

# THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXVIII.—No. 26

[REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL  
POST OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER]

Price Threepence

## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### The Myth of the Jew

*[In view of the resurgence of anti-Semitism at the present moment, I think the following article written by myself in 1919 will be appropriate. Anti-Semitism in practice is one of the vilest things that ever crawled the earth. You cannot humanise it, it is the dregs of a discarded humanity.]*

THE sufferings of the Jew at the hands of Christians is writ large in European history. For these sufferings the Jew took his revenge in anticipation. He foisted on the Christian his own God. On that score, therefore, the Jew may be said to have held his own. But the Jewish God was not the only myth that the Jew successfully foisted on the Christian world—or, rather, it was the parent of a number of other myths. Along with the God went the early history—largely imaginary—of the Jewish people. They proclaimed themselves a distinct type anthropologically, and the Christian accepted the classification. They said they were a "pure" race, neither marrying nor giving in marriage with outsiders; and that also was accepted. They announced themselves as a great people—in Biblical times; and the Christian world accepted that. And now, in connection with the conquest of Palestine and the proposed handing over of it to the Jews, there is much talk—newspaper talk—of the Jews as a nation, without anyone asking if the Jews really are a distinct nation—whether a Jewish State is possible; or, if possible, is it desirable?

Jews are found all over the world, and everywhere they offer an approximation to the native population. There are negroid Jews in Africa, and there are Mongolian Jews in China, just as there are American, French, English, or Dutch Jews. Everywhere inter-marriages take place, and nowhere is there found a genuine anthropological type marking them off as distinct from other people. Generation after generation these native-born Jews are reared under all sorts of widely differing institutions, and experiencing the influence of widely differing cultures. They share, when permitted, in the common life of the country, and show the same interest in the country's welfare. During the 1914-18 War, between three-quarters of a million and a million Jews were fighting in the different armies. They were not fighting as Jews, but as Britons, Frenchmen, Russians, Poles, Germans, Austrians, Americans. They carried into the War, not a common aspiration that marked them off from the other soldiers, but aspirations that differed from each other as did those of the countries to which they belonged. They were not in the armies as Jews, any more than Catholics or Protestants were there as representing their respective creeds. They were there as English, French, German, or Russian Jews, as others were there as English, French, German, or Russian Christians.

It is, then, the height of absurdity to talk of this heterogeneous agglomeration of people, differing in their physical type, in their language, their ideas, their aspirations, and in their general outlook on life, as being a nation. They are no more a nation than are Freemasons or Roman Catholics. There is not a single quality or characteristic which can be called national that Jews have in common. The one thing they have in common is religion, and even that presents all sorts of variations, from a vague Theism on the one side to a gross mediaeval superstition on the other. And how is it possible to make religion a basis of nationality? The one thing demonstrated beyond the possibility of question by the whole history of the world is that a religious State lacks every element of stability. It stereotypes evils and fails to confer benefits of any lasting value. Byzantium, Geneva, New England, are cases in point. Bring together into one State the Polish, Russian, American, English, and Dutch Jews (force would certainly have to be used to secure some of them), what would they have in common on which to build the ordinary fabric of a State? England has survived as a State precisely because, in spite of the varying and differing religious views of the people, there has persisted an attachment to certain secular institutions, to a certain area of country, and to certain national traditions. But what of this would there exist in a State built up of Jews recruited from all parts of the earth? Their tastes, habits, ideas, and ideals would be in hopeless and irreconcilable antagonism.

So far as the Jews have been held together, it has been by a religion; so far as they have anything in common it is religion. And for this they have to thank Christians. Christian bigotry and persecution has done what the religion of the Jew could never have done of itself. Persecute savagely, persistently, and you accomplish one of two things. Either you obliterate what is persecuted or you preserve it. The persecution of the Jews drew them together; they became attached to that for which they suffered, as a mother loves the more the child she has borne in agony. Where persecution is relaxed, where the Jew is allowed to mingle without hindrance in the life of the nation to which he belongs, the tendency is for him to disappear altogether. His religion loses its hold on him, and he becomes merged in the people around him. The Jew has fought for his religion, and Christians have helped, unconsciously, to keep it alive. His aspirations for Jerusalem were not a national longing, but a religious symbol. He wished for Jerusalem as the Christian longs for heaven—without any desire to change his locality. The Jewish religion can survive persecution—so could any other religion; but what no religion can survive is freedom. For freedom, real freedom, means enlightenment, and no religion that the world has ever seen can survive that.

That brings me to the only possible justification for the founding of a Jewish State. And the reasons here

are political and humanitarian, not religious. If the persecution of Jews by Christians is to continue, if they are to be outraged and murdered in Poland as they have for so long been outraged in Christian Russia, if Christian Roumania is to continue treating them as outlaws, and other Christian States to indulge in their measure of persecution, then it will be advisable to remove some millions to a part where more desirable conditions may be obtained. But the reason here is political or humanitarian, and does not at all rest on the question of nationality. The desirability of this plan turns upon the unlikelihood of Christians becoming civilised. Assuming that Christians were to become sufficiently civilised to cease persecuting Jews, does anyone claim that the Jew in Poland, or Russia, or Roumania, springing as he does from ancestors who have been settled in these countries for many centuries, will anyone claim that the Jew will prefer exile to a peaceful life in his native country? Of course, to escape persecution, he may be glad to go; but is the civilising and humanising of Christians quite a hopeless task? One would really like to get the opinion on this point of those Christians who talk so much about the return of the Jew to Palestine. It would be interesting to discuss what really does lie at the back of their minds.

Does the world really desire to see another religious State set up? Is it a desirable thing? And what does it mean? Does it mean a State in which a Jewish Church shall rule—a theocracy with the possibility of developing all the intolerance of which a theocracy is capable? Or will equal rights, absolutely equal rights, be guaranteed to people of all religions, and of no religion? In that case it is a misnomer to call it a Jewish State, it would be a State completely secularised, no matter who were the people composing it. It is really a strange thing that just as other States are moving in the direction of secularisation we should set up a new State that is at least nominally religious. And how long would such a State last? Already the missionary societies in this country are appealing for funds in order to convert the proposed new State to Christianity. How would the present population welcome these missionaries? And in a communication from the Christians and Mohammedans of the Holy Land comes the following:—

"We Moslem and Christian inhabitants of Palestine do not accept Jewish immigration into Palestine, nor Palestine becoming a National Home for the Jews, because Palestine is a Moslem and Christian country, and its language has been Arabic for the last twelve centuries. . . . We expect only justice from the powers, and our request to them to keep our country for us. We are the born sons of the Holy Land, who have been accepted by both the Christian and Moslem worlds as the inmates of this blessed home, and all the holy places in Palestine are Moslem and Christian."

The only rational justification for transporting the Jews to Palestine and setting up a Jewish State is that it would remove them from the brutality of Christians. It is their conduct that makes such a scheme commendable. But there is always the alternative possibility of the Christian learning to behave better, although one suspects that improvement will only come by way of a weakening of Christian belief. And as Christianity weakens so will Judaism disappear. It has been kept alive by Christianity, and the world will be the better for the disappearance of both.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## PHILOSOPHY AND THE BIBLE

### An Atheist's reply to Mr. Boffey

"TO-DAY, more than ever before, thousands of people question the authority of the Scriptures . . . . The above is a quotation from an article "Philosophy and the Bible," by the Rev. G. H. Boffey in "B.S.B." ("The Bible Speaks to Britain".)

Well, Mr. Boffey, don't you think it is amazing that in spite of the millions expended every year on Christian teaching and on the upkeep of the Christian Church, more than ever before, thousands of people question the authority of the Scriptures? And don't you think you would have been even nearer the mark if you had said *hundreds of thousands?*

The explanation is, of course, that to-day, more than ever before, people are receiving a better education, enabling them to develop their minds, to think intellectually and to reason for themselves instead of believing without question just what the priests choose to tell them.

