have been busy helping himself. One day we shall perhaps recognise that "The God Who Takes No Heed" is a description that fits every variety of Deity, from the Jumbo of an African savage to the attenuated abstraction of the advanced Christian.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## THE EVOLUTION TRIAL IN TENNESSEE

### II.

SEVERAL of Scopes' bright pupils were brought into Court to testify to their teacher's infidel instructions. But they admitted that he had not harmed them by his interpretations of the marvels of science. Meanwhile, conjurers and pop-corn vendors cultivated the custom of the crowds during the evening intervals of the trial, and they attracted almost as much attention as the evangelists who were zealously attempting to save the souls of the people. Among these were the Holy Rollers, whose delirious shouting, twirling and gesticulation, made the more decorous preachers seem very insipid. Indeed, there was an astounding collection of the representatives of nearly all the crazy sectarian bodies in the American States.

There were eleven churches in Dayton to accommodate a population of 1,500, and Bryan frequently appeared in their pulpits. The Judge seemed profoundly impressed by Bryan's exhortations, and when some controverted question was put in Court he would adjourn the case to consider it, and then decide in accordance with the views of the fundamentalists' leader. The days sped by and the heat continued unabated, while the crowds that packed the Court and its environs became denser than ever. Then, a rumour spread abroad that the floor of the Court room would collapse. So a platform was arranged in the open and the trial resumed on the lawn.

In this fantastic trial, the jury, thus far, had merely intermingled with the spectators. But now that a platform had been erected the Judge took his seat, the lawyers took theirs, while the jury sat in front under an immense banner urging all concerned to read their Bibles daily. A vast multitude had now collected impatiently awaiting the commencement of the trial.

Darrow at once called attention to the banner with its prejudiced appeal to the jury and public to search the Scriptures, and requested its removal. Bryan and the Judge protested against this sacrilegious objection, but the counsel for the prosecution admitted that its retention was perhaps irregular, so the banner was removed.

Dr. Metcalf, a distinguished naturalist, defined the term *evolution* and explained its accepted teachings. Then Darrow invited Bryan to define the word *religion*. To this the prosecution objected and the Judge asked Bryan whether he deemed it important. Darrow then reminded the Court that as the statute assumed a deadly conflict between science and religion, it was imperative to prove the meaning of these terms, to enable the jury to decide whether such conflict existed. However, Bryan eased the matter by offering his services, if Darrow also consented to answer questions. This was readily agreed to, and the stage was now cleared for the struggle between light and darkness.

In answer to Darrow's questions Bryan stated that he had been a student of theology for many years, had written and spoken extensively on the subject, and had been largely instrumental in passing the Tennessee statute under which Scopes had been indicted, while advocating similar legislation in other States. When Darrow inquired why, on a previous occasion, when questions were put to him personally concerning religion and the Scriptures he had ignored their existence, he made no reply. But to a Press interviewer, Bryan afterwards averred that Darrow was an Agnostic with whom he had no concern, for his activities really related to pretended Christians who were merely Christian in name.

When interrogated in Court, Bryan made a bad witness and his evasions and inconsistencies disappointed his disciples. But both questions and replies were published in full in the Press and thus obtained wide currency.

After the adjournment, Darrow, much to his surprise, was accompanied home by a friendly crowd, while Bryan left the Court almost alone. The anti-evolutionists had evidently been bewildered by Bryan's admission that the Biblical six days of creation may have embraced millions of years. It was a bitter lesson to a politician who, for years, had been pestering eminent scientists with impertinent questions concerning their religious beliefs, and inciting bigoted and illiterate fanatics to deprive them of their professorships and perhaps reduce them to poverty and distress.

Obviously disconcerted by the preceding day's proceedings, the Judge informed the reassembled Court that questions were irrelevant. This decision ruled out not only Bryan but the expert scientists appearing for the defence. The Court now held that the jury must decide from the evidence of ordinary witnesses whether Scopes' teachings accorded with the Genesis story or not. Still, the objective of the defence had been gained through the wide publicity given to the case, which far exceeded its most sanguine expectations. Also, it was now perfectly clear that ignorance and intolerance were arrayed against the leaders of scientific enlightenment.

The trial was now briefly opened. The defence proffered no argument but submitted the case to the jury. Thus, Bryan was prevented from delivering the address he had carefully prepared for the occasion. That the verdict was a foregone conclusion was evident, and Scopes was found guilty and fined 100 dollars. Modern science was now dismissed in benighted Tennessee.

The verdict was now transferred to the Supreme Court of Tennessee and Scopes was promptly released on bond provided by the Baltimore "Sun." This occurred on Friday, but on

the succeeding Sunday, Bryan suddenly expired. He had seriously overtaxed his system by devouring a Gargantuan dinner. He then lay down to sleep, but when his friends tried to rouse him he was found to be dead. Thus, the man who had fought so strenuously for Prohibition had died through excessive eating, although no doubt he had been enfeebled by the tropical heat and the worries and anxieties of the trial.

At the trial's conclusion, Bryan presented his undelivered address to the Press reporters who, however, refused to take it, but after his decease some reports appeared in print, if it carried no weight with instructed readers.

Judge Raulston later conducted a campaign against evolution, but the box office receipts were meagre, while his political efforts proved abortive. He was thus compelled to return to legal labour with a public reputation greatly impaired.

Darrow journeyed to Nashville to state the case for evolution before the Supreme Court of Tennessee, where he was joined by other noted attorneys. Much as in Dayton, the case attracted enormous crowds, both within and without the Court. The counsel for the prosecution made all that could be made of a very bad case. Darrow delivered the closing speech and was given ample time for his plain unadorned address. He was listened to with the closest attention and his peroration was accorded an ovation far greater than that received by his opponent.

A year rolled away before the Court's decision was announced. The four surviving Judges—for one in the interval had died—unanimously reversed the findings of the Lower Court. The trial was invalid, as the Judge and not the jury had fixed the fine. Moreover, they decided that Tennessee would no longer be bound by the decision, and they instructed the Attorney-General to dismiss it.

A little later, the National Association for the Advancement of Science assembled at Nashville when the Chief Judge made jesting references to the Scopes comedy. He also assured the scientists that they ran no risk in openly avowing their evolutionary principles in Tennessee.

Darrow opines that Tennessee is not so culturally deficient as is sometimes stated, and that there are many enlightened humanists in that State. And, although it remains within the Bible belt, Tennessee is not doomed to the everlasting domination of cranks and fanatics and their bigoted inspirers who, so far, have exercised so malevolent a sway.

The attorneys who fought for freedom acted on principle and raised the funds to meet the expenses of the trial and its sequel, while each counsel paid his own charges. Darrow himself was out of pocket by no less than two thousand dollars. Still, he was heart and soul in the conflict, and ever after enjoyed the remembrance of having played so important a part in bringing it to a happy conclusion.

