

THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXIX.—No. 43

[REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL
POST OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER]

Price Threepence

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Belief and Unbelief

HISTORY cannot record, it can only guess the number of those who, through fear of persecution, have hidden their real opinions practised a constant and humiliating hypocrisy, and died leaving to their descendants a legacy of degradation and dishonour. Generation after generation people see the mental coward or hypocrite, loaded with honours, rising to the highest position in the State, his character extolled, and see at the same time the man who will not be silent branded as a criminal. In this way, the attitude of the independent inquirer and fearless speaker becomes identified in the general mind with the character of a "crank," a social sport, instead of being recognised as of the highest value to mankind at large. In the mental insincerities and weaknesses of to-day we witness the results of our Christian ancestry, the accumulated influence of a religion that has done its best to breed in us instincts that are deadly antagonism to the essential requirements of a progressive civilisation. All that Christian persecution has ever done has been to manufacture hypocrites instead of men. Force cannot create conviction, it can only establish prejudice. None of the Churches have ever realised intellectual honesty is a very essential part of good morality, and that if men are too great cowards either to face the issues before them, or risk a fraction of their worldly prosperity by speaking honestly, they are undermining the principal condition of a progressive ethic. There is nothing that braces one so as a sense of intellectual independence, and there is nothing that so demoralises as its loss. To those who have, and are, justified in having this sense of independence, all things are possible. To those who have it not—of such is "the Kingdom of Heaven."

One might ask "what is it in human nature that Atheism will not satisfy?" It does not deny the reality or the value of any of the virtues, on the contrary, it emphasises their importance and significance. It is true that the Atheist would arrange the virtues according to a different scale of value to that adopted by Christianity, but that is about all. He would place a deal less emphasis on self-sacrifice, and a deal more upon development. The group of instincts that cluster round the family, instead of being treated as a mark of our "fallen human nature" would be regarded as the soil from which nearly all the other virtues spring. Above all, instead of going through life constantly quaking over a supposed probable dissolution of morality, the larger knowledge that accompanies Atheism would make it plain that such a dissolution is a sheer impossibility. For morality is the condition of man's continued existence in an associated state, and can only disappear when society itself dissolves. The truth is then, that instead of Atheism belittling human nature it is enhanced and made supreme. It is surely one of the curiosities of controversy that a theory which proclaims that human nature is too weak to stand alone, and too poor to deserve respect if considered in

itself, should charge those who traverse this position with belittling mankind and robbing it of its dignity.

What is true of morals holds true of all else. It is really too late in the day for Christian preachers and writers to talk as though goodness and truth were in some special manner religious possessions. They are neither religious nor anti-religious, they are simply human, and human nature loses or benefits as they are ill or well appreciated. You cannot, it is often said, build life on mere Atheism. Neither can you build life on mere theism. Neither the belief in a god, nor a reasoned disbelief in a god are of great consequence in themselves. It is the implications therefore that become of profound importance. The conclusions drawn from the belief in God have for hundreds of generations kept human nature in chains by forging useless and obstructive customs, and developing habits of mind more or less inimical to progress. From the belief in God has drawn the conclusion that it was wrong to inquire into the secrets of nature, unlawful to gratify legitimate desires, that happiness was a delusion, progress a snag, and that man's chief duty was to place a supernatural incense with its own handiwork. The mere disbelief in a deity may not seem much in itself, but it certainly involves a rejection of all those delusions that have been like a cramp in the intellect, and the heart for so long, while not of the least valuable in the implications to be drawn from this position is that human development is due to human industry and co-operation, and that the forces that have carried us safely so far may reasonably be trusted to carry us still further.

Great is the power of words. People have been constantly reading these things, and persons constantly repeating them. Both may, therefore, easily believe these statements to contain nothing but the truth. It makes little apparent difference to a sturdy believer that these things are all demonstrably false. It is easy enough to prove that the Christian era deserves the name of the era of war rather than peace. It is plain that, as a consequence of Christianity, goodwill has not spread among mankind, that there never has been "Peace on earth" least of all among Christians. It is comparatively easy to reconcile men of different opinions on any subject except that of religion.