Mr. Boffey goes on to say that in spite of a man being intellectual and an honourable member of society, if he does not believe in the *immortality of the soul* then he has no moral influence to impart; but on the other hand, the man *who believes* in the immortality of the soul lives his life on a higher level than the man *who does not believe!*

I challenge Mr. Boffey's right to make such allegations, and to prove their veracity. They are fine examples of the dogmatism and bigotry for which Christian teachers have become notorious. Such statements may fool unthinking Christians, for whom they are intended, and who accept anything that issues from the mouth of a parson as God-inspired truth, but they do not fool any other thinking person.

I defy Mr. Boffey to produce any proof that the man who doubts the existence of an immortal soul lives a lower and more sinful life than the man who does not so doubt. As for the increase in divorce, which Mr. Boffey gives as supporting evidence, I would ask him to explain how he is aware that the 50,000 divorce cases he mentions were due to a non-belief in immortality. I would be willing to wager that 90 per cent. of the people who apply for a divorce are *Christians* and not *Atheists*. His argument, then, is both valueless and misleading. May I also ask Mr. Boffey why Evolution and Biology are taught in the schools if the Darwinian theory is so debasing?

To anyone but a blind and bigoted Christian the evidence of scientific research must be of more value than the fanciful and superstitious imaginings of the uninformed writers of Genesis.

Mr. Boffey quite rightly states that the immortality of the soul can only be ascertained by establishing that God exists. *But that is just what no one has yet been able to establish!* Divine revelation (so-called) is absolutely no proof at all. Lots of highly emotional and mentally unbalanced people have claimed Divine revelation, but it proves no more than that the pink elephants of the dipsomaniac actually exist. Neither do the facts of Creation prove the existence of a personal Creator. No First Cause has yet been established and our greatest thinkers and philosophers are still groping in the darkness. Probably such proof never will be forthcoming, but that is no reason why teachers of Christianity should jump to the conclusion that creation was the work of God. Other pagan gods have also been credited with that achievement.

No, Mr. Boffey. Such statements are wild and extravagant, and *you* can no more prove the immortality

of the soul than I can disprove it. Why not be more tolerant and let each man be entitled to his own opinion on the subject?

If disbelief is spreading, as you admit in your opening statement, then surely it is evidence of the fact that intelligent people to-day refuse to be influenced by Biblical myth and fable. They are, at last, using their brains and their reasoning powers as the result of intellectual enlightenment and modern education, which is precisely what you Christians fear and would suppress at any cost—even at the cost of *Truth!*

W. H. WOOD.

## FIFTY M.P.s—AND ONE GREAT THINKER

A MONEYLESS World Commonwealth is not my own invention. I am one of many throughout the world who hold that a world organised on the basis of production of goods for use only and free distribution, and in which money, buying and selling, wages, trade, exchange, barter, advertising, and armed forces will no longer be necessary is the only alternative to the present social system, if the present social evils are to be abolished. In other words, and, I hope, unmistakably and clearly:

(a) The new social system must be world-wide. It must be a World Commonwealth. The world must be regarded as one country and humanity as one people.

(b) All the people will co-operate to produce and distribute all the goods and services which are needed by mankind, each person willingly and freely, taking part in the way he feels he can do best.

(c) All goods and services will be produced for use only, and having been produced, will be distributed free, directly to the people so that each person's needs are fully satisfied.

(d) The land, factories, machines, mines, roads, railways, ships, and all those things which mankind needs to carry on producing the means of life, will belong to the whole of the people.

The social evils rooted in the present system could not and would not occur in a Moneyless World Commonwealth. To bring it about it is necessary that the majority of people throughout the world know of its possibilities, appreciate the advantages that it will bring, and are ready to take a conscious and responsible part in its achievement and management. This we believe will not be difficult since many are becoming aware of the disadvantages of the present one.

I must point out, too, that the idea of a Moneyless World Commonwealth is not based upon fantasy or wishful thinking, but upon a study of the world in which we live. In the present "Money System" goods are produced for sale or exchange. This is the primary cause of war, unemployment, and poverty in the midst of potential plenty.

I will now deal with some of Mr. Wood's statements in "The Freethinker," May 16.

(1) "In savage communities money is quite unknown even if cannibalism is not."

Mr. Wood should know that cannibalism had its source in the scarcity of the means of life under savagery, and that this was due to the undeveloped means of production. The problem to-day is to ensure the distribution of the superabundance made possible by modern social production so that the needs of all members of society are fully satisfied. Properly used, the arable land of this earth is sufficient to support a population at least three times the present world population (Food Supply of the

World; Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th edition, Vol. 9, page 462). I therefore see no reason why we should eat one another

(2) "But who is to decide each man's need?"

Each man and woman. Who better? Does Mr. Wood need an authority to help him decide the extent of his own appetite?

(3) "And would manual ability take precedence over mental ability?"

They are both abilities and of equal social importance. If all can have all that they want, who would want more? The question of precedence could not arise in a Moneyless World Commonwealth. There would be plenty for everyone. A question like this could only occur to Mr. Wood through his knowing the present system only. In this, those who have most money to spend get precedence over the less fortunate, and this irrespective of ability.

(4) "According to him we could do without our Einsteins and Churchills, but not without our drain diggers."

Drain diggers were not mentioned, but agricultural labourers, sewage cleaners, and coal miners were. It is a fact that these categories of worker are indispensable. We do manage quite well without the two worthies mentioned, who are fed, provided with sanitation and warmed (all very important) by workers.

(5) "Had we to rely on a road mender to lead us to victory in the last war, I am afraid Mr. Phillips would now be enjoying life under Hitler."

If a house painter was capable of "leading" the Germans, I see no reason why (at some future date perhaps) a road mender should not be capable of "leading" the British. In any case, Mr. Churchill would be the first to admit that without the efforts of workers on field and in factory the war could not have been won.

(6) "There is already in existence a very live organisation known as 'The Crusade for World Government' under the able leadership of Henry Osborne, M.P., and supported by some fifty Members of Parliament."

Mr. Wood claims to be "six foot two; chest forty-four." But I am more interested in the weight of his arguments than the state of his figure. Likewise I am unimpressed by the 50 M.P.s and Mr. Henry Osborne (with Dr. Kurt Laelmann thrown in for good measure). I am just as little impressed by the 500 or more M.P.s who apparently do not agree with Mr. Henry Osborne. What would impress me would be evidence that a Universal World Government would be more effective in preventing wars than a League of Nations or UNO. The root cause of modern wars is economic conflict; that is, competition for world markets, access to raw materials, and the safeguarding of trade routes. Thus, General Wedemeyer, speaking before U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee ("New York Times," March 5, 1948), is reported to have stated that "We must have military support and protection for our economic investments wherever forces threaten everything that we hold dear." In these circumstances World Government becomes World nonsense.

(7) "Finally, we have the greatest thinker of the day, Bertrand Russell, famous philosopher and mathematician, pronouncing, 'World Government is certain to come—but probably not in time.'"

Mr. Russell's certainty is merely the expression of an opinion. Mr. Wood may be more impressed by one opinion rather than another. I can do nothing about that. But in matters of opinion the greatest thinkers have been wrong as often as they have been right. Mr. Wood should know that and should think for himself.

(8) "I have no doubt that others, less sordid minded than myself, would readily welcome a world in which

goods will be produced just for the fun of the thing and distributed free to all comers."

