

# THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor : CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXVIII.—No. 48

[REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL  
POST OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER.]

Price Threepence

## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### The Courage of Man

IN different ways we are all wondering—uneasily—about the future. It may be expressed foolishly or wisely, but tools are affected as well as philosophers and it is not easy to separate one class from another. We have a deadly war and "win" it, only to make preparations for another. We are quite certain that "we" do not long for war, but then neither does the other fellow. We may take it that even Hitler would rather have ruled the world without a war if it could have been done. Wars are fought for a purpose, whether the purpose be good or bad is another question. When that question is settled it will make things look a little different.

Soon after the present Government was established one of the Members of Parliament called the attention of the House of Commons to the fact that if Christianity had been properly adopted the world would have been much better than it is. Of course, that was just nonsense, and it was rather surprising to find Dr. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's, correcting the statement by saying:—

"It is not true that any revival of religion would be a step towards peace. The fact is that some of the most cruel and devastating wars have been wars of religion, wars waged by men who had sincere faith. When men fight for merely temporal or worldly interests they are open to considerations of prudence; if it is markets they covet they will consider compromise when victory seems too costly. But when they fight for religious conceptions, for belief about the nature of man, they will not compromise, they will go on to the end. The most disturbing danger which faces us, as I see it is that we may find ourselves plunged into a world-wide war of religion."

Now I think that this is as clear a statement as one can have. It is not new, but it is true, and the truth is that religion—the Christian religion—has done more in keeping war alive than any other single cause. The ancient Roman people shut the temple of peace when war came.

The Christian Churches when war came used the churches more than on any other occasion. It is true that the Church would bring forward the matter of morals—in the Church—but it is also true that to the people the first place was war. Pure morality has always been kept in the background. Indeed it would not be out of place to consider Christianity as a creator of warfare—among other things. We fancy that Dr. Matthews will not please a great number of his followers.

The fact is that we cannot stop people thinking any more than we can stop them from growing bodily. Not even the Roman Church, at its greatest,

could stop human development, it could only divert it. In the main we do make things move and change ideas and attain to better modes of living than did exist.

Let us assume as true that what is accepted as moral and social theory has always been associated with religious belief. The statement contains nothing of very profound significance, because each in its degree is found in every branch of human life. The whole course of human growth has been placed in absolute control of religion. But every advance in civilisation and culture has meant the growth of a sense that however useful religion may be as an adjunct of morality, morality has to end in a morality independent of religion.

I have emphasised the fact that moral teaching commences in a cloud of superstition. The whole question must hang on whether associated life is derived from religion, or religion springs from associated life. All those who are competent to express an opinion will side to-day with the latter position. Human association is the expression of an organic impulse, and in the long run all theory—religious, social or moral—must yield to the demands of that organic necessity upon which social life is founded. And this implies that life fashions theory, not theory fashions life. A theory that fails to take account of life is doomed to disappear. It may be flawless in aspect, beautifully rounded and coherent as a whole, but if it fails to withstand the touchstone of fact it cannot persist. The notion that you can force upon society a theory for which it is unready or unsuited is one of the wildest of delusions. The history of society offers countless instances of failures, all of which, rightly read, carry lessons of hope and warning. They warn, because we are bidden continually to check theory by fact. They bid us hope because they show the power of society to survive the wildest and most fantastic theory ever devised.

The simple truth is, then, that conduct is determined not with reference to beliefs, but with reference to facts. And this will not only determine morality, it will determine religion as well. Much is made of the fact that religions have always pressed morality. This is true, but here religion has been subjected to the same forces that operate upon human nature as a whole. Fitness determines survival all round, and religion to survive must become increasingly utilitarian in character. Against its will, it must diminish its supernatural and so increase the social aspects of its teachings. This is the real cause of the change that has come over Christianity of late years. It has not caused social growth, it is social growth that has forced a change of religious teaching, of doctrine and interpretation. This is as true of the past as of the present.

One of two things must result. Either religion gains control, in which case the organised society disappears and there are no chances of resumption. Religion must, therefore, if it exists, become subject to the same laws of life to which others are subject. The Roman Church



could hold up celibacy as an ideal, but it is bound to make allowances for human instincts in other directions. Protestantism could lay stress on the atoning blood of Jesus, but it, too, must give way before the force of social development. Ultimately it is life that determines the form of religion, not religion that determines the form of life.

The conclusion is, then, that behind all our consciously elaborated theories of life and conduct lie the forces of life themselves. These compel systems of thought to fashion and refashion themselves until they are in harmony with the conditions of social well-being. Morality is obviously no exception to this rule. It does not commence in a conscious discovery and application of moral rules; it exists in practice long before it is expressed in theory. Moral laws are no more the cause of morality than astronomical laws are the cause of an eclipse. In either case, we simply recognise the conditions of a given phenomenon. In the case of morality there is, however, the distinction that reflection shows us the reason and justification of certain lines of conduct and so gives an added authority for their performance. Properly understood, morality is not the high abstract thing some would make it, it is extremely concrete. The great feature of moral development is that it is easy to understand in both quality and use.

We may note in passing the strong and continued cry from the clergy that to remove religion will break the moral chain. That is just nonsense laddled out by religious leaders who know it is nonsense. If our intellectual life is saturated by religion, it is also saturated with social influences which over and over again weaken the power of superstition. The claim made by religious influences is steadily weakening, and for the obvious better. To the Freethinker, the really beneficent forces of life are and always have been, independent of religion. Above all, he does not believe that mankind will be injured by truth. All that man does need is truth. To understand life is the first duty of man. The rest will depend on courage and truth.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## THE "INFALLIBLE" PAPACY

"I am Tradition"—Pius IX 1870.

THE Era of the Reformation versus the Counter-Reformation, an era marked pre-eminently by religious wars, lasted about two centuries, from the beginnings of the Reformation to the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) which finally checked the schemes of the French "Sun King," Louis XIV, the political instrument of the Jesuits to reconquer Europe for militant Catholicism.

The succeeding (18th) century proved to be from the point of view of the Papacy, a kind of, as it were, watershed between the two revolutions, the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution.

The Popes of this era were by no means fanatics—one of them actually accepted the dedication of a play by Voltaire—and in 1773 the Papacy yielded to contemporary political pressure and officially dissolved its shock troops, the "SS Men" of the Church militant, as one can accurately term them, the Jesuits. For in that year the famous "Company of Jesus" was officially declared to be "abolished and abrogated for ever."\*

\* It is true that the Pope, Clement XIV, who had the temerity to get rid of the "Black Pope" and his associates did not long survive the dissolution. He died soon after, not without suspicion of poison.

However, the Papacy soon had occasion to regret its action. For in 1789 a new wave of social and intellectual revolution broke upon Europe, the famous French Revolution. From the point of view of the Church of Rome the slogans enunciated by the Revolution—"Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity"—represented the most pestilential heresy and denial of all authority. The more so in that the way for the great Revolution had been prepared by writers like Jean Meslier, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot and the Encyclopædists, who were avowed Atheists, or at least, Deists, and in all cases avowedly anti-clerical in their mental outlook.

Did not the spokesman of the Jacobin Club at the height of the Revolution repeat with gusto that forthright saying of the arch anti-clerical, Jean Meslier (himself a priest) that "the world would never know happiness until the last king had been strangled with the entrails of the last priest." Not exactly a quotation likely to endear the French Revolution to the Vatican!