Outstanding American scientists expressed their profound appreciation of the ability, integrity and idealism manifested by Clarence Darrow during the trial. This they conveyed with a covering letter to the world-famous Professor Pupin of Columbia College; Dr. Maynard's signature to the letter being endorsed by those of the eight eminent scientists, each highly distinguished in his own department of study, who went to Dayton to testify on behalf of the prosecuted John T. Scopes.

T. F. PALMER.

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I have attacked the Bible, but never the letter alone; the Church, but never have I confined myself to a mere assault on its practices. I have deemed that I attacked theology best in asserting most the fullness of humanity. I have regarded iconoclasm as a means, not as an end. The work is weary, but the end is well.—CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

## HYPOCRISY, REASON AND POLITICS

IT has been said that democracy is derived from the gatherings of the City States, and that representative government arose in the inability of a leader to address the whole of a wider constituency. But to-day, we have the use of radio, so that a political leader can address his constituents; indeed the whole world. We are back where we were, the world is that much smaller, but there is a greater diversity of opinion and interests. And, just as each and every member of the electorate might listen to loud-speakers, so also might they speak through microphones; but what sort of a noise would emerge?

E. G. Gordon's excellent article on sincerity, reason and politics had virtue in that it did attempt to answer a question. But the question raised needs further consideration; not only of politics, concerning representation and organisation, but also of hypocrisy as the antithesis of sincerity, as well as reason.

A number of candidates stand for election, the election is fought on a number of issues, a candidate is elected. Is he elected to use his own judgment or does he represent the constituency; does he represent those who voted against as well as those in favour; does he represent the diversity of opinions and interests even of those who voted for him; how can he represent such diversity? Even if we consider the immediate electoral issues the position is awkward, but he will later be called upon to deal with other matters. If he acts in accordance with his own judgment, then he is not considering the wishes of the constituents. Is he to use some means such as the Gallup Poll, to ascertain the prevailing sentiment; or is he to make a careful estimate of the extent to which this is biased by prejudices derived from tradition and custom; to what extent it is derived from existing circumstances; of the variety of interests and emotions involved; or leave all these on one side, consult expert advisers and consider the consequences and their merits?

Call politics the art of being governed, and we see the absurdity of the idea of representative responsibility. How can we delegate responsibility? It is not a question of the relationship of the individual to the State, for the State apart from individuals is unthinkable. Rather is it one of the relationship of individuals within the State. If the machine is to work, it works as a whole. No one cog-wheel in a watch is more important than another; the big hand no more than the small one; and if the watch is to keep time it is a question of adjustment. Each and all should make equally careful precautions and considerations. The representative is an individual like each member of the electorate. The responsibility is mutual. It is equally absurd for the representative to throw it back on them as for the electorate to put responsibility upon him. If he accepts the responsibility and uses his own judgment he is certain to be up against the diversity of interests involved. The more definite his opinions, the more certain is this to be the case.

If he is sincere in his opinions he will use some means to gain support and overcome opposition. If he endeavours to arouse enthusiasm, exaggeration and misunderstanding may expand into absurdity and misrepresentation; and produce dissension rather than unity. This is the case within parties as well as sections of the community. If on the other hand, he compromises in endeavouring to please and avoid displeasure, he becomes less active and his utterance becomes ambiguous, because the divergent interests cancel out. Hence the characteristic ambiguity of political terminology; the slogans, shibboleths and platitudes. The question becomes less one of reason than of emotion; sincerity is doubted, and the accusation of hypocrisy is raised. We need to be aware of the nature of the circumstances and the workings of our own mind; of the evasions and distractions; in order to distinguish vital issues. For it is always on the part of the other fellow that hypocrisy is asserted. We are lost in a maze of assumptions.

It has been said that hypocrisy is the lip-service paid by virtue to vice; an excellent way of putting a poser, but not very informative! Is hypocrisy virtue and sincerity vice; if virtue countenances vice, how is it virtue? But, no matter which way round it is put it becomes an absurdity. If it is lip-service paid by vice to virtue, its existence is evidence of virtue's impotence and it ceases to be such; if ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise. Just as the Christian who, condemning pride, boasts of his own humility; so also, sincerity, condemning hypocrisy, lays itself open to the same charge. How do we distinguish sincerity or hypocrisy, either in ourselves or others? The absurdity arises in that the question is a complete evasion. The assumption of either sincerity or hypocrisy is gratuitous. It is really one of knowledge (and not the absurdity of that of right and wrong) and of consciousness, upon which knowledge is based.

Not only is there the assumption that sincerity is a virtue and hypocrisy a vice, but also that hypocrisy is obnoxious and dangerous. But it seems obvious enough that if the hypocrite is conscious of incongruities and contradictions he is more likely to be conscious of the pitfalls involved; whereas the sincere man is far more likely to be dangerous, in virtue of his sincerity. We are more likely to play the hypocrite to avoid unpleasant consequences. Again, we may be certain on the meaning of an utterance, but that is no indication that it is so understood. If we are not aware of incongruities and contradictions, there is no question of hypocrisy; if we are aware of them in others, it is no indication that they themselves are so aware; and the fact of contradiction is more likely to be a consequence of ignorance than of knowledge. And if we are forced to the assumption of unconscious hypocrisy, we are in a ridiculous position for that involves unconscious intention.

If we assume the hypocrite's intention is to deceive, we also assume our own ability to be deceived; for if we are aware of contradiction we will not be deceived, whereas if we are not aware of inconsistencies we are not aware of hypocrisy. But the assumption of deception suggests that the question is not merely one of the existence of, and recognition of, logical inconsistency, for a realisation of contradiction may lead to a renunciation of logic and the assertion of dialectic; that nature is a paradox; that contradiction is a natural law. In which case we have nothing more than assertion and counter-assertion; we get nowhere. And a realisation of ignorance may even lead to the assertion of belief; of faith. In which case we have nothing but rationalisation; self-justification by hook or by crook. But there is more in it than that. The incongruities and contradictions of hypocrisy are like those of the unconscious mind. It is not merely a question of inconsistency. After all we are aware of the tricks and twists of the dream and may find illusion pleasing.

In other words, we need knowledge of both the conscious and the unconscious, and to apply logic in both aspects of reason. In seeing the social character of reason we might also see there can be no pretence about reality. Hypocrisy is a dawning consciousness of the unconscious. We might paraphrase an old saying; the superstitions of to-day are the religions of yesterday. The sincerity of to-day becomes the hypocrisy of to-morrow; and smile in our consciousness of it, as we do at the old superstitions.

H. H. PREECE.

## THE RAGGED TROUSERED PHILANTHROPISTS

TIME and again during the last quarter-century we have been confronted, in print and in speech, by nostalgic evocations of that halcyon era that came to a sharp close one hot August Sunday morning in 1914. Life in England, we are persuaded, was very pleasant in those days; the background was apparently stable, the people were healthily ignorant of isms, roads were safe, beer (and what beer!) was 1d. a glass, and—why, even the very weather was well-behaved.