And so, at last, Mr. Wood concedes a useful point and gives me some encouragement to persevere in my endeavours. He agrees that others would welcome a Moneyless World Commonwealth. But why not you, Mr. Wood? Why include you "out"? Because you are sordid minded? (Avaricious?) But you would not have cause to be in a Moneyless World Commonwealth. Nor would you need those hundred pound notes which you say you are "itching" to play with. Why play with them; they could be used to better purpose. You may be avaricious, Mr. Wood, but I am certain you would not want money in a Moneyless World Commonwealth; you see, you would not be able to spend it. Like everyone else, you would have the right to go into any store and take free all that you want whenever you want it. Being avaricious (by confession), you would at first feel inclined to take 30 or 40 coats, 50 or 60 pairs of shoes, and, because of your "six foot two; chest forty-four," at least 25 square meals a day. But that feeling would soon pass. For you would see around you "others, less sordid minded" behaving like sensible people. I have little doubt that, in the company of such sane and truly civilised human beings you would soon become a changed man indeed.

J. PHILLIPS.

### MARLOWE'S CRIME

MAY 30, 1593. Christopher Marlowe lay dead in the Bull's Tavern, at Deptford, with a dagger through his head. A matter of weeks afterwards the Queen was to grant a free pardon to his murderer. The whole affair is shrouded in mystery, and it is unlikely that after more than three and a-half centuries any fresh and vital evidence will come to light. There is little enough to go on, and the speed with which Ingram Frizer, his murderer, was granted a pardon suggests that his death was, to say the least, not unwelcome to certain authorities. It was not the first time that the convenient removal of one who was something of a nuisance had been similarly winked at, and with Marlowe, no great subtlety was needed since he was known as an inn-haunter, and was in any case bound to stay in London while the Privy Council investigated certain allegations of atheism that had been brought against him.

In an age of orthodoxy, atheism was a crime punishable by imprisonment or more often the stake, and the critical mind that dared to question the prevailing religious dogma was persecuted with savagery; moreover loyalty to God was inextricably bound up with loyalty to the State, and the authorities, temporal and spiritual, were both on the watch for lapses from grace. The clergy and their lordships of the Privy Council were ever ready to investigate charges of heresy or atheism.

Two years before his death, Marlowe had lodged with a fellow playwright, Thomas Kyd, author of "The Spanish Tragedie," and other pieces. Nothing is known of their relationship save that when an informer was the cause of Kyd's arrest in 1593, he alleged under torture that the papers containing blasphemous statements that had been found in his dwelling place belonged to Christopher Marlowe. The latter, summoned to appear before the Privy Council, was able to convince them that the passages were merely a

transcription from a book that he had been using, and he was set at liberty on condition that he reported to the Council daily until given orders to the contrary.

So the matter might have rested, save for one of those tantalisingly shadowy figures who so often cross the Elizabethan scene, and about whom nothing is known save their names. One, Richard Baines, an informer, made his way to Westminster bringing with him a collection of anti-religious statements attributed to Marlowe, "concerning his damnable Judgment of Religion, and scorn of God's word." This was, indeed, an imposing document, and contained what Baines deposed was a record of Marlowe's utterances against religion over the space of six years. Obviously, Baines had known the poet sufficiently well to be aware of the circles in which he moved, and had either been a member of the group of Marlowe's friends, or had been an assiduous eavesdropper for this period. His motive in collecting this harvest is unknown. Was it the thought of material reward or had he at some time quarrelled with the poet and regarded this as a suitable means of revenge? We shall never know, and must remain content with the fact that such a collection had been compiled.

Thomas Kyd, still languishing in prison, confirmed these statements, as did Richard Cholmely an erstwhile Government spy. The Privy Council pondered this statement, procrastinated, until on May 30, Marlowe met his death at Deptford, and the long dossier was laid aside for the last time. Marlowe had come to "a soden and fearfull end to his life."

According to a note that a clerk appended to this long document, three days only had passed between the delivery of the statement and the poet's murder. Was there any connection between the two events? It is just possible that the powers at Westminster felt the whole matter might be so much more easily settled out of court. In his University days it is believed Marlowe acted as a Government agent and this may have had some bearing upon the decision (if indeed there was one) to despatch Marlowe in so summary a fashion. On the other hand, poets had long sought the company of rogues and been involved in scuffles ending in the death of one or more concerned. There the matter must stay, for no useful purpose can be served by wild surmises for which there is not one scrap of evidence.

To-day, we may remember Christopher Marlowe as a poet of the highest order, whose misfortune it was to be so overshadowed by the young man from Stratford, that often his poetic worth is undervalued. Despite the efforts of Puritan critics to defame and vilify him he emerges equally clearly to-day as a man of fresh and outspoken views, who in an age of unimpeachable orthodoxy could write:—

" . . . I count Religion but a childish Toy,  
And hold there is no sin but Ignorance."

VICTOR E. NEUBURG.

### THE IMPOSTURE

Religion is a necessary imposture. Even the most obvious ways of throwing dust in people's eyes cannot be neglected when you are dealing with a race as stupid as the human species, a race created for error which when it does admit the truth, never does so for the right reasons. It is necessary, then, to give it wrong ones.—RENAN.

## NOBBLING

## I

NOBBLING is an amusing game played by children. Practised by adults, oftener organisations than individuals, operating on a larger scale it is frequently serious. If amusing then funny on a different plane of humour from what entertains youngsters.

The saying attributed to Jesus Christ "Suffer little children to come unto me" has been widely acted upon and still more widely interpreted. The operative word suffer, originally meaning allow, permit, tolerate, endure becomes enlarged to justify entice, bribe, persuade, constrain, compel, force, propagandise; any method which would make children tools or victims of those seeking possession of them. Because to get hold of younger generations is the policy of authoritarians, reformers, hot-gospellers and all who want things their own way.

Lesser nobblings are many. Political parties deemed it important, so established Junior Imperialists, League of Young Liberals, and Socialist Sunday Schools. Communists have revealed no specific title for their enlistment of adolescent Communists, but no doubt are equally eager to get them.

When the Co-operative movement felt itself influential enough it got a chapter into school history books detailing the origin and progress of Co-operation. The Co-operative Union runs evening classes for children and a variety of Youth Circles.

Years ago animal lovers issued a book extolling kindness to animals, persuading many school authorities to use it. Numerous very sentimental people remember its insistence on the intelligence and loveableness of rats, of all creatures.

To inculcate by song and story and lecture the same humanitarian principles children were enrolled into Bands of Mercy.

Not to be outdone Teetotallers issued a textbook "Strong Reasons Against Strong Drink." It was heavy reading, dull to the degree of sending growing youth to public houses as reaction or to test the truth of its extreme statements.

In furtherance of the same cause Bands of Hope enrol children, seeking to get pledges of lifelong abstinence. Friendly Societies run juvenile sections to encourage thrift and provision for the future by continuing membership into adult life.

Even the conservative farming industry is awakening to the possibilities of nobbling youth. One of its means of recruiting labour and arresting the drift from land to towns takes the form of Young Farmers Clubs open to all juvenile country dwellers.

Most recent is the formation of Cinema Clubs by film corporations. Most barefaced too, the magnates claiming it is for the good of the children and to keep them from mischief and idleness, relieving the pressure of Saturday mornings on their lousy mothers. Some advertise they study child psychology in drawing up programmes. One might not so much object if picture house proprietors honestly said they were out to create the film-going habit in the young so it would continue—to their great profit—during their patrons' lives.

## II

Greatest nobblers of children are governments. In the guise of education governments have by their coercive powers been able to control the younger populace wholesale, take away their personal freedom, detach them from family influences and make them mass implementers of national policy.

Anyone so simple as to think education is promoted for the children's benefit should think again. Such belief in the honesty of politicians betokens a state of mind which invites the operations of dictators and similar batters on the credulity of mankind.

When Frederick the Second's Prussian drill sergeants reported the newly conscripted recruits not docile enough the royal autocrat's cunning saw in compulsory education solution of the difficulty. During two centuries since Germany has set the pace in education and war. Repercussions on the rest of Europe have not been such as to make us accept the system without wide revision.