Here, then, is the present position. We have a religion which, on the one side, intelligent men and women find it impossible to accept without modifications and reservations that are a serious slight upon either their intelligence or their candour, and on the other side a number of bigots who, because of their bigotry, are able to read the other class a lesson in honesty. Apart from both is the Freethinker, with a conviction that reason is on his side, and makes for destruction of both. Every fresh attempt to rationalise Christianity makes, ultimately, for the growth of "Freethought," and a better life. In the beginning of gods they did almost everything. Nowadays, the great thing is to find them something to do. In the sciences, clearly there is no chance of employment. The chemists, the biologists, persist in going about their

labours, as though God did not exist, and sociologists and moralists follow their example. But the gods remain as idle as ever, and many of His worshippers are alarmed lest the gods be completely eliminated. They lead not neither do they advise. Gods and their followers are steadily dying out.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

THE STORY OF A CONSCIENTIOUS CLERGYMAN

II

WHEN Temple succeeded Dr. Jackson as Bishop of London, some of Headlam's friends suggested that the differences between Jackson and Headlam might be healed. Temple contributed to the heretical *Essays and Reviews*, and it seemed a reasonable supposition that he might now take a lenient attitude towards Headlam's "eccentricities". But when approached, Temple frowned on the Church and Stage Guild and, although he acknowledged the eminence of Shakespeare and Sheridan, his Lordship "insisted on the general evil influence of the stage and especially of the ballet, and urged that earnest moral men should 'cut it off', as Christ said the right hand was to be cut off, because it offended, and had offended the Church for centuries."

A deputation was then sent to Fulham Palace which included Headlam, Shuttleworth, Ben Greet and others. But Temple proved as intolerant to the theatre as the most narrow Puritan of the time. It is true that he questioned professional dancers who formed part of the deputation, concerning the nature of their calling, as ballet dancers were commonly regarded with the darkest suspicion by the ultra pious. He asserted that stage dancers were apt to inflame sexual desires among young men who witnessed their performances. Then, he was asked by one of the dancers, whether he objected to the dress or motions of the performers. The Bishop, states Bettany, replied: "Well—er—I understand that you wear tights and that some of them are flesh coloured, the colour of the human skin." "But, my Lord," she answered in prompt repartee, "some of us play the part of fairies; you wouldn't have fairies surely in a blue skin?" The Bishop looked up to the ceiling and pondered a moment. "I don't see why," he said at last, "so imaginary a creature as a fairy should not have a blue skin, or black for that matter."

For eleven years Headlam was refused a full licence as preacher, but with Benson's death, Temple became Primate and the Broad Churchman, Mandel Creighton, became London's Bishop. Then a full licence was granted, but in writing to a friend Headlam stated: "The Archbishop [Temple] has kept up his evil reputation by telling the Bishop that he refused the licence on the ground of the bad example I set by living apart from my wife . . . Of course he never gave any such reason and fortunately I have his reasons in his own writings and in print with his own permission. I have always thought you were all mad on the fairness of Dr. Temple, but I did not think he was quite so bad as he has turned out. However, after eleven years' waiting I have won."

Headlam's unconventional conduct still precluded preferment, and he was driven more and more into secular activities. Whether in the pulpit or on the platform, he continued to express the "Christian View of the Bradlaugh Case" in which he defended Iconoclast from the aspersions of his foes. His Guild of St. Matthew played its part in social affairs and Henry

George's *Progress and Poverty* completed his conversion to the Single Tax on landed estate, and Headlam's Guild became a Christian Socialist Church. Then, at the Leicester Church Congress in 1880, Prof. Symes and he joined in the discussion on "Existing Forms of Unbelief." Symes, who later took the Chair at Poote's lecture at Nottingham after his release from Holloway, told the Leicester Congress that he had "the honour of some slight acquaintance with Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant." Headlam himself very boldly asserted to the assembled clergy: "It seems to me that it is because the Christian Church has not got itself recognised as a society for the promotion of righteousness in this world that the Secular Society is so strong. The Secularists wished to leave this world better than they found it. Then if we desire the overthrow of secularism we must make people understand that the Kingdom of Heaven of which Jesus Christ spoke was not merely a place to which people were to go hereafter, but a divine society established in this world."