Those are the impressions; for the facts we must turn to the contemporary records—the social statistics, the reports of the newspaper—and there we are introduced to the seamier side, to the want and squalor and disease that beset the lives of the many who were not in a position to enjoy the fine living available to the few. And as, inevitably, it was in the ranks of these few that the majority of writers were to be found, it is hardly to be expected that the contemporary records are often mirrored in their novels. Only rarely, as for example in "Howards End," do the poor make brief and disturbing intrusions. And very, very rarely do they dominate the pages as they do in "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists." But the author of this novel lived in the poverty he wrote about.

Robert Tressall was a journeyman housepainter and occasional sign-writer before the Great War. Although a good craftsman, he earned only enough to "make do" and when trade was slack he had to face near starvation with his fellow out-of-works. But while they accepted their lot, if cursingly, with what the well-heeled novelists would have described as "typical British phlegm," Tressall's reading and brooding led him to denounce the labour system as inefficient and cruel, and to urge a remedy—socialism. In his spare time he novelised the life he saw around him—complete with remedy. Shortly after finishing the task he died, still a young man, of consumption. The manuscript was edited and published in 1914 by Jessie Pope.

By all precedent, such a book should by now be leaden and drear. Surprisingly it remains vivid and immensely readable. The author takes us into a small community of workmen engaged in renovating a big house; some young, some old; some sanctimonious and some incorrigibly blasphemous; some skilful and conscientious, some hopeless deadbeats. The rich but never over-written details enable us to see them clearly; now at work, now fearful of dismissal; now at home, their wives pathetically struggling with unbalanceable budgets; now in the pubs where life could be briefly sweet. And despite Tressall's reforming zeal (he gives his protagonist, Frank Owen, lengthy socialistic homilies to deliver) he never upsets the balance of interest, or twists the characters to his own ends. Most of the men, most of the time, remain unimpressed by argument. "I don't see no bloody sense in always runnin' down the rich," said Harlow at last. "There's always been rich and poor in the world, and there always will be." "Of course," said Slyme, "it says in the Bible that the poor shall always be with us"—are typical last words after one of Owen's persuasive talks. Tressall was a realist, telling of what people were like, and not what he would like them to be, and his intellectual contempt for "those ragged trousered philanthropists, who not only quietly submitted like so many cattle to their miserable slavery for the benefit of others, but defended it, and opposed and ridiculed any suggestion of reform," did not damage the artist in him. He describes his philanthropists faithfully, and records their talk frankly—with, here and there, such pardonable euphemisms as a raw morning's being enough to freeze the "cars off a brass monkey."

Towards the end of the book there is a superb description of an annual "beano," a waggonette trip to a country inn. When the toasts are proposed, all the workmen, beerily forgetting their suffering under the contemptible foreman, Hunter, leap to their feet and cheer him. One feels that, with a little more drink inside them, they would have been blinded by tears of affection for all their rascally overseers and employers. Again, there is a sympathetically developed little theme of a lodger's developing an affection for the young landlady. Tressall makes no attempt to "write up" this affair; it winds to a natural and convincing full-stop. What insight, too, lies behind the account of Owen's enthusiasm for the execution of some "fancy" decorating which, he knows, will bring him no material reward, and will enable his employer to increase his already exorbitant profits.

An unusual and memorable book. And particularly good to read today, in the midst of so much moaning about the state of

the nation. Laying it aside, we reflect that the amelioration in English social conditions during the last generation has been truly great, and that the men who helped to bring this about may be more worthy of our adulation than the mightiest of our generals and the cleverest of our inventors.

N. T. GRIDGEMAN.

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## REQUIEM

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Life is but a journey taken  
On a road that all must tread;  
Some are bruised and some are shaken;  
Some are driven, some are led.

Man is born to struggle grimly,  
Darkest Ignorance his foe;  
Though he lights the path but dimly,  
Yet more plainly will it show.

We are part of Nature's forces,  
Nothing more and nothing less.  
Who may know Life's secret sources?  
Who the Purpose dares to guess?

Foolish myth shall never bind us,  
Nor belief in pagan lore;  
Superstition shall not bind us—  
*Reason* is the Open Door.

From the elements that made us—  
To the elements returned;  
Satisfied that Life has paid us  
In the knowledge we have learned.

Shed no tears of bitter sorrow,  
Not in sadness need we part;  
Look towards a new Tomorrow  
Bravely—not with aching heart.

No regrets and no dull mourning;  
Not in anguish bow your head.  
Darkness passes with the dawning—  
Grieving cannot help the dead.

Know in peace we are but resting,  
Freed from mortal pain and strife;  
Ours the gain but yours the testing—  
Yours to battle on through Life.

Let no doleful words be spoken,  
Nor your pleasures cease, we pray;  
When Life's prison bonds are broken  
Would you bid the captive stay?

Linger not with thoughts distressing;  
All Farewells are better brief.  
Inward calm is more impressing  
Than mere outward show of grief.

Though this earthly tie we sever,  
May this knowledge soothe your pain—  
Ev'ry loved one shall for ever  
In Sweet Memory remain.

W. II. WOOD.

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Take these men for your example. Like them, remember that prosperity can be only for the free, that freedom is the sure possession of those alone who have courage to defend it.—  
PERICLES.

## ACID DROPS

We see it has been decided that the Emperor of Japan is permitted to select what God he pleases, or whatever religion he pleases. In that respect he enjoys much greater freedom than does our King. What religion he should have, and what kind of God he should worship was settled for him more than 200 years before he was born. The Church runs no risk where the monarchy is concerned.

Some very great news. It is arranged that the Church "Commandos" are to go into action next April. But it has already got into hot water at a recent London Diocesan Conference. The trouble is the mixing of different Christian bodies; also that in the group of religious warriors there are Church men and Nonconformists, and a Mr. Cowie is horror stricken at the thought of going into action with heretics, believers in "false doctrines," etc. How can they go into action—even to save infidel souls—with Methodists? Things looked very serious, but other voices were heard. The Rev. Frost warmly retorted that Methodists accepted Jesus as their saviour and they could reach people that the Church of England could not touch. Mr. Frost was backed by the Bishop of London, although he is being attacked by another section of Christians and is charged with being a Roman in disguise. Still, needs must when a certain character drives, and even Russia was highly praised by Mr. Churchhill when the British-Russian "Commando" was working against a common enemy. Religion and politics have many things in common.

These be hard times for many of us, and the Army Padres, like other members of the Forces, are being demobbed. But, as one of them moans in a popular journal, it is difficult to one who is used to good-sized congregations—ordered to attend service—to feel at home with a mere handful of people who "drop in" now and again just as the maggot bites them. The demobbed preacher does his best, but with a mere handful of visitors who ask the same old questions, and get the same old answers, where there are no prayers and few sermons, the preacher's life is not a pleasant one. After all a clergyman with the Forces was a somebody to many, now he is rapidly becoming a nobody who strives, in vain, to please everybody.