In Britain beginnings of compulsory school attendance about 1870 followed extensions of the franchise. Governing classes were afraid of the new power bestowed upon electors, so devised a scheme to render such innocuous, or at least less disturbing.

Propaganda in schools and elsewhere has eliminated the republican movement so strong in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century. In its place is sentimentality toward royalty which tends to become grovelling if not slobbering.

If anybody is satisfied that immuring crowds of children inside buildings with a few adults is education we should ask whether or not such mass segregation is the best we can do to prepare children for their future careers and living.

Revolutionaries seizing governmental power create a system of compulsory education: to foster in the young the idea that the revolution was not only successful at its moment of striking but is continuingly so, the only possible society which can exist permanently.

## III

Admitted politicians were not the first to noble children in the name of education. Centuries earlier churches realised the importance of catching them young. So infant baptism was followed by attendance at church, schools, colleges and universities under clerical control, with confirmation in their teens. Nor have modern chances of nobbling been neglected by churches.

Before British governments seized opportunities of conscription ere youth had grown up General Baden Powell anticipated it by his Scout movement. Now troops of cubs and scouts, brownies and guides are appanages of local churches, the original open-air pseudo-adventurousness fading till those young people are merely attachments to Sunday Schools. Also the churches can claim to have preceded Baden Powell in their formation of Boys' and Church Lads' Brigades.

Youth Movements and Clubs seem going the same way, so eagerly and skilfully are churches and their ministers getting control of them.

## IV

One great hope remains to offset all these varieties of nobbling. That is the nature of the child, his capacity to amuse himself when alone and formulate his own entertainment in company with his fellows; to find hobbies and play games without interference, unadvised and unregulated by organisably anxious grown-up people; in short his innate independence, inventiveness, often rebelliousness; his desire to go his own road, his craving for experience and novelty.

If those are killed by official or officious or other nobbling of whatever motive then the future of human thought and action is indeed bleak.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

## ACID DROPS

Sir Stafford Cripps is a Member of Parliament. He is there to represent a body of people, and elected to his position because of his skill in secular matters. We are not concerned with the rightness or wrongness, the cleverness or the reverse, of this Member of Parliament. We wish to say only that, so far as the position of Sir Stafford is concerned, he is a secular person, and his sole work, as a Member of Parliament, is of a secular quality. Parliamentary election does not or should not rest upon religious opinion.

But there is another Sir Stafford. This one indulges in spreading the news—not in Parliament—but in this and that Church, in which he informs his listeners that no matter how great Parliament can be, how much it may work, it can reach nothing without religion. As a sample, we give this:—

“Without the religious and moral inspiration of our Christian belief, our democracy must fall, because it would be too feeble to stand up to ruthless efficiency.”

Now, we are not going to argue against this religious nonsense. It smells of street corner preaching, and if Sir Stafford really believes what he says—and brilliant men do have lapses—the proper place for this to be told is before the House of Commons. What does happen is that our Chancellor says one thing in church and another in Parliament. If he believes that the betterment of the country rests on God, then he should make that belief public in the House of Commons.

One of Lord Wavell's own men writes in a Dundee paper against church parades and says, “I can excuse the general, but I cannot excuse a service chaplain . . . throughout six years service, I hoped to find one chaplain who would refuse to preach to men driven by the threat of the guardroom. I didn't find one. Perhaps they had revised the Bible to read ‘Compel little soldiers to come unto me.’” There is nothing soldiers hate more than religious compulsion.

“The Record,” an old established religious paper, is overjoyed at the advance towards a religious revival. A recent Albert Hall gathering never managed to call back a single man or woman to the Christian creed. The names of well-known men and women will help to draw a crowd. But that is all. But when the excitement has lost its strength, and the repetition has got tiresome, there will be the same emptiness of the churches. That process has been gathering for many years, and it is not merely in England. It exists wherever the Christian religion exists.

The question of whether the Bible should be printed in plain every-day language is again being discussed among Christian leaders. For our part we should be glad to see it done. As things are, people are apt to read the Bible much as the Catholic peasant who repeats something to Latin. In fact a great deal of the dislike by Christians of Freethought propaganda is due to the fact that Bible passages are expressed in plain contemporary language, and Christian leaders do not like it. Really, if “Jack and the Beanstalk” were recited in the language of a thousand years ago it might well be put before the people as a part of the Christian religion. There is a great deal in the *form* of language.

The Archbishop of York warns his followers that they must not be too hasty when dealing with Russia, because a quarter of the Russian population is made up of Christians. Just think of it? Three-quarters of nearly two hundred millions of people have no belief in gods! We are inclined to believe that the number of Atheists in Russia are not so numerous as the Archbishop of York says, but the fact that religion can shrivel in so short a time may be taken as an indication of what can be done in other countries—our own included.

It would appear that not all Catholics are swallowing Fatima and its miracles with the ease of medieval Christians, and that fervid supporter of rank superstition, the “Universe,” is now constrained to advise its readers to study the “excellent articles of Fr. Martindale” in the “Catholic Gazette” where they will find “an attempt to elucidate the actual happenings.” We have not read these articles, but we can imagine nothing more intriguing than a Jesuit “attempt” to “elucidate” the story of some ignorant children relating that the sun, moon and stars danced about the heavens at the request of the Virgin Mary. Can credulity and superstition go further?

Yet there seems to be no limit. In California, 30,000 Catholics attended a huge service in honour of Fatima, all praying for peace, and the conversion of Russia. In Madrid, we are assured, 500,000 gathered for the same object, while in Texas 53 Masses “were offered simultaneously at a Fatima ceremony at dawn.” In Madrid, the Holy Ghost, in the shape of Doves, flew around the Fatima statue, over 7,000 sick on stretchers were gathered, and, of course, the inevitable cures—of nine people—were announced and duly vouched for by 100 doctors and the 1,000 nurses in attendance. And we are often solemnly assured that the work of Freethought is no longer necessary.

Canada is providing one of the latest and most convincing examples of divine wisdom and planning. In one part of the country there is drought, forest fires and urgent prayers for rain—lots of it, whilst in another part of the country terrific floods are sweeping over thousands of acres of growing crops, houses are being demolished and many people are being drowned. If any sceptic cannot see the wisdom of God in the situation, he should consult a clergyman—in his official capacity.

In the South African election the Nationalists have won a majority of the seats. The leader of the Party, Dr. D. F. Malan, has evidently had a good Christian training. His career began as a Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, and he graduated as a Doctor of Theology at Utrecht. Up to the time of his election, his programme was one of pure Nationalism, he opposed political rights for the native population and he is in favour of segregating all coloured people in reserves. Christianity may profess to believe that “We are all equal in the sight of God,” but the actions of many Christians seem to indicate that their beliefs are a little shaky. This may be an under-statement, but it is an accurate measure of their conduct in relation to that much used phrase “Christian Ethics.” We think “Christian Hypocrisy” a better term.

# "THE FREETHINKER"

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

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

F. J. GOULD, W.C. 2.—Circumstances have altered since then, as the cost of producing the "Freethinker" has jumped. We hope the possibility of enlarging the paper will not be far off. We, too, would like to see a 16-page as formerly.

E. W. JAMES, Wheathampstead.—We are not surprised that you do not get answers from clergy. Some of the questions put may be rather difficult.

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 connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, 17s.; half-year, 8s. 6d.; three-months, 4s. 3d.

Owing to an alteration in office hours, Lecture Notices must reach 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, by first post Friday morning for the following Sunday week's issue of the "Freethinker."