With the French Revolution there began a new epoch in the history of the Church of Rome. From that day down to this, the philosophy broadly described as Secularism, a philosophy concerned solely with this world and embodied successively in the various (and often mutually conflicting) forms of Liberalism, Socialism, Communism, and Anarchism—all philosophic doctrines concerned solely with *this* world—succeeded the rival religion of the Protestant Reformers, Luther and Calvin, as the chief menace to, and rival of, the Popes and their Church.

The dawn of this so dangerous an epoch was quickly recognised by the Men of the Vatican. The conclusive proof of which is to be found in the prompt restoration of the Jesuit Order after its temporary dissolution. In 1814, as soon as Pope Pius VII returned from Napoleon's prison in France he restored the Jesuits both to their legal position as a recognised religious order and, in practice, to their old position which, as far as an outsider can judge, they still retain as the arch-strategists of militant Catholicism.

The French Revolution itself made a frontal attack, not only on the Christian religion, but what was even more criminal, upon the clerical monopoly of culture and education. It is true that this "ultra-left" outspokenly anti-clerical phase did not last long. Under the dictatorship of Napoleon, the "Stalin" of the French Revolution—the historical parallel is striking—a Concordat was concluded between the Catholic Church and the Napoleonic Empire (1801). But relations remained very strained as is usually the case when two regimes of a totalitarian nature try to co-exist, and the Pope remained a prisoner in France until the defeat of Bonaparte in 1814.

Meanwhile, the French had united Italy and abolished the Temporal power of the Papacy by abolishing the Papal States, and sowed in Italy the seeds of Liberalism and Freethought, which the subsequent reaction was never wholly able to eradicate.†

The European reaction which overthrew Napoleon and restored the Temporal Power, also tried unsuccessfully to restore the Spanish Inquisition. The Popes returned to Rome from captivity resolved at all costs, to fight the French Revolution to a finish. Henceforth, republican and freethinking France was *the* enemy—"The eldest son of the Devil," as an ultramontane Catholic writer called her. (An allusion to the old pre-revolutionary title of the French Kings, "the Eldest Son of the Church".) As already remarked, the first thing they did on their

† In Spain, that other clerical stronghold, the French abolished the Spanish Inquisition and discharged a similar role.



return, was to restore the ultra-reactionary Jesuit Order to its old position. In Rome the Popes restored medieval conditions of life, and banned all such modern innovations as railways, telegraphs and gas. Whilst throughout the world in general they allied themselves with the blackest reaction, in particular with the infamous "Holy Alliance" of Russia, Austria, and Prussia (1815-48), that "gaoler of liberty."

From 1814, the date of the return of the Papacy to Rome, to 1870, the date of the proclamation of Papal Infallibility, a merciless struggle raged unceasingly between clericalism and the secular anti-clerical forces unleashed by the French Revolution. If one wishes to-day, to recapture the violent hatred of clericalism in general, and of the Jesuits in particular, which marked that age, one should turn to the pages of Eugene Sue's famous anti-clerical novel, "The Wandering Jew," or to the impassioned denunciations of the great French historian, Jules Michelet.

Michelet's famous denunciation: "If you stop the man in the street, the first passer-by, and ask, 'what are the Jesuits?' he will immediately reply 'the Counter-Revolution,'" aptly sums up the general viewpoint of the whole anti-clerical generation between 1814 and 1870.

The high-water mark of this two generation long struggle between clerical reaction and the French Revolution was reached in the European Revolution of 1848. One of the results of that famous "year of revolutions" was the flight of the Pope and the temporary proclamation of a Roman Republic under Mazzini and Garibaldi.

More dangerous still in the long run to the Papacy, was the appearance in that self-same year of a new and dangerous "heresy" destined to cause Rome much concern between 1848 and 1948, Marxian Communism; for Marx and Engels issued their famous "Communist Manifesto" in that year. Incidentally, even before Marx and Engels had made their historic pronouncement the Papacy had already warned the church against the new enemy.

For, on September 11th, 1846, the then newly enthroned Pope Pius IX (1846-78) proclaimed: "Communism is completely opposed to the natural law itself, and its establishment would entail the complete destruction of all property and even of human society." A denunciation to be frequently repeated from 1848 to 1948.

However, the tide of anti-clericalism continued to spread, and in both the intellectual and the political spheres the Vatican suffered defeat after defeat, culminating in the loss of most of the Papal States themselves in 1860, when the Kingdom of United Italy was formed in the teeth of Papal denunciations. Thereafter the Pope could only cling precariously to Rome itself with the aid of a French garrison.

Something had to be done. The Papal answer to the anti-clerical menace was proclaimed when Pius IX called a General Council of the Church at the Vatican in 1869-70. Upon July 18th, 1870, the Pope proclaimed the Dogma of Papal Infallibility; the Pope, when he speaks as Pope (the limitation should be noted carefully) on "Faith and Morals," cannot err, and it should, incidentally, be noted that in the Catholic scheme of things, "Faith and Morals" between them can be made to cover most human transactions.

The Papal Decree of Infallibility, properly understood, was the answer of the Papacy to the French Revolution, that is, its *real* causes belonged to the sociological rather than the theological domain. The Popes contraposed their own dictatorship over the Church to the growth of Democracy in the Secular sphere, in a fast moving age

the Church could now move quickly freed from the cumbersome ecclesiastical machinery of a more leisurely age. Pius IX himself remarked at the time, "I am Tradition."

But ecclesiastical dictatorship was something more, it was the assertion of a new principle which was soon to find imitators in the secular political sphere. For on July 18th, 1870, the "Leader Principle" was first proclaimed, to be widely imitated by the Fascist Dictators of the following (20th) century. Ecclesiastical Fascism was born in 1870, the Totalitarian Dictatorship of the Pope. It was the old master at the Vatican and none other, who taught the Catholic-trained Fascist Dictators of our own day—Hitler, Mussolini and Franco, the secret of their trade.

F. A. RIDLEY.

## THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN RUSSIA

MR. B. M. SUMNER'S "Survey of Russian History" (Duckworth, Second edition, 1947, 18s.) is a penetrating study of that masterful Soviet State. Mr. Sumner is Warden of All Souls College, Oxford, and rarely obtrudes his personal convictions but allows the facts to speak for themselves. Thus, free from bias, while revealing an expert acquaintance with Russian topography, social, religious and economic conditions, with an appreciation of the remarkable achievements of Russian writers in the nineteenth century, our author has composed a work which is likely to prove a standard history of enduring value.

Among the innumerable matters dealt with is a discriminating appraisal of the Russian Church. Sumner notes that the Soviet Union was the earliest State to be established on purely secular principles. And, indeed, the older Russian revolutionary parties had always regarded the Orthodox Greek Church as a support of Tsarism with all its iniquities and oppressions. So, with the overthrow of the Romanov autocracy, the Church, which buttressed theocratic despotism was certain to suffer.

Also, as our historian observes: "The fact that many leaders of the Church supported the Whites in the Civil War and Allied intervention, gave further grounds for identifying Orthodoxy not only with reaction in the past, but with counter-revolution in the present. The Catholics in the Russian Empire were mainly Poles . . . while the international character of Catholicism accentuated Soviet hostility. The Moslems, some 20 millions in all, were subject to pan-islamic and anti-Russian influences, especially in Central Asia, the Communist reconquest of which involved a bitter struggle against Moslem vested interests, with some support from across the frontiers. Here there was, however, one notable change in that Turkey, under the new secularist regime under Mustapha Kemal ceased to act as a powerful magnet to Russian Moslems."