The Publicity Campaign of the Churches is going ahead—that is, those who are interested in it meet and plan how to capture the people, while the said people are less and less interested in the campaign. At Fulham Palace a meeting agreed that at least £10,000,000 would be needed, of which £2,000,000 has been found. We are unaware just how the money is to be spent, and how the wanted £8,000,000 is to be collected, but one representative of the press begged the servants of God to leave newspapers alone. "Religious items are not news." A little while back we saw a picture of a clergyman sitting on the steps of St. Paul's collecting money for the church. We suggest that if the Bishop of London were to stand on his head and charged a guinea for all who came in St. Paul's a considerable sum might be raised.

The "Universe" records, we know not on what authority, that two days before the "Queen Elizabeth" reached its destination, a number of the passengers knelt and prayed for Russia almost within earshot of M. Molotov. If the tale be true it is something of which decent men and women should be ashamed. But religion and decency do not always run together.

You can't count on miracles—or on the fools who place their faith in them. The "Daily Express," for example, gives us the information that in the Central Provinces of India a native girl fell out of a three-storey window and rose from the ground unhurt. In fact she began reciting poems directly after she fell. Now that could not be beaten by a first-class R.C. miracle. The girl was not a Christian. It must have made a Christian preacher's mouth water.

Also from the "Daily Express." The Rev. Vicar of All Saints, Warwick, gives notice that a woman came to Church to thank God for giving her a child. No mention is made as to what angel visited the woman before the baby was born, but the Vicar calls

people to notice that "the churching gift is a personal fee to the vicar, and he is entitled to something on a decent level to modern values." Poor vicar!

From the "Glasgow Herald" we learn that many people are leaving their homes to live in an area where there is no Baptist Church. The preachers have our sympathy. The stock and trade of the clergy is being affected for the worse for the preachers. But why not start selling "blessed bottles of water" and let the people themselves do their own holy-washing?

It was Heine who first described the Papacy as "The great Lying Church," and certainly it has lived up to the description. The latest example we have seen comes from the "Universe." A reader inquired whether it was true that the Church imprisoned Galileo for saying the earth went round the Sun. That was, of course, black heresy for the Church declared the Sun went round the earth. Galileo was tried and punished and the Sun went round the earth, by permission of the Catholic Church. In fact the Sun kept, officially, running round the earth until 1822; then the Vatican permitted the matter as it now is. For over 200 years the earth stood still. Who is it that dares to question the power of the Roman Church?

Another noteworthy point comes from Lady Loathan (R.C.). She claims that so far from men losing their faith, people today are "Crazy for religion." We think the association of the desire for religion with craziness is rather significant, but we have several friends who are religious, and we have never noticed any indications of insanity.

There are a number of different ways of lying. It may be achieved by the tone of voice, or by placing an emphasis where there should be none. In fact there are so many ways of telling a lie that a lie is the hardest thing in the world to kill. Take this example, furnished by the vicar of St. John's Church, Mansfield. It is reported in the "Nottingham Journal" for October 18. Here is what he says:—

"When people tell us so glibly that science has now made Christianity unnecessary or out of date, do not forget that had it not been for the Church the whole tradition of philosophy and science would have perished from the chaos of the Dark Ages."

That is surely the most impudent falsehood that anyone ever gave to the world. It cannot be a mistake, the evidence to the contrary is so plain and so easily found. . . . Consider a single passage: "Had it not been for the Church the whole tradition of science and philosophy would have perished in the chaos of the Dark Ages." That is not argument, it is just impudence, and it is that because the evidence to the contrary is so easily found.

Consider two or three easily established facts. First, Christianity took its rise in the greatest days of law-giving Rome, and with all the philosophy and science, art and humanism that belonged to the best days of Greece. The philosophy and sciences of the ancient world were still active. But these phases of social life were decaying step by step with the growth of the Christian religion. And the "Dark Ages"? That was mainly Christian, and it was the revival of the ancient learning, the science and the humanism of the Mohammedan world that brought about the Renaissance—the new birth—that brought life to the Western world. For downright impudence commend us to the vicar of St. John's Church, Mansfield.

Mrs. Fisher, wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury, says, as reported in the "Daily Herald" of November 1:—

"Our people have no faith. Our children have not grown up with the kind of security afforded by the late Victorian and Edwardian times. . . . They say: 'We don't believe there is a God; for he would not allow wars and atom bombs to happen.' We hear with grave misgiving of the figures of illegitimacy, juvenile delinquency, and of young girls being married who are already pregnant. We hear with sorrow that only ten per cent. of our population go to church on Sunday."

All of which, being summarised, means that her husband's business is in a very shaky situation.

# "THE FREETHINKER"

41, Gray's Inn Road,  
London, W.C. 1.  
Telephone No.; Holborn 2601.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

F. BALL (U.S.A.).—We are pleased to say that we have had for many years appreciative readers of this journal. We are glad to add yourself. If our readers were as deep as they are wide, we should rank among the largest circulations in the world.

E. JAMES.—Thanks for paper.

A. B. STOKES.—We have no dislike against criticism of our opinions, but they must be of the kind that will interest sensible and critical readers. Good things are always welcome; the more stinging the better. Our columns are always open for Christians who can argue with common sense, or if they are in a position to speak with authority.

G. B. S. (East London, S. A.).—Thanks for report. Will be useful. We are much indebted to those who send items that otherwise we might never see.

C. WILLIAMS.—We know nothing of a Jewish "Race." In fact it never existed. There have been a number of people who were believers in the Jewish religion, but that is a different thing.

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.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

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## SUGAR PLUMS

Once again we are witnessing the truth that whether wars be large or small, inevitable or due to misjudgment on the part of our rulers, they always involve a dislocation of civic life. Also, when war comes our Churches with unblushing impudence immediately discover that it indicates a neglect of religion, and that the way to prevent war is to increase the power of religious belief. The impudence is glaring, and we were very pleased to see the "Standard" for November 1 giving the Churches a rap they well deserve, thus:—

"The Church must attract men by its own vitality, and in so far as it fails, should not fall into the temptation of casting blame on declining standards of morals. 'If thy morals makes thee dreary,' wrote Robert Louis Stevenson, 'depend upon it they are wrong.' The Public Morality Council should hold its future deliberations with this motto draped round the platform."

We are pleased to find so good an authority repeating what we have often said. Our Christian leaders are, not for the first time, giving the world an exhibition of humbug and lying.