## SUGAR PLUMS

The first conference of German Freethinkers since Hitler came to power has been held in Hamburg. It was decided to rebuild the German Freethought organisation in all zones in Germany as soon as possible, to re-start their official paper as soon as a licence was granted by the authorities, and a programme of future work was laid down. A message of good wishes and congratulations from the National Secular Society was read to the conference and received with hearty acclamation. There is a wealth of meaning behind the early destruction of German Freethought in Hitler's plan for world domination.

The many friends of Mr. J. T. Brighton will be pleased to note his return to activity after his recent accident in the coal mine. On Monday, 28th June, he will debate the question, "Will Christianity Save Us?" with the Rev. Patrick Knox in the Socialist Hall, Old Arcade, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The debate will begin at 7-15 p.m., with A. K. Wilson, Esq., in the chair. The Rev. Patrick Knox is vicar of St. Marys, Newcastle, and we can assure him of a worthy and courteous opponent in Mr. Brighton.

"Combined Operations" by Christian Commandoes are about to commence, and the first blast will be the film "The Film of Bolton," which, it is hoped, will attract the cinema-goer as much as Marlene Dietrich in her most hectic moments. The "Church Times" is, however, woefully disappointed. "The production," it moans, "is disjointed and jerky, and as an evangelistic force, its effect will almost certainly be nil." It adds that if only the producers had a firm grasp on the theology of the Incarnation, a better film could have been made. The idea that producers of any of our films could firmly grasp any theology whatever will strike most people who know them as hopelessly funny; and we might add that even if Bing Crosby tried to put over the "Incarnation" in his religious films, the box office would soon settle his popularity.

The "Church Times" regrets that the Archbishop of Canterbury should have allowed his name to be associated with the film, and also, that "such amateur efforts should advertise the Christian Faith." The truth is that "amateur efforts" in film-making these days would damn one even if God himself were to direct it. The standard has to be as high as "Going My Way," with Bing Crosby, and we doubt that even that film converted anybody. When will Christian propagandists realise that even the cinema could never hope to prevail against the indifferentism of the average "Protestant." Christianity can only succeed with the ignorant superstitious Catholic peasant and Middle West Fundamentalist, or the naive childishness of the Salvation Army.

The American Journal "Life," famous for its photographs, published one showing children playing with a Noah's Ark. On the table they had set out the animals among which were three camels. We are not surprised at the shriek of horror which welled up from every Fundamentalist and the fervent believers of the other 300 sects of Christian for which the U.S.A. is famous. Indeed, our heartfelt sympathy goes out to those doughty champions of God Almighty. In His book he declares that only two animals went into the Ark, and to depict three is the rankest blasphemy. True, in another part of the Word, the number given is seven—but that is not three, and we are surprised that anyone could thus flout the Lord's express declaration. We are pleased to learn that "Life" has declared its deep contrition.

## THE MARXIST VIEW

IN a recent article I wrote of the relationship between Marxism and Christianity, taking as my text a book by Mr. J. M. Cameron, published by the S.C.M. Press. Now, as a footnote to that article, I should like to say a few words about Mr. Archibald Robertson's "Man His Own Master" (Watts; 2s. 6d.), which is (I think one can say without unduly distorting Mr. Robertson's aims) the Marxist analysis of the facts of human history. Mr. Robertson's primary idea is to disabuse the human mind of the idea, still sedulously propagated in some circles, that man needs God in order to give him a chance to face the problems of the twentieth century. In his arguments in the contrary direction he suggests that no such leaning on supernatural ideas is in any way needed. Much of his argument, it is probably unnecessary to remind readers of this column, is both cogent and well reasoned; but it seems to me that there are occasions when he tends to go right outside the realm of rational argument—and it is notable that these are the occasions when his Marxist bias is most marked. For instance, he says that the Church of England has no right to consider itself in any sort of genuine continuity with the ancient Church. This is reasonable enough; the breaks have been so abrupt that any such claim appears the veriest nonsense. He goes on: "A claim to continuity by any other organisation whose basis had been altered, whose governing body had been purged, and whose officers had been coerced in this fashion would be deservedly laughed to scorn." True; but does not Mr. Robertson suggest that the present Government of the Soviet Union has such a claim to continuity with the Government of Lenin? The parallel is so exact that it is almost comic to reflect upon.

This is, however, a minor point. What is more valuable for discussion is Mr. Robertson's treatment of the ideas of Freewill and Determinism. Here is the crucial paragraph:—

"Economists recognise determinism when they speak of the laws of supply and demand or the effects of inflation. But these laws are only working hypotheses. We are not entitled to conclude that man is a helpless puppet of circumstance or that his every act was predetermined from all time. We are real agents; what we do makes a difference; and our acts are no less, but equally no more, subject to causation than anything else in heaven or earth. Such freedom may not amount to 'free will' in the theological or metaphysical sense. It is doubtful, however, whether that ever interested anyone but a theologian or a metaphysician."

That seems to me completely begging the question. It looks very suspiciously like trying to get the best of both worlds. A good case, after all, can be made out for the idea that all man's actions, like "anything else in heaven and earth," is free from causal control; a case can be made out for the idea that strict determinism rules the universe. But to try to say that man is, after a fashion, free, but is not quite free, seems to me to be indefensible, both philosophically and theologically. Then one reflects that this is actually an attempt to translate into easily-understandable terms the theories of Dialectical Materialism, which hold that, while the end of action is determined, man can either assist or obstruct the general trend of history by co-operating or opposing the fluctuating policies of Communist Parties.

I hope that Mr. Robertson and some of his Marxist friends will not feel that I am being too cruel to the philosophy of Marx; but I do feel that there is a danger if we accept the reasoning of Marxists uncritically. Superficially it appears to be a very useful idea to provide a way out of some of the dilemmas of twentieth-century thought, as in this matter of freewill and determinism. Actually, when analysed with care, it proves to be a not particularly satisfactory compromise between opposing philosophical views. For that reason I would suggest that Freethinkers should think twice before they accept the ideas of the Marxists. It is tempting to think of the U.S.S.R. as the home of Freethought, though the recent recrudescence of religion makes even that doubtful. The main thing, however, is that much of the Marxist philosophy is definitely irrational; and when irrationality rears its head, all sorts of difficulties may be encountered, practical and theoretical.

JOHN ROWLAND.

## PLOTTERS IN THE HOLY SEE

### VI

INTO the election funds of the Christian Democratic Party and that of the neo-fascist organisations the Vatican has poured over three thousand million lire; seven new daily newspapers were founded for the election campaign. This being the case, it is quite evident that the only thing the American imperialists and their holy fellow travellers are afraid of is the democratic and unhampered expression of the will of the Italian people. Hence elections in Europe after the American pattern with hundreds of U.S. armoured cars and the thousands of machine-guns levelled at the people—the army of priests and monks threatening the wrath of heaven for the dis-

obedient and famine for Italy should the people dare not vote as Washington demands.

So the events in Italy can serve as a paragon for the influence of money interests on "free" elections. It was revealed in Washington that the U.S. had spent about £1,000,000 for "political purposes" in Italy, viz., the most savage campaign of bribery and intimidation ever seen in recent European history.

Why this concern, this unveiled interference in Italy's internal affairs and this gross violation of all democratic prescriptions?

Italy, to a greater extent still as Greece, is an advanced base in the Mediterranean; her vital strategical position will be at the disposal of the United States.

In the 'twenties, soon after the first World War, Vatican-influenced political circles in a number of West-European States advocated a plan calling for the creation of a "Danubian Federation," to fill up the "political vacuum," caused by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

Translated into plain speech, this meant the creation in Central Europe of a Catholic fascist bloc to be used as a ram-head against all popular intentions. The "Danubian Federation" was planned to include not only Austria and Bavaria, but also Hungary, Yugoslavia and Poland. Austria and Bavaria, under the sway of Cardinals Faulhaber and Immitzer respectively, are rather secure, the other prospective countries, however, have broken away from dollar influence, and it is this which worries the warmongers. All the more it is necessary for them to keep the Italian citadel.