A complete reconstruction of society and the creation of an educated peasantry and proletariat were essential to the ideal State contemplated by Lenin. Above all, religion, "the opium of the people," must be banished from the schools and religious seminaries. Payments to clericals were suspended, churches were temporarily closed and the clerical supporters of the counter-revolution imprisoned, and sometimes put to death. But when the anarchy occasioned by the Civil War was ended and the Soviet system made secure, anti-religious activities decreased. Direct attack was soon superseded by the licensing of churches and other indirect methods. Also, heterodox sects such as the Baptists and other



Dissenters were granted greater freedom than they enjoyed under the Tsar, as their increase was deemed likely to weaken the Orthodox hierarchy.

But at the period of the first five years' plan in 1929 with its rapid drive towards collectivism, the Soviets resumed their onslaught on the Church. Unfortunately, the Government provision of 1918 which allowed liberty for both atheistic and theological propaganda was rescinded, and the latter rendered illegal. Later, under the Constitution of 1936, electoral rights were granted monks and priests of every religious creed while complete freedom of sacred worship was restored. Marital and family relationships of old time were resumed and Sunday observed as a day of rest. There were local attacks on the clergy in 1937-38 but, as a rule, the bitter enmity of earlier years was a thing of the past.

Naturally enough, in a country with an enormous preponderance of illiterate peasants religion retained much of its vitality in rural areas. In 1937, the President of the League of the Godless estimated that, "in the towns about two-thirds of those over sixteen were unbelievers, but in the villages perhaps only about one-third." But, as Sumner says: "At the same time the fact must be faced that it is probable from Soviet figures that there were in 1941 ten times fewer Orthodox churches than in 1900, and at the very least six times fewer of the secular clergy, while monks and nuns had disappeared. Much the greater part of the drop seems to have occurred since 1928."

With Hitler's invasion, Christian and Secularist alike immediately responded to their country's call. This attenuated the stigma attached to the Church as the agent of foreign enemies of the Soviet State. Henceforth, antagonism of the administration towards the clericals lessened and, with Stalin's approval, a Patriarch was elected in 1943. Moreover, a growing appeal was made to old-time traditions and modern Russia's indebtedness to the past. For the missionaries from Byzantium, who introduced Greek Christianity into Kiev Russia in the tenth century, brought with them a tincture at least of the superior culture of Constantinople which itself had preserved much of the civilisation of Pagan Rome.

Moscow's conversion resulted from the relationship of Kiev's commerce with Byzantium and Bulgaria. Its Prince was baptised in 988, and then began a Christian persecution of Paganism. But the Roman Pope and the Greek Patriarch were soon at variance, and when the cleavage came between the two churches, Russia adopted the Greek cult. In contrast to medieval Catholicism, Russia "knew no monastic orders, no canons regular, no friars, no crusades, no chivalry, no challenge by the spiritual power of claims to supremacy by the secular power, and no philosophic or scientific inquiry."

There was little resistance against the Christian evangelists. Still, as Sumner notes, while there was no organised Pagan priesthood with vested interests to defend, yet, "The mass of the population even when nominally Christian, for long retained their old customs and beliefs. Sorcery, magic, witchcraft and omens still held sway almost as strongly, it appears, in the sixteenth century, as in the thirteenth, when a church council (1274) had to insist that no one should be ordained priest who had previously practised sorcery."

More useful than her creed, however, Byzantium conferred her legal code, her art, her writing, and her world outlook on Russia. Little of Russia's early

literature survives. Her folk songs and legends were transmitted by memory and the peasants' country dances and sports were denounced by the clergy as pestilent survivals of heathendom.

As the years rolled away the Russian Church became a subservient part of the administrative appliances of the Tsarist State and dissenters were severely penalised. Under Catherine the Great and Alexander I, however, toleration prevailed, but under his successor, Nicholas I (1825-55) membership of the Orthodox Church was almost obligatory. As Sumner writes: "The Church became identified with reaction and its official trinity of autocracy, orthodoxy and nationalism. Thus, all the nineteenth century revolutionary, or socialist movements were, as in most European countries, bitterly opposed to the Church, and the liberal elements when not actively hostile, favoured drastic reforms."

In 1917 the Church still remained obscurantist and the projected reforms of 1905 were set aside as soon as the reactionaries recovered power. Had the suggested reforms been carried, the Church might have survived. But Crown and Church alike proved impervious to reason. So in 1918, the Bolsheviks disestablished and disendowed the Church. Tikhon, the Patriarch, excommunicated them, but no one seemed a penny the worse.

T. F. PALMER.

## DOES DETERMINISM IMPLY FATALISM?

LET us try to get this question clear.

Almost all Freethinkers are determinists. But by no means all Freethinkers know why. We are determinists because in actual life we cannot dispense with determinism. We cannot perform the simplest action without assuming that, given a specific cause, a specific effect will follow. I strike a match to light a fire. Why? Because I find by practice that friction ignites a match, and that contact with a lighted match ignites paper and wood. I agree to address a Freethought meeting. Why? Because I find by practice that discussion with Freethinkers is pleasant, and that even non-Freethinkers are sometimes open to reason. In both cases we get cause and effect. The reasons for assuming it in human affairs are as good as those for assuming it in nature.

In this way a determinist philosophy is built up. Note that its basis is entirely practical and empirical. In the words of W. K. Clifford (who cannot be suspected of being a Marxist, or of having "listened-in" in 1872 to anything said in Russia after 1917) the truth of science "is not that which we can ideally contemplate without error, but that which we may act upon without fear." We know that specific causes lead to specific effects as far as our observation goes. We are not entitled to say that the same must be true of events too small or too remote for any observation possible to us.

Now the fatalist takes a leap. He infers that, since determinism holds good within the limits of observation, it holds good from beginning to end of the cosmic process and in the minutest particulars—that nothing whatever, in short, could be other than it is.

Fatalism cannot be proved by observation or experiment. No matter! Let us, for the sake of argument, assume it true. My contention is that if it is true, if events are unalterably fixed in the minutest detail from all eternity, then "cause" and "effect" in the everyday world become unmeaning. For what do we mean by



cause and effect? Simply that if A is, then B will be; or that, if A had not been, B would not be. But in the fatalist's world there is no "if." From all eternity everything was certain to be. On that showing, nothing can make anything more certain than it already was!

Mr. Yates contests this. He argues that, even though the chain of events was predetermined from eternity, one event may have been fated to cause another. I confess I can attach no meaning to this. It seems to me like the Christian argument that, though God pre-ordains everything from eternity, yet we are responsible for our actions. Obviously, if God pre-ordains all, he is responsible and not we. I am not the author of my actions, but a puppet dancing on strings held by God. If we abolish God, but leave in his stead something called fate, I cannot see that it makes any difference to the argument. If fate predetermined me and the matches and the fuel and the fire, what meaning is left in the statement that I light the fire? I do nothing: the whole process was predetermined a billion years ago, and now merely "goes through the hollow form of taking place."