The Chairman of the Nottingham Education Committee, Mr. Holderman Halls, has seriously offended the local vicar by saying,

"Can it be seriously argued that there is any case for the retention of the Church of England School in the educational system of this city?" The Vicar retorts thus: "No wonder our bishop was shocked. Any Christian in England would be shocked that the person who is the head of the Education authority of a great city like Nottingham put forward such a question," and, with an unintentional logical outburst, the Vicar says, "If there is no place for any religious school in Nottingham, and since Nottingham is one of England's great cities, it follows there would be no place for any religious schools in England."

There is a little logic in part of what he said, but on the whole it voices the usual falsities that accompany religious pleading. There are, of course, plenty of churches and plenty of preachers although preachers are not so plentiful as they were. There is no doubt whatever that of those children who have had religion forced upon them the majority will outlive religion as they reach maturity. Nothing can prevent that—short of a rule such as existed for a time when the Christian Churches worked on the same lines as when Hitler managed to establish his reign. But meanwhile the place should be in a religious building, while the secular side of education should develop pupils to the ability to understand the past and the present and so to realise what lies in store for a developing body of people. We congratulate the Chairman for saying what he did. If the same courage was shown in the House of Commons it would be all to the good. As to the Vicar, well he is just a parson striving—perhaps in all honesty—or trying to prevent the complete collapse of his religion and his power.

In order to prove that the world cannot right itself unless the proper religion is adopted, one of our Roman Catholic papers gives us week by week the name of a man, with a portrait to boot. One of the recent characters was Mr. Arnold Lunn, himself a very good advertiser—of himself—who is convinced that the world will never be at its best unless the Roman Church rules the world. All we need say is that while that Church did, for a longish epoch, rule a section of the world, we hardly think that a selection of portraits with praise of one man after another is likely to get again for it the great power it once possessed. We do not say that some unforeseen calamity may not give the Roman Church another spell of domination, but it is very unlikely.

Somehow there is a bit of goodness in unexpected places and times. Thus Archbishop Downey, R.C., addressing a youth gathering, said that "youth has its own reactions, but at present it is mostly in the hands of elderly people." We agree with him, and if he meant what he should mean it would be good advice. But we have our doubts. It would be a test question to ask the Archbishop what degree of liberty would he give to youth that decided to have its own views on religion? We need not write the probable issue.

## AGNOSTICISM AGAIN

ONE of the things that all genuine Freethinkers are agreed upon is—no heresy hunting. We welcome into our ranks all those who want to fight the good fight—in perhaps the greatest of causes—and if they prefer to be known as Agnostics, or Rationalists, rather than Atheists, or Materialists, why not?

We cannot deny that, for many people, even when broad-minded, the word Atheism is heartily disliked. George Jacob Holyoake, for example, struggled all his life against it—though he knew quite well that he was as much an Atheist as his great rival, Charles Bradlaugh. He tried hard to get the term Cosmist accepted, and eventually turned with relief to Agnosticism. There was a more genteel sound about it, even when Agnostics indignantly repudiated the jibe that Agnosticism was merely Atheism with a top hat on.

But it is a fact that ever since Huxley coined the word, it has appealed to a good many Freethinkers who would have nothing to do with the word Atheist. I suspect that a good deal of their dislike was due as much to the mud flung at the word by pious Christians, as to its "aggressive infidelity" as A. W. Benn would say. In his "History of English Rationalism," he adds, Huxley coined the word Agnosticism to designate his philosophic position taking it from—

a reference made by St. Paul, or rather by the writer of Acts, to a deity whom the Athenians were supposed to worship under the name of the Unknown God. But there is this difference between Huxley and St. Paul, that whereas the Christian missionary proposed to give his audience full

and authentic information about the object of their ignorant adoration, the modern scientific thinker held that no such light ever was or ever could be obtained. If God means an infinite and absolute Being who created the universe out of nothing, then such a Being has never revealed himself to man, nor can man by searching find him out. Our knowledge is of phenomena, not of a reality underlying phenomena. . . . Agnostics absolutely disbelieve in the God of popular theology; and many of them hold that the existence of such a ruler would be the worst of calamities to the universe.

If this extract gives a fair presentation of Agnosticism, it does seem to me that the only difference between an Agnostic and an Atheist is a matter of words. Ingersoll, who almost always called himself an Agnostic, said Agnosticism was Atheism and Atheism was Agnosticism—there was no difference whatever between them; but somehow or other the discussion goes on—just as whether a “theoretical” Christian is a “real” Christian or not.

Our valued contributor, Mr. Sturge-Whiting, gave us the other day an impassioned plea for Agnosticism as representing best his own position, and he has every right to do so; and I am sure he would defend my right to call myself an Atheist, a term which I prefer. Actually, I can see no real difference in our respective positions.

Even if one admits the “life force” (with capitals or without) of Bernard Shaw, I still fail to see how this in any way affects Atheism. In summer, I can see the pears on my pear tree gradually growing until they are ripe enough to be eaten. You can call this growth by any name you like, the fact remains that the pears do grow, and if Bernard Shaw prefers to call whatever makes them grow by the two words “life force” there is no need to be frightened. The word “life” indicates a mysterious “vitalism,” the word “vitalism” indicates “vital energy” of some kind, a “vital energy” cannot come (we are affirmed) from “dead” matter, and heigh presto, here we have a God, or at least the ghost of a God and Atheism is annihilated. I think this is the way in which some Atheists are intimidated against the use of the words “life force.” I personally am not afraid of words, and certainly not of the two words “life force,” or of the word Atheism, or even of the word God.

The argument can be reduced to its absolute minimum in a simple way. Whatever people may mean by the word God, there can be no doubt whatever that in the ultimate they mean a “personal” God—a God who creates, who thinks, who rewards, and who punishes. Nobody but Jeans and a few of his immediate followers believe in a “mathematical” God without passions or parts, and certainly they never fervently pray to him. No genuine Theist believes for a moment that his God is “unknown,” that he does not respond to prayer, or that he remains in “heaven” literally doing nothing. The question for the Agnostic then is simply, do you believe in the possibility of a God who is entirely without power, who never does anything, who is not a “personal” God, who is “unknown,” and quite “unknowable”? I have never asked this question of an Agnostic without being told immediately—certainly not. All that Mr. Sturge-Whiting can say is that “the faintly possible Créator” is “unknown and unknowable,” there is no “imaginable gnosis” of him, though “he may exist.” If all this is not “rigmarole” then I do not understand the meaning of plain words.

It is up to anybody to say something exists—though we know literally nothing about it. Why shouldn't we take as an example Mr. Sturge-Whiting's “Man in the Moon”? Precisely the arguments he uses for his “faintly possible Creator” can be used for the Man in the Moon. How can we say with absolute certainty that he does not exist? There is no doubt whatever even Mr. Sturge-Whiting would incline to believe he does if, as

he says, the arguments for his existence satisfied Aquinas, Oliver Lodge, Dean Inge and Middleton Murry.