Between the two wars, the Danubian scheme had no real basis behind it, and, therefore, was soon consigned to the archives. It was dragged to light again, however, during the second world war, when the international forces of reaction began to lay their plans for a post-war settlement that would preserve their power in Europe after the crash of Hitler-Germany. The wires are being pulled by an influential group of American financiers connected with the bank of Morgan. Invisible threads stretch from Faulhaber and Immitzer to the Vatican and from the Pope to Cardinal Spellman, who, in turn, is closely connected with the bank of Morgan. Spellman has established contact with top-ranking clergymen in Bavaria and Austria through his personal representative in Europe, Munich, Catholic chaplain of the American occupation forces in Germany. This prelate concerns himself actively with Bavarian affairs, working together with Faulhaber's associates in the Christian Social Union—the Jesuit disciples Pfeiffer, Hundhammer and others.

They have separatist slogans and separatist figureheads but they have no separatist movement. And so, in the hope of whipping up at least the semblance of such a movement, they decided to seek a leader of the "Left" breed. For this purpose, the American authorities imported from Switzerland the Social-Democrat Dr. Wilhelm Högner, Bavarian separatist, or, as he styles himself, "democratic federalist." With Germany dismembered, it will be easy to get Bavaria into the Vatican-dominated Wall Street-controlled "Danubian Federation."

In the course of a few short months the U.S. Military Government raised Högner to dizzy heights of prominence. His speeches were disseminated through all Germany, by means of press and radio. The "Tagesspiegel"—American mouthpiece—wrote whole pages about him.

A similar separatist attempt was made in the Rhineland by the French. A quarter of a century ago, during the French occupation of the Rhineland, they purchased the



services of Dr. Adenauer, who is now Chairman of the Christian-Democratic Union in the British sector. This time, after the armistice, the French authorities established contact with certain groupings in Bavaria, and, above all, with the potassium magnate, Reehberg, a friend of Ludendorff.

America reacted quickly. Reehberg was summoned to the U.S. intelligence office; he was brought out dead. Official report: Death due to heart failure during interrogation.

After Reehberg's death, contact with the French authorities was maintained by von Aretin, a well-known Bavarian monarchist and separatist. In May, 1946, an "independent Rhine movement" was set up on the instructions of the French authorities. The separatists in the services of French expansion were rewarded by appointments to high posts in the French zone; one of them was Altmaier, Prime Minister of the Rhineland-Palatinate.

Since then, France has accepted the Marshall Plan and joined the Anti-Communist Axis of "Western Europe". As a consequence the Americans have dropped their fear of French competition in their zone.

Towards the end of November last, while the Council of Foreign Ministers was in session in London, a secret conference took place at the Schönenberg Carmelite Monastery, near Ellwangen, Württemberg, attended by all the more or less prominent separatist leaders: Bavarian Prime Minister Ehard, ex-Minister Pfeiffer, Minister Frommknecht, State-Secretaire Sedlmayer, South Baden Prime Minister Wohleb, etc. It seems that the conference discussed the question of a "South German Federation," to embrace the American and French zones both in Germany and Austria. At that time, the failure of the London Conference was already accepted as a *fait accompli*.

The Vatican and the financial circles grouped around the bank of Pierpont Morgan regard this plan as a next resort in case political developments in Germany as a whole, and in Western Germany in particular, should fail to take the line mapped out by Wall Street. They are greatly attracted by the idea of a strong Catholic neo-fascist State in Central Europe as an American advanced base pointing against the East.

Already a number of Jesuit schools are being set up in Bavaria to train Catholic priests for missions—including sabotage and spying—in the Balkan countries.

This is the sum and substance of the new Axis. By playing on the fears of millionaires and morons the world is to be plunged in another war in order to glorify the Corporate Vatican State. Said Father Coughlin in 1940:—

"We should build armaments for the purpose of crushing Soviet Russia in co-operation with the Christian Totalitarian States—Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal."

By the exchange of notes, President Truman and Pope Pius have sought to create a mutual assistance pact between the Holy See and Wall Street. The conclusion of Truman's letter was: "Our common goal is to arouse and invigorate the faith of men to attain eternal values in our generation—no matter what obstacles exist or may arise in the path."

The papal reply was lengthy and abstruse, but the American headline, "Pope, Truman pledge mutual aid," showed that its significance was not lost.

Let us resume: Pacelli negotiated a Concordat with Hitler; as the Pope, he congratulated Hitler when he escaped assassination. The R.C. Church backed Hitler in the Saar plebiscite and in his drive to the East. When

Hitler marched into Vienna, Cardinal Immiter hailed him as the tool of "Divine Providence." Father Künzle, a R.C. priest, wrote "Mein Kampf" for Hitler. The Pope never breathed a word against Hitler's murder factories; he decided to be represented in Japan two or three days before the treacherous attack on Pearl Harbour. Finally, a papal encyclical endorsed the Corporate State of Mussolini as the Catholic solution of the political problem. And in unholy alliance with American Big Business the Vatican has set out to strangle Freedom and Progress by every conceivable means, among others, through the creation of a Catholic Danubian Federation.

TOM HILL.

## BUDDHISM AND FREETHOUGHT

DURING the last half century "Buddhism" has been attacked from the "Right" and from the "Left,"—the former meaning the Christian missionary, many of these, fine scholars, but who were obviously out to replace it with the "only true supernatural revelation,"—and the latter, the Freethought "Left"—the rationalist criticism. Now Buddhism, being a non-authoritarian Faith, invites discussion—the "Dharma" was developed by means of question and answer. It must be recognised, however, that early Freethought scholars and scientists, such as T. H. Huxley, "Darwin's Bulldog"; Karl Pearson, the author of the "Grammar of Science"; Lafcadio Hearn, that fine admirer of Herbert Spencer—that these all held that Buddhism, in the history of philosophy, and especially ethics, occupied a prominent place.

My critic, Mr. Cutner, appears to have given a hasty glance at Buddhist teaching and history for the purpose of refutation. He turns aside from the distinguished Indologist, T. W. Rhys Davids, founder of the Pali Text Society, and takes refuge in J. M. Robertson's "Pagan Christs," and the now discredited theory that founders of great historical reform movements like Gotama and Jesus are merely sun myths. But even if this view were sound, the artillery of Robertson misses fire when turned on Buddhism, for the simple reason that Buddhism does not depend on the historical sense in anything like the degree that is essential to Christianity. If it could be shown that the founder never lived, his teaching as a sane way of life would be unaffected. Even that inveterate critic of so-called Nihilistic religions, Frederick Nietzsche said of Buddhism:—

"It is the expression of a *fine evening* perfectly sweet and mild—it is a sort of gratitude to all that lies hidden, including that which it entirely lacks—viz., bitterness, disillusionment and resentment. Finally it possesses lofty intellectual love; it has got over all the subtlety of philosophical contradictions and is even resting after it, though it is precisely from that source that it derives its intellectual glory and its glow as of a sunset." ("Will to Power" Aph. 155.)