For my part, I do not believe in either God or fate. Each seems to me an equally arbitrary hypothesis. I believe in matter and in the laws of matter which we discover by generalisation from experience. Those laws are not agencies independent of matter; they are ways in which matter, so far as we can observe it, behaves. We prove them by acting on them, whether we are dealing with inorganic matter or with matter organised in living things and human societies. But, as Clifford points out, we have no reason to regard the laws of nature (or matter) as absolutely true, nor should we have any means of knowing it if they were. Matter is not a passive substance propelled by agencies external to it. It is itself an agent—the only kind of agent we know. Every particle of matter as molecules or atoms or protons or electrons or neutrons. And there is no reason why an agent, while following in its general behaviour a pattern common to its kind, should not on every occasion of acting show a little peculiarity that marks that occasion as unique. This does not contradict determinism; statistical aggregates will still exemplify natural laws. But it *does* contradict fatalism, and it *does* make each event a real cause, not a mere shadow thrown by almighty fate.

Long ago old Epicurus, the greatest Freethinker of antiquity, felt his way to some such solution in his famous doctrine of swerve. Modern physics seems to have come back to something similar in its theory of indeterminacy in the electron. When ancient and modern scientists thus converge, I hope an ordinary Freethinker may be allowed to give a provisional assent without inviting nonsensical gibes about an "obligatory party line" and all the rest of it.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON.

## THE SPIRITUAL WEAPONS OF THE CHURCH

" . . . a strategy, in which the lie, the garbled word or fact and trickery have come to be accepted weapons of offence which some people wield with the skill of professionals, boasting even of their competence."—(The Pope in his Xmas broadcast on December 24, 1947.)

IN the later part of April, 1948, the Rumanian paper *Timpul* published an article, *The Vatican Espionage Service*, which brought to light some interesting details of the "spiritual activities" of this Catholic general staff.

On April 16, a Telepress report from Rome stated that the United States and the Vatican had concluded a secret agreement, under which the U.S. pledged to support, through the State Department, the Catholic clergy throughout the world; the Vatican, on the other hand, promised to step up its campaign against liberalism all over the world. This meant the reorganisation of the Vatican's intelligence activities.

In 1946 the Pope had entrusted the Dominican friar Morlion, a Belgian, with the modernisation of this spy ring and its merger with the Jesuit espionage network. The central intelligence department of the Vatican is headed by Janssen, another Belgian and head of the Jesuit order. His deputy is Montini, the acting Vatican Secretary of State, and his assistants are Schneider, the administrative director of the central Jesuit espionage bureau, and Morlion, director of the "Centro d'informazione pro Deo" (C.I.D.).

The central intelligence department is subdivided into branches and sections dealing with the various countries. One of the main branches is the so-called "Special Division" operating under the signboard of the C.I.D. press agency. Similar divisions have been set up in the C.I.D. units in all parts of the world; the one in New York is under the personal direction of Cardinal Spellman. The "special division" in Austria (Innsbruck, French zone) is directed by the rector of a Jesuit College, in Coblenz (Germany) by the Catholic priest Poelart who is also director of the Catholic Press Agency.

Vatican intelligence agents are instructed to worm their ways into progressive organisations and to spread calumnies against governments hostile to Marshall Aid. Ever since 1946 Vatican espionage operations have been financed almost entirely by the U.S.A.; incomplete data reveal that in 1947 Washington spent about 500,000 dollars for this purpose in Europe alone.

The training of skilled intelligence agents has always been given much attention. The present writer, many years ago, was contacted by one who had been educated for work in Russia. He not only spoke a flawless Russian, but went there as a highly skilled technician, i.e., under the guise of a first-rate expert. Promising students of Catholic colleges and Jesuit institutes are selected for special courses in the methods of intelligence work. The central espionage department has organised a higher school of espionage, disguised as the Institute of Journalism of the C.I.D. Spies dispatched to Eastern Europe undergo a special training course at the Pontificio Istituto Orientale in Rome (and then at the "Russicum" Theological College).

With his subversive organisations at work, the Pope in his Christmas message claimed that the Holy See "is foreign to any sort of temporal consideration." This assertion, as can be seen, is equally insincere as is the heading of this article.

## THERE WAS ONCE . . .

A MAN OF FAITH. One day he set out along the Path to Heaven. After walking for some time he became enveloped in a thick Fog and lost his way completely. He groped onward saying to himself: "Surely the Fog must soon clear away." But it did not. The further he went the more dense it became.

And so he starved to death in the Darkness.

W. H. WOOD.

TOM HILL.



## ACID DROPS

"The Record," a Christian publication relates a story of a boy campaigner listening to an "unkempt dishevelled blasphemous speaker" in Hyde Park. Suddenly the 19-year old Christian campaigner, without a word, pushed the speaker off his platform and castigated the crowd for allowing the dirty one to blaspheme. The Christ-like humility of the young campaigner was very touching. Why is it that non-Christian speakers are always dirty, untidy, and blasphemous? Even if it were so, and they talked sensibly, it would be more tolerable than an impudent Christian youth pushing a man off his platform so as to talk Christian nonsense. We are not surprised that "The Record" asserts that it would like to see more of that type of campaigner.

It is in the true line of Christian intolerance.

A woman was sentenced to death in a Dublin Court for the murder of another woman in a church. It appears to have been a holy mess up. The accused woman said she was praying in church when the other woman entered and hit her on the head with a hammer. In self defence, she took the hammer from the attacker and struck back with it several times—causing the woman's death. It seems to have been a sordid affair, but it does enhance the value of prayer or the restraining influence of Christianity. As one woman is dead and the other is to be hanged, the stage is set for continuing the feud in heaven—with spirit hammers.

Farthings wrapped in silver paper to resemble six-pences were found in the collection at a Hove church. It need not necessarily have been a Christian trick to pull a fast one over Our Lord. It may have been payment for the estimated value of services rendered, and wrapped in silver paper to distinguish it from the offertory coins. Generosity and modesty are hall marks of Christian influence and that makes the latter suggestion the more likely explanation.

Whatever else was dinned into our ears about religion in the army during both world wars, one thing above everything stood out, and that was the intense religiosity of the Catholic soldier; he always went to mass, or to church, or both, and never missed fasting, of course. There was no way of checking these statements, but lately the "Universe" has been publishing letters from men and women in the Forces which show the reverse side of the medal. Things are pretty bad abroad, but one writer also points out "that things are not so good here at home." In fact, "any excuse is good enough to exempt a man from attendance" either on Church Parade or to see the padre when he should; and the way this pans out is that the young soldier is now beginning to feel that being in the Army actually means for him a dispensation from going to a religious service. It looks as if there would be precious little religion anywhere if it was not to provide parsons and priests with jobs.

However, one writer has an easy way of bringing in the backsliders—give them very severe "penances." Well, well. If that doesn't larn 'em nothing else will. But how would it be proposed to deal with the soldier who prefers the penance to the religion?

Still another way of converting England to Romanism has been given by Cardinal Griffin. It is like all the other ways, simplicity itself. All every Catholic has to

do is to bring a non-Catholic with him to church and, hey presto! England will go right over in a generation. We have no doubt that the Cardinal is in deadly earnest, but anybody who can believe in the average Catholic miracle will believe anything.

One of the Sunday evening speakers on the radio gave us an account of his life in a series called "In my experience"—which was particularly boring and quite worthless from any point of view; it must have appealed to the authorities because the speaker told us how he had no religion at the age of nine and was an Atheist for many years after. Naturally, as he grew older, he found God, and he confidently told his hearers that only by finding God can they be saved from the awful things which are happening all round us. Nothing tickles us so much as these fully-fashioned Atheists at nine years of age—we have an idea that Mr. C. S. Lewis, in his own opinion a great infidel slayer, was also an Atheist at a tender age—who so quickly find God as soon as they reach maturity. Their vanity is colossal; if it were not, they would understand that their naive "confession" forms a subject more for amused contempt than anything else.