But it is to the credit of Atheism that big names have meant very little to its followers. Famous men and women may have followed the crowd, but the Atheist feels it his duty to examine the argument no matter whom it may have convinced. When the simple “Design Argument” fails, the Theist begins again with a cloud of words, and it is astonishing how—sometimes—even the Agnostic falls for the “Unknowable” (capital U, of course) or the “Unknown.” He certainly is an Agnostic, when he reiterates “I don't know” of a mere word.

But if the Agnostic has no God whatever himself, if he can find no evidence for the existence of any God, of what earthly value is his “I don't know”? Is it a case of the pious old lady who, in church, reverently crossed herself every time the parson used the word “Devil”? When he met her outside, he asked, why did she do so? “Oh, well,” she replied, “you never know, do you, your reverence.” When the Agnostic says it is “seemly” to reserve judgment on the existence of God—or rather on the “Unknowable”—when he uses the words, “not proven,” I always feel that he could with equal right take precisely the same attitude towards the Devil. Why not? Are there any reasons whatever for the existence of an “Unknowable” which are not applicable to the Devil? Is Mr. Sturge-Whiting prepared to be “agnostic” towards his Infernal Majesty?

Let me repeat again, however, a man has a perfect right to claim Agnosticism if he is quite convinced of that position, and we who prefer the word Atheism should welcome him into our ranks; heresy hunting is always hateful and can lead to dictatorship.

A. W. Benn says:—

“Kant, Herschel and Laplace with their nebular hypothesis, Lyell with his theory of geological uniformity, Darwin and Wallace with their reduction of teleology to mechanical causation by natural selection, have abolished the argument from final causes; Mayer, Joule, Grove and Helmholtz, with their doctrine of the conservation of energy, have made the notion of a creator incredible. What evidence is left for the existence of a personal God?”

This is his argument in favour of the Agnostic position. I cannot, with the best will in the world, see any difference between it and Atheism.

H. CUTNER.

## WHERE TYRANNIES ARE BLESSED AND REVOLTS FOMENTED

HOW clearly Christianity derives from earlier religious beliefs is convincingly shown by H. G. Wells in his “The Fate of Homo Sapiens,” first published in 1939.

“Ptolemaic Alexandria,” he writes, “was a hot-bed of religious elaboration.

“At the Serapeum, before the middle of the third century, b.c., it had produced a trinity with a sacrificial son, who is slain and ascends to the Father, and becomes the Father.

“There were a regular and secular clergy, monks with tonsures, a choral Easter ceremony; and the worship of the goddess Isis bearing the infant Horus in her arms anticipated the Catholic adoration of the Virgin Mary down even to minor details.

“The hymn ‘Sun of My Soul, Thou Saviour Dear,’ addressed originally to the hawk-sun-god Horus, has become a Christian hymn. In the temples one saw collections of ex-votos hung up for miraculous cures and escapes, and the ceremonial purchase and burning of votive candles was encouraged. The hope of a glorious immortality—which was little stressed in the earlier religions outside Egypt—was a central fact in this religion.”



scheme; and so, too, was an insistence upon the material resurrection of the (in Egypt usually pickled) body.

"All this was going on nearly three centuries before there was a Christian in the world."

Wells had some very "complimentary" things to say about Catholicism.

For example (I give what follows not in the order they appear in "The Fate of Homo Sapiens" but as condensed, detached extracts):—

"The Catholic Church exists primarily for itself.

"When it emerged as an organisation from the early, formative centuries, it was already the most extraordinary jumble of absurdities and incompatibilities that has ever exercised and perplexed the human intelligence.

"For centuries the Immaculate Conception was not a matter of faith. It was made so by a Bull of Pope Pius IX as recently as 1854. And now all good Catholics must believe in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, though what it is they think they are believing in I cannot imagine.

"And so, century by century, the great fabric of the faith goes on accumulating. You will, for example, find the sternest condemnation of socialism; no Catholic can be a socialist; and then you will find that the author of the completest forecast of communism, commissars, and all that—Sir Thomas More—has been canonised as a saint.

"Why do intelligent people accept this strange heap of mental corruption as a religion and a rule of life? They accept it because it is there before them, and because it existed long before they did. They grew up to it; and even if they were not actually born-and-bred Catholics they saw it everywhere taken for granted and treated with respect.

"In the Vatican, the Holy Father, in the measure of his intelligence and the quality of his advisers, keeps his court, and steers the Church through the pitfalls of this world. In all the democracies 'the Catholic vote' obeys the tortuous wisdom of these scheming old anachronisms. Here tyrannies are blessed, and hero revolts are fomented. The devout in France or Britain, for example, must support the Franco pronouncements to the infinite injury of their own countries.

"Joseph McCabe in his 'History of the Popes' tells the story of the Papacy with a certain bitter accuracy and an ample citation of authorities. The Catholic reader will, I know, feel that my recommendation of that outspoken book is in the worst possible taste. But nevertheless let me urge it upon his attention. It will trouble his mind; but it will purge it.

"The Catholic prelates, so imposing in their triple crowns and mitres and epicene garments, are in fact extremely ignorant men, not only by virtue of the narrow specialisation of their initial education, but also by the incessant activities of service and ceremony that have occupied them since.

"The fact is that the majority of Christians are not even reasonably curious about the future life, and they are not curious because they have no more positive belief in it than I have. They are Christians because it is the most convenient and agreeable pattern for them, and for no other reason whatever."

And this word-for-word extract I would like to give by way of a Wellsian summary:—

"When we try to estimate the role the Church is now playing on mundane affairs we have to realise that on earth it has no definite objective at all. It is a vast, self-protective organisation, which seeks merely to exist, and if possible spread. Its friends are those who support and servo it; its enemies—and its enmity has the unrelenting quality of an instinct—are those who have thwarted, controlled, and suppressed it.

"It is against Soviet Russia, against every Protestant system, against every country which insists upon Secular education. It is on the side of every Government, however corrupt and evil, which attends Mass, and makes the sign of the cross. Its real objectives, it alleges, lie in another world. In some strange

existence outside time and space the reckoning will be made, and those who have swallowed the Athanasian metaphysics, taken the advice of their priests, and performed all their religious duties, will enjoy Heaven, and those who have fallen short will pass to Heaven through a state called purgatory or descend into hell for ever, according to the enormity of their disrespect.

"Bolsheviks, I assume, will ALL go to hell."

J. Y. ANDERONEY.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

## POWDER-SMOKE AND INCENSE

IT is a known phenomenon that the churches of all confessions are crowded after a war: powder-smoke dissolves into incense. (There are certain cults not using incense. In their case we may speak figuratively of a kind of mental incense). The believers of all shades praise the master of Heaven that at last He stopped the slaughtering on earth. They forget that, due to their own imagination of a world creator, without whose permission no sparrow would fall from a roof—he carries the responsibility for the war. For there is no logic in the usual argument that misery on earth is meant as punishment or test. Is it not in God's power to let his creatures become guilty or not? Why then does the Almighty tolerate sin? In order to get a chance to punish? A human moral code would call such behaviour sadistic.