But Mr. Cutner is quite wrong when he says that 100 B.C. is the earliest date for Buddhist writing. Dr. Princep, the painstaking genius who was the founder of Indian archaeology, provided concrete evidence that the date of the Inscriptions on rock of the Buddhist emperor Asoka, may be deduced as being c.258-257 B.C., and one of these refers by name to the canonical collections of the Buddha's sayings—the Edict of Bhabra. ("The

Legacy of India," p. 73.) Although then, the date of the Books of the Pali Pitakas (records of Buddha's teaching) can be stated only vaguely (they were composed at different times between 500 and 250 B.C.), they undoubtedly contain a great deal of much older matter. Robertson and my Secularist critic want to build an argument on "Buddha wrote nothing." Now one of the first things that the student of Indian history and Indian institutions learns is that the European notion that books can only be preserved in *writing* is all wrong. No one can dispute the enormous powers of *memory* to which Indian priests and monks attained. The present writer knew a Rajput scholar who could repeat the whole of the *Mahabharata*—in Sanskrit—the great Hindu Epic—the *length* of which may be judged from the fact that this would take six months—reciting so many verses a day! Buddhists believe that their great teacher composed works which were handed down by memory in their original state until they were committed to writing; and it is known that the Vedas were handed down in this manner for many hundreds of years as an actual fact. This being so we need not regard the Buddhist belief concerning the faithful transmission of the Buddha's sayings as improbable. Discussing the "Noble Eightfold Path" which consists of a technique of mind control and moral culture leading to the extinction of suffering, including: Right Views; Right Aims; Right Speech; Right Conduct; Right Mode of Livelihood; Right Exertion; Right Mindfulness; Right Meditation and Tranquillity.

Prof. Rhys Davids says: "The views here set forth are so remarkable as the basis of a religion promulgated in the sixth century B.C. that to suppose the disciples to have invented them is to credit them with a power of intelligence and imagination no less than that of their revered master. But to the historian it would be much the same thing whether the Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness were really due to the master or his followers. The remarkable fact is that we have here set forth a view of religion entirely free—*independent* of the soul theories, on which all the various philosophies and religions then current in India were based; entirely free from the idolatries and superstitions of the day. And if this Buddhist ideal of the perfect life is remarkable when compared with the thought of India at the time, it is equally instructive when looked at from the comparative point of view."\*

To track down Mr. Cutner's errors about "Buddha," and "Gotama," and "previous Buddhas" and King Asoka would take more space than can be spared. Mr. Cutner "agrees with some of the moral precepts," but he says:—

"When I am told that 'a wise man should avoid married life as if it were a burning pit of live coals,'—I consider such teaching to an insult to humanity."

My friend's critical method here is an insult to free-thought. Here is the actual passage:—

"A wise man should avoid *in chastity* as if it were a burning pit of live coals. One who is not able to live in a state of celibacy *should not commit adultery.*" (Dhammika Sutta, Verse 21.)

Then again, "contemplating one's navel in the depth of a forest" has nothing to do with Buddhism. It was ancient *Hindu* ascetic practice. Mr. Cutner would not "give up Free-thought" if he became a Buddhist—he would, as I have suggested, rather *greatly widen* his conception of it. On the other hand, I agree heartily with

my critic that "the men who made wireless possible (such a blessing to the blind), who built our great transport services, who gave us *great* music, (*not* jazz), art (*some*), literature, etc.," are worthy of our admiration. But my admiration for Western progress is qualified, you know, by the shadow of the atomic bomb, which I suggest, we can only banish by the practice of that ethic of self culture and self control taught by the "heathen" Gotama Buddha, who was not a "god" but just a Man among men. There are many literary men in Europe and America to-day who look to Indian thought for inspiration in our present troubles. As Sir Charles Eliot observes: ("Hinduism and Buddhism," Vol. I p. XLVI) "Let me confess that I cannot share the confidence in the superiority of Europeans and their ways, which is prevalent in the West. European civilisation is not satisfying and Asia can still offer something more attractive to many who are far from Asiatic in spirit."

R. J. JACKSON.

## GOD AND DOG

IT was only a dog, and for the time a really dumb animal, lying ill on the gorse-protected grass strip between the road and the promenade, beyond which was the shingle and the surging sea.

A man and his wife had seen it there at a quarter to one, pitied it, and, for want of urgency in their sympathy, left it unrescued.

It was nearly three when another visitor to Ormesville drew my attention to the animal, and remarked that the address on its collar was not far away. But for this man's more energetic tenderness, I too, might have passed it by. The creature had, he thought, little chance of survival in the keen, blustering wind, the sun not being sufficiently strong to furnish the needed warmth.

It seemed reasonable, since I was apparently the much younger man, for me to visit the address of the dog's owner, and this I did, hoping that the animal would remain in place until the human members of its circle could arrive. Unfortunately, there was no-one at the address, but a gardening neighbour stated that the people were out looking for the dog. Then came a constable on the same errand as mine. I wrote a note as to the dog's whereabouts, pushed it through the owner's letter-box and returned to the shore.

The dog, still there, raised its head on my speaking to it, and came off the grass and close against the seaward side of the kerb edging the promenade, seeking, no doubt, more shelter from the wind.

The dog was alone when I then saw it, but the first two visitors came back, and we discussed as to what might be done. Fortunately, we were soon interrupted by the arrival of two lads, who had some time before recognised the dog. They now produced a sack, and carefully wrapping up the animal, carried it towards its home.

On the following day, the cinemas and the public-houses in Ormesville were to be closed, but the churches were to be open, for it would be Sunday, a day now sacred to the memory of the god Jesus, who had said that not a sparrow fell to the ground without our Heavenly Father's knowledge. Presumably, also, the happenings to dogs, each worth several sparrows, are within the celestial awareness.

This knowledge is, however, not necessarily of help to sparrows or dogs, any more than people are assisted by the fact that the revenue officials keep records of their incomes and deaths. Of God's help to animals, observ-

tion reveals no trace, for they so often prey on one another that pious men have sought to save the Almighty's reputation for mercy by averring that below man there is little suffering, death being swift, and devouring being but a part of a beautiful harmony, in which the earth is kept clean for God's new experiments in creation. Similarly, they can explain the fact that the roads of England are streaked with the carcasses of birds, hedgehogs, and rabbits, caught by the wheels of cars, God not having shown his creatures how to avoid impact with modern traffic.

Now pity is native to man as a social being, and he feels it towards all animals usually within his domestic circle, and Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," has named many pagans distinguished for their inculcation of the duty of tenderness to the lowlier creatures. and of Plutarch he states that he placed such duty on the broad ground of the affections.

How, then, does Christianity stand in this respect? The New Testament is mostly silent, and, instead of the injunction of the Old that one must not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, we have St. Paul's contemptuous question, "Doth God take care of oxen?" Lecky, when mentioning Plutarch's teaching, referred to above, remarks that he urged it with an emphasis and a detail to which no adequate parallel could be found in Christian writings for at least 1,700 years.

The teaching of kindness to animals met this great obstacle in Christianity that the latter averred that all creatures below man were external to the scheme of redemption, and, therefore, beyond the range of duty. Man had a soul and life eternal, animals had neither.

From this superstition, indifference to animal suffering naturally ensued.

For the dogs there were only the crumbs falling by hazard from man's overflowing table.

J. G. LUPTON.

### CORRESPONDENCE BELIEF IN HUMANITY

Sir.—I do not wish to intervene on behalf of Mr. Roy, who can doubtless take care of himself. But I wish to criticise Mr. Wood's last article. Judging by the quantity of italics with which he peppers it (a sure sign of incompetent thinking and writing), Mr. Roy has reduced him to an acute state of hysteria.

"No country," says Mr. Wood, "has ever yet been forced to accept democracy." Bosh! Our system of government by Parliamentary majorities was forced on those who objected to it in the seventeenth century. The extension of the franchise to the middle class was forced through in 1832 by a threat of revolution. Hyde Park railings had to go down before working men got the vote; and windows were smashed and churches were burnt before women did. The Americans forced democracy on their Tories by a liberal application of tar and feathers. The French forced it on theirs by the guillotine and at the barricades. So if Mr. Wood doesn't like systems that are "born in a blood bath," he had better leave all existing systems severely alone.