Advertising the Church in the same comprehensive way as Beecham's Pills are advertised, is one of the proposals made by Christian "boosters" to get the religion of Christ accepted by the people of England; it is only fair to add however, that there are quite a number of Christian people who bitterly resent dragging modern publicity methods into the Divine Camp. At the Church Assembly recently, there was some hot opposition to the proposals, though a Mr. B. A. Best insisted that the people of England had to be educated to the church-going habit, and he was eventually supported by a majority vote in favour. We should fancy, however, that it is far easier to swallow a proprietary pill or even castor oil than some of the teachings of the Church, no matter how these last were advertised.

The "Church Times" has been saying hard things about the kind of films which the Church of England will shortly let loose on a suffering public for its delectable conversion. "Films based on the Gospel narrative," it says, "frequently descend from the inadequate to the detrimental, and from the detrimental to the heretical." And it goes on to point out how the film makers "improve" on the wonderful Gospel, inventing scenes and dialogue, and inserting "fictions"—just as if the Gospels themselves were not fictions, anyway. In any case, the "Church Times" is very uneasy about it all, and is by no means certain that the public will wait for hours in queues to see some version of the life of Jesus as they would and did for films like "The Wicked Lady," or "Forever Amber."

The law governing the relationship between man and woman in Czecho-Slovakia has been changed, and henceforth a wife may retain her maiden name or agree with the husband on some common family name. Marriage may still be solemnized in a church, but the parties must undergo a Civil marriage before an accredited government official. Divorce will also be made easier, and may now be obtained by mutual agreement. Another step forward in the emancipation of women. How long is "Christian" England to lag behind?



# "THE FREETHINKER"

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

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

A. R. WOOD.—Thanks for your interest. We can always send further supplies of "The Freethinker" for re-distribution.

C. E. BOUGHTON (Norwich).—The assertion by Dean Inge will be found in "Science, Religion and Reality" (page 357), a collection of Essays, edited by J. Needham, and published by Sheldon Press.

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

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

Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.

## SUGAR PLUMS

We are surprised that so few Christians do not publicly declare their indebtedness to the Devil, who has played such an important part in the scheme of things. It was Satan that tempted Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge, raising human beings above the brute level. The priesthood in particular should be more than grateful to him; he has kept them busy for years and in terms of hard cash, very profitably. We think that a monument should be raised to the Devil. After all, we praise the Lord, who created us in a state of ignorance, but ignore Satan who dispelled that ignorance. Christians should surely honour him.

The Nottingham Branch N.S.S. will have a visit from Mr. J. T. Brighton to-day (November 28), who will speak on "Miracles and Medicine," in the Co-operative Hall, Parliament Street, Nottingham, at 7 p.m. The local branch is a young one, but it has enterprise and energy behind it and should be encouraged by the many Freethinkers in the area. With Mr. Brighton, the platform will be well served and an interesting and instructing evening can be promised. Admission is free.

On Wednesday, December 1, Mr. T. M. Mosley, Secretary of the Nottingham Branch N.S.S., will meet Mr. J. Bothams, President of the Nottingham Spiritualist Society, and debate the question, "Is communication with the Departed possible?" The debate will be held in the Mechanics Literary and Debating Society Hall. Further details, not included in the notice sent to us, can be had from Mr. T. M. Mosley, 63, Valley Road, Carlton, Nottingham.

Lucian's "Dialogues of the Gods" are always entertaining, and when collected and formed into plays, they lose nothing of their originality but if anything, are more readable. Rather ingeniously, G. E. O. Knight, the late Editor of the war-time monthly "Questions and Answers" and adaptor of Greek tragedies, has pieced together two plays of Lucian which make most interesting reading; the first Charon surveying the world with Hermes from soap boxes, and the second with the spinner of fate, Clotho, interviewing the Shades driven by Hermes into the Netherworld. The conversations are amusing and up-to-date, translated from the Greek in the best Lucian style. Copies can be obtained from G. E. O. Knight, 92, Maygrove Road, Kilburn, N.W., for 6s. 6d. post free.

## A DOCTOR ON RELIGION

### II

IN his book, "Why Believe?" Dr. A. Rendle Short asks two questions—among others—"Why believe in God?" and "Why believe in Jesus Christ?" He has of course no difficulty in answering both, and probably would be quite surprised if told that his argument, or reply, is based on sheer ignorance and credulity.

Never having properly understood the arguments against teleology (though it is quite probable that he has never seen them) he proceeds as if it had never before been really discussed. All he does is to show the world and what is in it, and then triumphantly points out that "every animal and every plant is in itself a miracle of structure." There can be only one cause—"the creative act of God." And that is how, not only is the existence of God proved, but the "creative act" of God. Here is a medical man who talks as if he had never risen in argument further than the average nun or Salvation Army lassie.

It seems to me useless seriously to discuss the many problems connected with the Universe with anybody, even a doctor, who has never gone beyond the kind of mentality which proclaims that everything is explained by the three words, "God did it." No one can possibly explain the forces in Nature, all we can hope is to describe them correctly; and this is no explanation. I can tell you how we get an electric current and why we get an electric light—but why electricity at all? Why, given certain conditions, should there be an electric current? What kind of a reply is, "God did it?"

And needless to say, Dr. Short flounders more than ever when he touches, as he is obliged to do, "evolution." "There is," he tells us, "a plain record in this sense"—the sense of a designer—"in the first chapter of Genesis beginning with fish and ending with man." Evolution ended with man—God said so. It is all in Genesis. What some of our great evolutionists would say if they read this kind of twaddle, I hesitate to say; probably they would just ignore Dr. Short.

Perhaps he felt this himself for he proceeds to tell us that (in spite of Genesis) Darwinism might "quite well be by act of God, just as a dressmaker may take an old dress material and turn it into a new 'creation.'" Then feeling perhaps he was touching upon something he was quite incompetent to deal with, he hastens to inform his readers that "many modern scientists, quite apart from any Christian apologetic, have developed grave doubts about the adequacy of the Darwinian theory as an explanation." And he sends readers to those antedeluvian "scientists," Mr. Douglas Dewar and Sir Ambrose Fleming, faithful relics of the bygone Victorian Protestant era when Evolution was just beginning to make headway against the combined might of religious obscurantism.

Of course there are difficulties in Darwinism—nay, in the whole theory of Evolution. How can it be expected that in, comparatively speaking, a few years the whole wonder of change and development in the Universe can be adequately accounted for? Even in thought it is impossible to grasp the marvellous conception of a Universe packed with strange and wonderful drama so vast that we have had to coin the word "infinite" to describe it. It may be that the Universe is finite but no one has shown it. In any case no scientist has ever said that he can explain everything—that modest claim



must be left to God Almighty, and such faithful henchmen as Dr. Short.

But it is one thing to say something and quite another to prove it. To say "God did it" is merely to repeat three meaningless words—though I am ready to admit that they will be swallowed by most of the audience for which Dr. Short is writing. So, harping all the time that we cannot properly account for many things in nature—such as the markings on a butterfly's wings, or sunsets, or colours, and so on, Dr. Short asks, "What is the explanation?" and in the same breath answers it "Why, God." And he really believes he has now fully explained all Nature's mysteries. You see beauty in Nature and ask, how can we account for it? Why, it was all "created" by God. You, then, as Dr. Short does, turn from God to man and ask, how can you account for "man's sense of God?" The answer is that "probably," early man "was given revelation or intuition of the existence of God." It is all so very beautiful, wondrous, and simple. Only this theory does not account for the men who have literally no sense of God—like myself.