However, the fact is that people rediscover God as soon as they get into trouble. Misery teaches prayer. That longing for purification does not last long. Soon they fall back into their godless loitering. But the Church is satisfied even with such temporary religiosity, which seems to prove that people need the Church. Middle Ages, so prosperous for the Church, are over. No cure was known then for plagues and cholera; they forced people into prayer. The progress of medicine liquidated those times. War alone is left to the Church to call on the people to turn their minds towards the "higher" life. What else can we expect the harassed Church to do but bless the guns, since the suffering of the war promises good business for the Church.

Long ago the Church ceased being a power political factor in Soviet Russia. The immense Church property now belongs to the State. Buildings and cult utensils are only rented. Yet, even in Soviet Russia we witness an increased religious feeling since the last war. For the first time since many years the Easter bells chimed, and masses flocked to the churches. The festival of religious resurrection became a celebration of re-established Greek Orthodox Church.

And yet the Pope is not quite satisfied with the ways things go. When at Easter he saw his 200 representatives of the Catholic Action in Italy he expressed his worry about the future. He warned those pious fighters to double their efforts for the good of the Church and to be on the alert before the coming political battles. The Pope has every reason to be worried about the developments, not only in Italy. It is true that the Catholic parties in several countries (France, Belgium, Austria, etc.), have gained. But so have the Socialists. There is a special threat—even in Catholic countries—the political awakening of the women. They resent being birth machines and to supply cannon fodder.

Thus war does not only further religion but enlightens, too. Especially the last "punishment of God" threw light upon the contradictions of to-day's economic system. We must not let ourselves be confused by slogans of democracy and humanity, so much the vogue to-day. Neither by a wave of charity, which aims only at overcoming the economic deadlock. Not so very long ago cotton and wheat were destroyed in the United States to artificially keep high the world market price. Were there no starving and freezing people living at that time? Yes, but at that time goods did not find any market any more, and that period had to be mastered somehow. There were too many goods.

A technical overproduction was the cause, and unemployment grew. New York's stock market crash (1929) made it clear that the next war had become inevitable. Yet it took a few years till the diplomatic preparations were finished. In 1937, the North American newspaper, "Atlanta Constitution," stated with great frankness: "There are many keen observers who feel unable to see a chance for a war in Europe; but others are more hopeful and believe that it will be possible to create a workable misunderstanding."

The "hopeful" were right, and a misunderstanding was found. The Entente—invitingly—left the Rhineland. Hitler moved in; nobody interfered, for war was wanted, rather, needed. Winston Churchill was quite right when in his sensational speech at Fulton (March 5, 1946), he declared that no war could have been avoided as easily as the last. But he omitted that it was England which stopped the French when they wanted to make impossible Hitler's march as well as the whole Nazism. The big business of a second world war was too alluring, even if millions of people would be destroyed through it. The harvest of the profits cannot yet be reaped. The whole world is so impoverished that a special organisation had to be put up to help the devastated and economically shaken countries to get on their feet again. The plutocrats have learned from 1918: They try everything to avoid revolutionary movements. That's why, for the time being, efforts to nationalise mines, banks, etc., are tolerated. The development towards planned economy of the future cannot be stopped. That new economic system would represent a better guarantee against the outbreak of another war than the atomic bomb does.

The Pope's anxiety has its good reasons. If mankind succeeds in banishing the curse of war for ever, then incense and its art of smoke-screening reality would lose its value. People who need not despair of life have no reason for consoling their mind with an escape into a better life after death.

THEODOR HARTWIG.

## TELL ME, WHERE IS JUSTICE BRED?

THERE is a tale of a Soho Italian who, after some minor infringement of the Law, was brought up before the magistrate. "All I ask is British justice," he cried again and again until the magistrate, tired of hearing him, said "You keep quiet or you'll get something worse than British justice."

Justice is a strange word, for it is one which loses its force when preceded by an adjective and yet is frequently used with one. "British Justice," "Poetic Justice," "Rough Justice," mean no more, and often mean less, than "Justice." Like medicine it is "dispensed" and like medicine it is a remedy for human ills. The similarity may be traced even further for like medicine it has many different prescriptions and its efficacy depends very largely on how the mind receives it.

It was my duty at the end of last year to appear as defending "counsel"—I am unqualified professionally—at two trials of war criminals in Europe. In each case Germans were accused of being concerned in the killing of prisoners in a most brutal fashion. I did my part to the best of my ability and was shocked to hear a number of people ask me, "But surely you are not really trying hard to defend these people, are you?" At this point let me make it clear that the avowed intention of the Allies was to establish the idea that International law in war cannot be flouted with impunity and that, after fair trial, those found guilty of offences should be punished. With that view I agree but I have had many conscience pangs about the way in which it has been put into practice.

First, I believe that to try offences against International Law there should be an International court. This was not so, and the compatriots of the killed prisoners judged those accused of killing them.

Secondly, I am certain that if the idea of International Law is to survive, its sanctions must apply to every nation. As yet I have only heard of the defeated enemy being tried for international law-breaking, yet I cannot believe that not one crime was committed by the victors. The lesson which Germany may well draw from the trials is that the loser pays.

Thirdly, the defence of these lesser war criminals was in the main that they acted on the orders of their superiors. These men have been tried, then shot, acquitted or imprisoned before the guilt of the commanding superiors was judicially examined. The instigators of these international crimes have either committed suicide or await their fate; their instruments lie in jail or have, months ago, been hanged or shot.

Fourthly, an accused person should have a chance to meet a specific accusation. All the men I defended were charged with "being concerned in the killing of —." Where are the limits to such a charge? It could apply to the persons who made the bullets for their lethal weapons if one chose to take it far enough. It might be argued that if a man knew that Germans committed illegal shootings he became a party to them by making guns.

Evidence was called to show the part which each of the accused had taken and later most of them were found "guilty." Not guilty of any specific acts but "of being concerned in the killing." To what extent the court believed the evidence the accused never knew; he could only tell that they believed he was concerned in the killing. I believe that the court should have stated its conclusions in detail in the presence of the accused but this was not done.

Everyone in the Court did his best to see that justice was done, and in the circumstances I think the trials were as fair as one could expect anywhere in the world, but I still feel uneasy when I look at the unadorned word "Justice."

It was my unhappy duty during Christmas week—the week of goodwill towards men—to tell a man that I could not offer him much hope of reprieve from the death sentence. His courage in the face of impending death before a firing squad was amazing. The only thing he wanted was sleep at night and this was hindered by the ever-burning light in his cell. He gathered that this was left there so that any attempt at suicide should be seen and frustrated.