Mr. Wood talks of "Russian tyranny in Czechoslovakia." There is not a Russian soldier there. What was done was done by Czechs among themselves. Let me tell Mr. Wood that last year, before there was any bother in Czechoslovakia, I met an old Czech professor in England. We made friends. After the February affair I wanted to send him a newly published book of mine. Naturally I hoped my friend was all right, and made suitable inquiries. I was delighted to hear in due course not only that he was safe and well, but that he was disgusted by the propaganda in the western press, regarded the events of February as "a great victory in the class struggle," and considered his country's liberation as "only now complete." As I had steeled myself for bad news, this reassurance across the "iron curtain" was most cheering. I need hardly say that my old friend had not been nearly so happy under Hitler.

Less italics, Mr. Wood, and more sense, if you please!—  
Yours, etc.,  
ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

### Report of first meeting of new Executive held 17th June, 1948

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Hornibrook, Rosetti (A.C.), Seibert, Bryant, Thompson, Griffiths, Ebury, Cleaver, Page, Taylor, Barker, Mrs. Quinton and the Secretary.

Financial statement presented. New members were admitted to Halifax, North London, Crewe and to the Parent Society.

Permission was given for the formation of a branch of the Society at Crewe, to be known as the Crewe Branch of the National Secular Society.

Propaganda films were discussed, with some figures available. Meeting considered it not a practical question at the moment.

Future lecture arrangements, including Glasgow and London, were dealt with.

Messrs. Griffiths, A. C. Rosetti and Mrs. Quinton were elected as the Benevolent Fund Committee. Mr. R. J. Woodley was co-opted as a member of the Executive.

A legacy of £50 from the late J. H. Gibson was announced.

Motions remitted from the Annual Conference were dealt with and decisions made as follows:—

Alteration of the rule concerning Vice-Presidents considered a matter for the conference.

Motion 11, concerning Executive reports to Branches. After discussion, President held that "Freethinker" reports of Executive meetings contained substance of proceedings, but undertook to see elaborations be made where possible.

Motion 12 on payment of expenses of members of the Executive. Motion, that it was impracticable and too expensive, carried with one vote against.

Motion 13 that venue of Annual Conference be decided by Conference, one year in advance. Agreed that present method is preferable.

Motion 14 regarding an Organiser. Agreed that no further action be taken at this stage.

Motion 15 demonstrations; action already taken. Motions 17 and 18, re B.B.C., suggestions under continued review.

Motion 19 re provision of conference minutes. Always has been the practice. Remaining motions accepted.

Mr. Ebury drew attention to attempted police interference with his open-air meeting at Highbury Corner. The attempt was successfully resisted.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for July 22, and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI, General Secretary.

### LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

#### LONDON—OUTDOOR

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Sunday, 12 noon; Highbury Corner, 7 p.m.: Mr. L. EBURY.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Marble Arch, Hyde Park).—Sunday, 4 p.m.: MESSRS. E. C. SAPHIN, JAMES HEWIT, G. WOOD.

#### LONDON—INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "The Jewish Question," Mr. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON, M.A.

#### COUNTRY—OUTDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Car Park, Broadway).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. H. DAY.

Glasgow (Brunswick Street).—Sunday, 3 p.m.: Messrs. S. BRYDEN, E. LAWASI and J. HUMPHREY.

Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: Mr. J. BARKER.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (on Blitzed Site, Ranelagh Street, Liverpool).—Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: Messrs. G. THOMPSON, W. PARRY, W. C. PARRY.

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

Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barkers' Pool).—Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: Messrs. A. SAMMS, G. L. GREAVES.

#### COUNTRY—INDOOR

Newcastle (Socialist Hall, Old Arcade, Pilgrim Street).—Monday, June 28, 7-45 p.m.: Debate, "Will Christianity Save Us?" All. Rev. PATRICK KNOX, Neg. Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON, Chairman Mr. A. K. WILSON.

**FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF****Recent American Pamphlets****THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

By L. H. Lehman. The Catholic attempt to control education in the U.S.A. with some facts and figures of Catholic criminals and juvenile delinquency. 24 pages. Price 1s. 6d., post free.

**THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN A DEMOCRACY**

By L. H. Lehman and F. V. Riggs. An account of how the Catholic Church obtains money, property, and power. It includes a chart showing the proportion of religious denominations in the U.S.A. Congress. 32 pages. Price 1s. 6d., post free.

**VATICAN POLICY IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

By L. H. Lehman. 50 pages of documented facts regarding Catholicism and Fascism. Price 1s. 4d., post free.

**THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

By D. Tomitch, translated by L. H. Lehman. A record of Catholicism and anti-Semitism originally published as an official communication to Freemasons of Europe and U.S.A. Authenticated evidence regarding the Vatican intrigues with the Axis Dictators. 36 pages. Price 1s. 6d., post free.

**CENTURIES OF INTOLERANCE**

By J. M. Freeman, B.A. A survey of Catholicism and anti-Semitism, with parallels of Papal and Nazi anti-Jewish decrees. 48 pages. Price 1s. 6d., post free.

**SOCIALISM AND RELIGION**

By F. A. Ridley. A useful survey of Religion in relation to Socialism. A short history of Religion from the witch doctor to High Mass at St. Peter's. 20 pages. Price 1s. 1d. post free.

**PAMPHLETS**

By C. G. L. Du CANN

**HOW THE CHURCHES BETRAY THEIR CHRIST**

Do the Churches follow the example of their Founder, in war, in peace, in morality? Price 9d.; postage 1d.

**THERE ARE NO CHRISTIANS**

How many Christians follow the teachings of Christ? How much are Bishopsrics and ecclesiastical appointments worth? Price 4d.; postage 1d.

**THE FAULTS AND FAILINGS OF JESUS CHRIST**

Was Jesus the "family man," the "humanitarian," the "great teacher?" Price 4d.; postage 1d.

**WILL YOU RISE FROM THE DEAD?**

An examination of the evidence for the Resurrection. What truth is there in the Gospel stories? Price 6d.; postage 1d.

*An indictment of the Christian Church and its teachings.*

*The set of four pamphlets 2s. 1d., post free.*

**THE BIBLE HANDBOOK**

By G. W. FOOTE and W. P. BALL

Specially compiled for easy reference. For Freethinkers and inquiring Christians

References given for Bible Contradictions, Absurdities, Atrocities, Prophecies and Immoralities

9th edition. 2nd printing. 176 pages.

Price 3s., Cloth only. Postage 2½d.

**ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING**

By CHAPMAN COHEN

Series Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Each volume about 160 pages

*Essays include :—*

Religion and To-day.	Religion and the State.
Do Miracles Happen?	Religion and the Young.
Praying for Rain.	Is Religion of Use?

Price 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

The four vols. 10s. 6d., post free

**THE VATICAN POLICY in the SECOND WORLD WAR**

By L. H. LEHMAN

F. A. Ridley in review: Dr. L. H. Lehman, a man of outstanding critical ability and "inside" knowledge of the ramifications of that arch-enemy in every sphere, the Roman Catholic Church.

52 pages. Paper covers only, 1s. 3d., postage 1½d.

**THE AGE OF REASON**

By THOMAS PAINE

The book that has survived over a century of abuse and misrepresentation.

Includes a critical introduction and life by Chapman Cohen and a reproduction of a commemoration plaque subscribed by American soldiers in this country.

230 pages. Price, cloth, 3s. Paper, 2s. Postage 3d.

**GOD AND THE UNIVERSE**

By CHAPMAN COHEN

A Criticism of Professors Huxley, Eddington, Jeans and Einstein, including a reply by Prof. Eddington.

3rd Edition. 136 pages. Cloth 3s 6d., postage 2d. Paper cover 2s.

**Just Published****"Christianity and Ethics"**

By CHAPMAN COHEN

No. 18. Pamphlets for the People

Price 2d.

Postage 1d.

From PIONEER PRESS, 41, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1