Then there is God in history. God found the wonderful world he "created" in a few days, "so depraved, that a Deluge was necessary to clean things up." There is no doubt whatever about the Deluge—only this time it is not a mere statement that God did it, for it can be found in a book, and that ought to settle it once for all. Of course, the book is God's precious Revelation to sinful Man. How do we know that it is a revelation? Well, the Church says so. How do we know that the Church has the right to say so? Because God gave it the right in the same book. Thus the Word is proven by the Church and the Church is proven by the Book and everybody—but a handful of blatant infidels—is satisfied. It is a glorious piece of logic.

But naturally we cannot expect Dr. Short to stop at God Almighty. That might do for Theism but not for a Christian; so he proceeds to show us that Jesus Christ is exactly what the Supreme God must be on earth, God Almighty in person, in fact.

Nothing is easier than to show that there really was a Jesus Christ—and here I must say frankly that when I read the arguments of some of our Reverent Rationalists as well as of those, not quite as reverent perhaps, but equally sure that there was a Jesus Christ, I am tempted to say that Dr. Short is in good company.

He insists that there is no difficulty whatever about the problem. All you need do is to go to "Paul's letters to the Church at Corinth" the authenticity of which, he claims, has never been doubted by any "serious historical critic." Well, they certainly have been doubted by Prof. Van Manen, who, equally certainly, is a "serious historical critic." But let that pass. All I need say at the moment is that if the historicity of Jesus could be established in this easy way, most modern Christians seem to be annoying themselves quite needlessly. Why are they still producing books and arguments against the easily defeated Mythicists? Why have even Rationalists to write books in defence of the real existence of Jesus? If Paul's letters prove that there had been a real Jesus, devils, miracles and resurrection and all, there is not and there never was any problem of Christianity. It was settled then and there for eternity.

Unfortunately, even Christians are not quite so sure about Paul's letters as is Dr. Short, and I shall try and show why in the next article.

H. CUTNER.

## CAUSE AND EFFECT

### I

SEEKING causes is like chasing rainbows; an endless pursuit, a perennial topic, an ambiguous term. John Rowland says that scientists seem to think of causation as something in the nature of statistical average. Archibald Robertson raises the question of how we come by our *knowledge* of causation. Both involve confusion and misunderstanding.

With Einstein giving greater accuracy than Newton, without the assumption of forces of any kind; with descriptive formula; we seem to be back with David Hume's invariable sequence. But with the question as to what our ideal symbols represent. For statistics are in no sense causal. To consider them as such is equivalent to giving up the old idea of cause and effect. They are descriptive; accurate indications of the course of events. Like any other mathematical method of computation, they may be considered as aids; they are useful, they are ideal, they are a tool.

Chapman Cohen's objection to Hume, in his "Materialism Restated," in arguing that causation is a two-way operation; as in the case of the billiard balls, with energy handed on and inertia handed back; seems to be sustained in Einstein's plus equals minus minus equals plus. Cohen's idea of causal relation only at the moment of contact, is ruled out, as with magnetism where there is no contact. His combination of factors is retained, the formula being descriptive of the whole of a given event; but his composition of forces is discarded in description of events in space-time. But without forces there is no cause and effect. The idea of causation is unnecessary.

Science only knows laws framed by scientists as explanations. A scientific law is a descriptive generalisation; a useful formula. The scientist is engaged in finding accurate ways of describing what happens. The purpose of scientific experiment is to find out what happens under given conditions. As Einstein said, science aims at an explanation with a minimum of assumptions. An accurate statement of the conditions and the result is a description of an event in space-time. In establishing the relationship between the conditions and the consequences the scientist is applying the principle of determinism without the assumption of causality.

On the other hand it can be quite definitely said that we have no knowledge of causation, for all this corroborates Herbert Spencer's argument that we only know effects and that our idea of causes is analytic. It is equally false to assert that such *knowledge* is acquired by trial and error. For what appears as metaphysical analysis is a reiteration of traditional notions, reinterpreted and modified maybe, but still postulating misconceptions based upon false analogies; and still retaining at least a suspicion of the old personification. So that a certain amount of primitive animism still lingers even in concepts of physical force.

Even if we discountenance misunderstanding of scientific terms, as for instance, inertia as a dead lifeless inertness, the concept of energy is based upon the analogy of the sense or feeling of effort, as when we pull a garden roller. We are actually measuring movement; the "force" being an assumption. The same with the concept of heat; based upon a psychological analogy. We feel heat, but a thermometer does not. In measuring temperature we are actually recording changes in pressure, expansion and contraction. Similarly, sound



waves are not sound to a deaf mute. We hear sound. The analogies are psychological if the standards are physical.

It is the same with our concept of time. As J. W. Dunne has pointed out, time is psychological and not physical; it is not a fourth dimension. The past is immutable, the present is change, the future, if it can be said to exist, does so in anticipation. So, for science, past, present and future, is memory, observation and calculation, respectively. In considering the quantum, indeterminacy, electron-wave form controversy, we come back to the operator himself. As Dunne remarks, we come back to the psycho-physiological laboratory. It also leads to a realisation that the instrument used determines the result achieved; and that the theory and method, though ideal, are part of the instrument used.

The result is a necessary consequence of the method used, and the method of metaphysical analysis throws us back on our self. The fallacy is plainly seen in an historical perspective. Mathematics has yet to outlive its mystical associations, surviving in so-called numerology. It still retains some of the character of number magic. History also gives corroboration with astronomy leading back to the astrological archons and angels, and their personal relations in the inspirations and aspirations and destinies of men. Such words as contemplation and desire are astrological in their derivation, metaphysically transcendental, intimate and sublime.

Tracing chemistry back we have the same psychological dilemma clearly seen in alchemy, with its mystical notions of affinity and communion. In the words of Eliphas Levi, it is the fixation of astral light by the sovereign magic of the will; or as C. G. Jung said, like psychological processes expressed in pseudo-psychological language. Corroboration is also seen in the historic philosophical argumentation, intuitionism, rationalism, empiricism, idealism, materialism. It was played out in the Berkeley-Hume controversy which ended with Kant. The problem is psychological. Kant's *Ding an Sich* is not a physical or metaphysical entity or thing in itself. It should be more literally translated as the matter of oneself.

Final corroboration comes from Archibald Robertson. Having destroyed all causes but one he is, himself, the cause. I strike a match, I make fire, he says. Of course, if he ignores the existence of the match, or of its material and structure, of the chemical composition of the matchhead, of something to strike it on, of the friction, of the oxygen in the atmosphere. The absurdity of the notion of causation is patent.

The fallacy lies in the method; of metaphysical analysis; of separating in fancy what cannot be separated in fact. As Chapman Cohen has often said, man cannot live in a vacuum. Analysis needs to be supplemented by synthesis. All the factors need consideration in generalisation. We not only need to consider how we come by our knowledge, but also what constitutes knowledge; and this can hardly be a synthesis of assumptions. It not only concerns how we think of the outside world, but also how we think of ourself.

H. H. PREECE.

## INTERVIEWING THE DEVIL

THE other day my friend Solly McManus, who is a journalist, was run over by one of those new cars for export. They took him to hospital and operated immediately; he's getting on all right now, though, I'm glad to say. On my last visit to the hospital he told me of a curious dream he had while under the anaesthetic.