Then, one day, when I visited him he told me that a priest had been to see him. A flimsy paper printed with extracts from St. John's Gospel lay on his table, but he did not seem to be very interested in it. The priest had also given him photos of his wife and children and he was looking at them. Suddenly his great calm broke and he wept long and bitterly. "Shoot me," he said. "It is not death I fear, but that these little girls of mine will grow up and will only know me as a man found guilty of being a party to bestial crime. What a sweet memory of their father! Believe me, if I want to live it is only to make men respect me again and to atone for what I may have done. If I am guilty it was because I was weak and bowed to force and in my heart I have suffered much for that."

I believed him for I had long thought him more unfortunate than wicked and it was only by the greatest physical effort that I could restrain the tears that beat at my eyelids. No fictional scene, no matter how well contrived to that end, has ever made me feel so unhappy. I suddenly felt what cruel creatures we are and never more so than when we think we are being just.

I heard some weeks later that this man had been shot and I am now getting over the harrowing personal experience though I shall never forget it. We only cease to worry about such things when they happen to us daily.

LYNDON IRVING.

War is not an art, and luck alone decides the fate of battles. With two generals, both blockheads, face to face, one of them must inevitably be victorious.—ANATOLE FRANCE ("The Gods are Athirst").

## A SYMPTOMATIC BOMB

MORE powerful than its atomic counterpart was recently launched via the B.B.C. by General Eisenhower; I felt the concussion and can only hope the shock will have travelled far and wide enough to reach the peace—and other—conferences, even to outstrip the American variety by travelling all over the world.

It was nothing less than a "looking forward to the time when all professional soldiers would soon be out of a job, himself included," the key to the problem of war as I see it? Courageous man, to risk undermining the morale of professional soldiers, to say nothing of his own reputation, in such a world where most of the professional military genius is directed to be stronger and more destructive than the other: "Safeguarding our interests"—or is it theirs—i.e., money invested with all its implications of "what we've got we'll hold," so help me God, etc.

Even professional military gentlemen, it seems, are not altogether immune from the revolution that is taking place in the rising wave of indignation. No incentive to "arm for peace," what of the military axiom that the best defence is a strong attack? but camouflaged aggression? "Oh, what a falling off was there." The gods of war are tumbling before the onslaught in the moral sphere as a social product owing to the awfulness of their enormity.

What an evolutionary discovery in psychological science to discover the enemy so often within instead of without, and the victims: "The glorious dead"; "theirs was not to reason why" the why of cenotaphs to perpetuate the foolishness, futility and sanguinary superstitions of all wars with God on their side and that fatuous phrase so often used, "humane warfare," as if there ever could be such a condition. Who's the "called up" and who's the called, who's the voice of authority? Theologians "call the spirits from the mighty deep" and so can others, but will they come for another war to end war? And was there any war ever fought for other than victory; victory over any but themselves.

If we honestly desire peace and security, why not have Secretaries of State, not for war but to abolish it? Aren't the police enough without the aid of gods, human or divine, stock exchanges and soldiers. Big business extends to politics and politics extends to war with professional soldiers to carry it out, that is the sequence.

Let's hope that General Eisenhower's bold message in moral courage reaches secretaries of state for war to the same end and that he had an interesting and enlightening conversation with the King regarding the god that saves him and professional military gentlemen—a contradiction in terms—their very profession is one of violence in terms of militarism by force of arms or powerful instruments as threats to that end in this or any other country wherever it raises its ugly head, and what crimes have been committed in the name of duty, authority, honour and obedience.

"Save us from our saviours" is becoming the cry of the people in a world over, we want peace and security, not masters and slaves, uniform in clothes, purpose, action, and mind. Humanity is at last awakening to a sense of moral justice, without the authority of almighty gods to justify compromises, and in this respect Freethought has no boundaries or competitors, stands out in bold relief compared to the fungus which festers around its roots.

D. G. TRANTER.

"In former days I used to have Mass said in the Chapel at Les Hottes by a poor devil of a Curé who used to say in his sermons: 'Don't let's speak ill of sinners; we live by 'em, we are unworthy as we are!' You must agree, sir, this prayer-monger held sound maxims of government."—ANATOLE FRANCE ("The Gods are Athirst").

## CORRESPONDENCE

## MARX, SCIENTIST?

SIR,—Will Athoso Zenoo ever realise how ludicrous his remarks on Marxism appear? Surely he reaches the height of absurdity in claiming "Marx, as a Scientist" in reference to dialectical materialism.

The basic formula appears in the preface to the "Critique to Political Economy," where Marx says that he arrived at it after study of law, and it thereafter was his guide; but he gives no idea of the method by which it was derived. In the preface to the second issue of "Capital," Marx stated that his method was that of Hegel, but that he turned it the other way round. So we are at a loss to discover the method of "Analytic Reasoning" used, unless his science is an idealistic philosophy standing on its head.

The idea of scientific socialism came from Engels who stated, in his book on "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," that he wrote it because it was the custom for German politicians to put their case in a philosophical thesis. So that Marx's science was only discovered later. But the cream of the joke is that these German philosophic politicians expressed themselves in French words. In introducing the word exploitation in "Value, Price, i.e., Profit," Marx apologised for using a French word. Bourgeois and proletariat were the terms used by Pierre Leroux, in his theory of economics. He was the first to use the word socialisme in print. That was in 1827.

Marx was expressing ideas and terms current in his day, and the subsequent development of doctrine may serve to show how a myth can develop. We observe a process of continuous re-statement, and Athoso Zenoo's presumption in "explaining" what "ought" to have been said a hundred years ago is an interesting example.—Yours, etc.,

H. H. PREECE.

## (AGNOSTIC) HERESY

SIR.—And whither, Mr. Sturge-Whiting, will your finessing take us, intellectually?

Rather a vain philosophy is it not to speculate on the abstraction of something from nothing? Cousin to casuistry, I imagine.

Let us have honesty in our thinking, and courage in our expression. Remember, the watchword of Charles Bradlaugh ("noblest Roman of them all") was Thorough, and we can at least justify the part of a good disciple. And, after all, Atheism is quite respectable nowadays.—Yours, etc.,

W. ROBSON.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

## LONDON—OUTDOOR

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—12 noon: Mr. L. EBRURY.

## LONDON—INDOOR

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1.)—Tuesday, November 19, 7 p.m.: "Patterns and Objectives in Social Planning." Professor P. SARGANT FLORENCE, M.A., Ph.D.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1.)—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "The Idea of Progress." Professor A. E. HEATH, M.A.

West London Branch N.S.S. (The National Trade Union Club, Great Newport Street, W.C. 1.)—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: "What is Freethought?" Mr. H. CUTNER.

## COUNTRY—INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics Institute).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: "Do we Survive Death?" Mr. A. HOWELL SMITH, B.A. (R.P.A., London).

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: "The Current Need for Freethought." Mr. COLIN MCCALL.

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