He dreamt he was on a strange station, peering through the barrier at two luxury trains, one a red one and the other blue.

"On the left, sir," said the collector, as he clipped his ticket, indicating the red train.

Solly passed up the platform, glancing at the trains on either side of him. They both seemed equally well appointed; the red train looked rather crowded but the blue one was comparatively empty. The blue one's destination was marked as Heaven, while the red one was going to Hell.

He did not remember much about the journey except that his fellow passengers seemed an unusually friendly and intelligent lot. Arrived at his destination he asked how he could go to the Devil, with whom an appointment for an interview had been arranged. A super-modern but very comfortable taxi took him to a large, tall and equally modern building.

On presenting his professional card a smart looking blonde, dressed rather like an air hostess, conducted him to a lift which shot them up to the sixty-fifth floor. Following his guide through devious corridors he was at last ushered into the great man's presence.

Solly looked curiously at Satan, as that gentleman rose from behind a modern desk of black metal and chromium. The Lord of Hell was a small man with a bald head, black piercing eyes and a black pointed beard, with a figure inclined to stoutness. He reminded Solly a little of Lenin.

"Am I addressing the Prince of Darkness?" he asked, holding out his hand.

"Chief Executive of the Underground is the more usual form of address," replied the other, smiling slightly, as they shook hands. "More in accord with modern terminology, you see," he added. "Sit down, Comrade McManus."

"I thank you, sir—"

"Comrade."

"Pardon. Comrade Satan."

"So you have come to find out about us, have you, Comrade?"

"Yes, s—. I hope you'll spare me a bit of your valuable time, Chief."

"And what is it you'd like to know?"

"Well, what the hell—I mean, what's it like in Hell nowadays?"

"Conditions, eh? Well, we're making progress; I may say, considerable progress. You know of the terrible conditions we found here when, after our catastrophic defeat and expulsion from the other place, we were thrown down here, and subjected by the Triumvirate to every persecution, victimisation and oppression generally. We have, I am glad to say, largely recovered from that disastrous campaign, described by that great poet of yours, Milton—now, happily, with us. We have now an elaborate system of central heating gridded off the fiery regions and air conditioning supplied from the frozen circles. Of course, we get all the best scientists and engineers here; very few of such people ever go to Heaven."

"No, I fancy not; they never were a god-fearing lot. So the climate is A.I. here now."

"Don't let us speak ill of sinners; we live by them, we priests, unworthy as we are."—"The Gods are Athirst," Anatole France.



"Yes. Very equable. In that respect we are much better off in Hell than they are upstairs, where they're behind the times, very old fashioned, y'know, Comrade McManus."

"I dare say you're right. I often wonder who goes there these days."

"All the 'best people' go there, of course," replied the Devil. "That is, the privileged and the ruling classes. Let's see, who of your countrymen would be there? Well, of course, there's your empire builders, Clive of India, General Gordon, Cecil Rhodes, Teddy Roosevelt—ah, no, he was an American."

"Old Cromwell? Where's he?"

"Oh, he's down here, with us. Then all or nearly all the kings, lords and bishops go to Heaven, of course."

"I wonder what'll happen to old Hewlett, the Dean of Canterbury," soliloquised the journalist. "Which of you'll get him?"

"Well, of course, one side of him is not quite, er, authentic," responded the Chief Executive. "It would be abusing a confidence for me to tell you which," he added a little smugly.

"Don't. Let me go on guessing. Are you expecting any new arrivals?"

"Well, we hope to see Bernard Shaw here, about the time they will be celebrating Winston Churchill's arrival in the other place."

"Indeed. You seem to have some fun down here."

"Oh, we get along pretty comfortably, all things considered." The Devil got up and led Solly over to the window. "A fine view one gets from here, don't you think, Comrade McManus?"

"Magnificent," answered Solly, looking out at the large park with tall imposing buildings in the background. "Wonderful park and beautifully laid out, too."

"Yes, we're especially proud of our parks and squares, all open to the public, of course."

"And those fine buildings in the distance, what are they?"

"They're the new blocks of flats, the homes of the people," replied Satan with suppressed pride. "Of course, housing is one of our chief worries and we are still very short of accommodation. So many people come to Hell, you see."

"You're telling me! I noticed the train to Heaven was pretty empty, while they were standing in the corridor in ours. Your style of architecture is most impressive."

"Isn't it? There again, most of the best modern architects come to us, as do the artists. Our fine modern buildings make the old palaces of the privileged in Heaven look quite shabby and insignificant—at least so I'm told by those who come down here from there."

"Oh, so you've got the transfer system operating down here too, have you?"

"Yes, quite a few do and sometimes, I regret to say, the other way about, though not many, of course."

"Yes, I remember noticing some people at the station, changing a ticket on the red train for one on the blue."

"It does occur. That very large building over there to the left," said the Underground leader, pointing out of the window, "is our hospital. We have a magnificent free health and hygiene service here in Hell, and have largely mastered all the evils which the Triumvirate have sent down to torment our people."

"Good work," commented Solly. "There's some crowd of people in that park of yours."

"Take these glasses, Comrade," said Satan, handing the journalist a pair of binoculars, "and I'll point out

some of the interesting people with us. One thing about us in Hell, you know, is that old rivalries are forgotten; for the struggle is so crystal clear to us all now and who is our real enemy, that we are as one—united! You see those two arm-in-arm down there? That's Jean Jacques Rousseau and Karl Marx. And there's Lenin with Kautsky following just behind. There's Oscar Wilde and Whistler, quite inseparable. That's Trotsky sitting on the bench; he's cheered up considerably lately, since he learnt it won't be long now before his old friend Stalin is down here. That group over there is Voltaire and Bradlaugh chatting with Wyclif and Abelard. One thing we can say, Comrade McManus," concluded Satan, as he conducted his visitor to the door, "all the most interesting people come to us."

"So it seems," remarked Solly, as the Devil opened the door for him. "Well, Chief, I thank you for your indulgence. And have you a message for those on Earth?"

"Tell them, there's a good time coming for all, just down under. So many are booked for here, it'll be a comfort to them. Tell them the Tru—, or, shall we say, the facts."

"Sounds better," grinned Solly, "coming from the Father of Lies."

"Not a fact, Comrade. On our last hasty evacuation of our heavenly positions we had to leave most of our stores behind for the enemy, and they've made good use of 'em, by myself!"

"Well, so long, Comrade Satan, and thanks. Be seeing you."

"You sure will," shouted the Devil after him. "Your place is all ready for you down here."

P. C. KING.

## THE MAKING OF A SECULAR STATE

PANDIT NEHRU, the Prime Minister of the Indian Union, is always talking in air of making the Indian a secular state. It is depressing (although it is welcome) that such a famous man as Nehru, who is hailed up by some of the westerners as westing the east and easting the west, should make such bold and false and fraudulent declarations. A declaration, on its face value, is always nothing, unless it is, at least, empirically fulfilled.

Nobody can nod against the fact that India is essentially a religious country. Those who are trying to hide this open secret are merely fooling themselves. After the 60 years of struggle for independence, Indian politics failed to unreveal its religiosity.

To talk alone of the Government of India, one would have a loud laugh at the fate of secularism in this state, which, with all its divinity, exported the ashes of the great Mahatma Gandhi to various lands abroad to distribute in the various sacred waters. The Government, on its own accord, doing such a highly secular deed, probably, is the first in the history of humanity.

And Gandhi, the deified Mahatma, was undoubtedly a religious man. He lived with Bhagavadgeeta and died with Ha Rama. His deplorable death is a result of his undesirable living. Above all, the secular Government ceremonised the death of that man or prophet, or Jesus, to call by a suitable name, after the manner of the Vedas, reviving the deep-rooted ugly Indian Popism.

Rajaji, a staunch religionist and communitist and a close friend and relative of the Mahatma, is the Viceroy of this secular state. Nobody can forget his premiership at Madras where he tried to utilise all his power and



capacities to remove the achary, the name-tail of the Viswabrahmin community, as it is the tail-name of his community (Vishnava) also.

The Deputy Prime Minister of India, Mr. Patel, in a gathering, declared a few months back that he would erect a temple at Somanathpur, where, once upon a time, Muhammad Ghazni extinguished a Hindu temple. History inspires Patel to rebuild the ruins with the money of the secular state.

It is only yesterday that Mr. Katzu, the Governor of West Bengal, appealed in his Vijaya broadcast: "I pray with you that the great Devi (an Indian Goddess) should continue to inspire us with her wisdom and her enlightenment as well as her strength and valour." It is strange that there are certain Premiers and Ministers who are not free in their offices without weekly Devipuja.

Is this what all Nehru meant by secularisation of India? Really, it has become a fashion in India for the religionist ambition of secularisation, and for the capitalist ambition of socialisation, and for the despotist ambition of democratisation—there is much space. Mere deception of words works up miracles in India. God knows whither India travels!

R. VENKATADRI.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### GEORGE STEPHENSON

Sir,—I am working on a new biography of George Stephenson (1781-1848), the pioneer railway engineer. At this late date it is unlikely that there is much in the way of new material, but, in view of the fact that no life of him has appeared for many years, it is possible that there are unpublished letters. If any of your readers have such letters, and are prepared to lend them, they will be copied and carefully returned. They should be sent to me at 16, The Close, Radlett, Herts.—Yours, etc.,

JOHN ROWLAND.

### PRISON REFORM

Sir,—The reference in a recent number to religious services in prison has caused me to give the matter much thought, for it is one of the avowed objects of the N.S.S. to work for the betterment of the unfortunates who have to sojourn in our prisons, and to strive for the abolition of the death penalty.

It has been with a melancholy fortitude that I have waited for a propagandist effort on these subjects—and such fortitude is but poorly rewarded by the reference to an article written by so biased a writer that he did not trouble to get his facts straight before doing so—for the greater percentage of the general public know but very little of what happens inside our prisons, which simplifies the falsification of facts; and although the Prison Commissioners in their last annual report premise a peak prison population of 20,000 before the decline of post war instability, this number is but a very small percentage of our total national population.

It is now the accepted policy of the government to try to reform law breakers rather than to deter them from crime by cruel repression, and there can be but very little doubt amongst those who study the position that this reform is being practised in a sloppy and unrealistic way; for the first essential—careful classification of types—is still being ignored; and segregation of those types just does not seem to matter. In our prisons to-day, prisoners are not classified by the kind of crime they were sent to prison for, but by the number of times they have been in prison for whatever type of offence. And so we have cheek by jowl murderers, thieves, sexual offenders, shoplifters and dangerous drivers, all receiving the same treatment, and oftentimes that treatment aggravating the particular weakness of the individual.

To assert that invariably the prisoner gives his religion as C. of E. is obviously correct. In Ireland, R.C. would be the case, and in India, Hindu, I suppose. But what is the reason for this? Mainly because the atheistic argument is not sufficiently well known, or because a State-imposed education has left the average citizen in a position where he is unable to reason it all out for himself, without divorcing

himself from everything he has ever understood to be the truth.

Church services are well attended, but could one expect anything else when the alternative is to be locked in a cell until the service is over. Prison Chaplains are one with their brothers in arms—they give as little as they can for as much as they can—and experience shows them that their seed falls on stony ground, because the average prisoner offers small inducement to the "spiritual healer," even though the prison authorities, in company with many others, have a dogmatic belief that any religion is better than no religion, and that religion has an enlightening influence.

Until prisons are correctly socially graded, with the realisation of their purely secular nature, we shall have reason for a sense of national shame.—Yours, etc.,

BEN MARCATO.

## LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

### LONDON—OUTDOOR

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

### LONDON—INDOOR

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, November 30, 7 p.m.: "Psychological Aspects of Delinquency," The Hon. Mrs. S. EARL.

Rationalist Press Association (Alliance Hall, Palmer Street, S.W.1).—Monday, November 29, 7 p.m.: "Current Theories of Personality." Third Lecture: "Approach from Experimental Psychology," Dr. FRIEDA GOLDMAN.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "What is Wrong with Industry?—The Psychological Approach," Dr. J. A. C. BROWN, M.B., Ch.B.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: "Who was Shakespeare?—The Stratford Myth Exposed," Mr. WILLIAM KENT (Author, "Lift up Your Heads").

### COUNTRY—OUTDOOR

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.

Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barker's Pool).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. A. SAMMS and others.

### COUNTRY—INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (38, John Bright St., Room 13).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: "Immortality of the Soul, Myth or Fact," Mr. C. H. SMITH.

Blackpool Debating Society (46, Adelaide Street).—Tuesday, November 30, 7 p.m.: "Blackpool's Crisis," Mr. W. DYSON.

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m., Mr. H. DAY: a Lecture.

Glasgow Secular Society (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: "Will It Be War?" Mr. H. W. HENDERSON.

Halifax Branch N.S.S. (I.L.P. Rooms, 7, St. James Street).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: "Christianity and Communism," Mr. E. V. TEMPEST.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: "Benelux and European Union," Mrs. OLIVE RENIER.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12, Shaw Street, Liverpool, 6).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: "Socialism and Freedom," Mr. W. HAMLIN.

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: "Socialists and War," Mr. A. TURNER (S.P.G.B.).

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Parliament Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: "Miracles and Medicine," Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON (Vice-President N.S.S.).

SECOND-HAND BOOKS. Wants List Welcomed. Michael Boyle, 21 Rosslyn Hill, N.W. 3.



## AMERICAN PAMPHLETS

### THE SECRET OF CATHOLIC POWER.

By L. H. Lehman. Is it Religious or Political. 22 pages. Price 1s., post free.

### MIXED MARRIAGES

By L. H. Lehman. An authoritative exposition of the Roman Catholic attitude towards marriage between Catholics and non-Catholics. 24 pages. 1s. 6d., post free.

### 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.

### The Ideal Present

Take out a subscription for your friends. "The Freethinker" will be sent direct to any address for 6 months, 8s. 6d., or 12 months, 17s.

JUST ISSUED.

## HANDBOOK of the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

Vital Information  
for all Members  
and Freethinkers

32 pages.

7d. post free.

## 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 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.

## 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.

## LIFT UP YOUR HEADS

An Anthology for Freethinkers

by

WILLIAM KENT, F.S.A.

400 Quotations ★ Fully Indexed  
from 167 Authors ★ and Classified

Cloth 5s. Postage 3d. Paper 3s. 6d.

From all Booksellers

★ PIONEER PRESS ★

— THE N.S.S. —

## SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CARD

Merry  
Krishnas  
CELEBRATING  
THE BIRTH OF THE SAVIOR  
KRISHNA  
From DECEMBER 25 ADOM 1200 BC



Reduced facsimile

At the request of numerous readers we are re-issuing this novel and interesting seasonal greeting card.

◆◆◆

Price (with envelope) - 7d. each

PIONEER PRESS