At one of the Guild meetings at Essex Hall, the irrepressible G.B.S. had his alleged doubts concerning his baptism set at rest when Headlam assured him that when "at the Great Assize, Christ returned to make up his jewels, Bernard Shaw would have to be accounted for." But there was trouble when Shaw delivered an address to the Guild entitled *Some Necessary Repairs to Religion*, when, we gather, he "ridiculed certain Old Testament stories, quoting especially Elisha and the bears and Jephthah's daughter and said that a religion which claimed to found itself on such tales could have no modern man's respect." So Headlam, who had presided at the lecture, sent a semi-apologetic letter to *The Times* in which he stated that while Shaw swept away antiquated theological fictions, his real faith in the divine was undiminished. While the Guild functioned, it served to liberalise thought. But with the advent of the I.L.P., the Fabian Society and, above all, the Christian Social Union, many of the Guild's adherents fell away so, in 1909, Headlam, then immersed in County Council work, determined to dissolve it.

The Church and Stage Guild was founded in 1879. A number of advanced clerics became members, while the literary and stage worlds were represented by Hermann Merivale, Charles Reade, Geneviève Ward and Charles Warner, among others. Augustus Harris was helpful, but Henry Irving stood aloof, though he later admitted to Ben Greet that: "People sometimes maintain that the Stage is indebted to me for the great esteem in which it is now held, but really did they know it, actors owe far more to that man Headlam."

Headlam stated that: "The objects of the Guild were to break down the prejudice against theatres, actors, music hall artists, stage singers and dancers, in those days only too common among Churchmen; to promote social and religious sympathy between Church and Stage; to vindicate the worthiness of acting and dancing as arts." These excellent objectives were given Ruskin's blessing, and their attainment was so largely secured that to-day it is difficult to realise the bitter Puritanism of Mrs. Chant and her supporters some sixty years ago.

From 1884 to 1893, Headlam conducted the *Church Reformer* which, like many other useful publications, was run at a loss. It was an advocate of Christian Socialism and the views it expressed were those he enunciated in a sermon preached in the Abbey in 1881 when the Modernist, Dean Stanley, invited him to preach there. Headlam declared that Christ's parables scarcely

ment life after death but desiderate an earthly Paradise " of a righteous communistic society in which all were to be fed as surely as the birds and clothed as beautifully as the lilies, of a real, genuine good news for the poor weary workers; the eternal life according to Jesus was to be enjoyed here, not merely hereafter; we are present inheritors and not only future heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven." What the fashionable congregation at Westminster Abbey thought of this startling deliverance must be left to the imagination. Even now, such heterodoxy would flutter pious people and much indignation be expressed.

Headlam's *Church Reformer* never possessed a large circulation. Its attitude was too sacramental to attract working class readers. Robert Blatchford's *Clarion*, however, had a far greater sale, but even that secular weekly died with the retirement of its Editor.

While a member of the Fabian Society, Headlam was never at his ease. A man of his enthusiastic and sacramental temperament could never be at home there. Moreover, as Sidney Webb stated to his biographer: "He was always afraid that we should become too prone to interfere by law with the freedom of the individual to live his own life as he saw it."

Headlam co-operated with Mrs. Besant on the old London School Board in the secular and progressive interest until that Body was abolished, and its functions transferred to the County Council. Later, when elected to the L.C.C., Headlam continued his strivings for educational efficiency despite official discouragement.

Among other laudable activities, his endeavours led to the establishment of the London Schools' Swimming Association. Another enterprise provided children with Shakesperian performances and every encouragement to play Shakesperian parts. As Bettany justly observes:

Tens of thousands were enabled to make the acquaintance of our national poet . . . to enter into a heritage which belonged as rightly to them as to the public schoolboy who takes Shakespeare for granted, or the student who uses him as a stalking horse for theories." Headlam himself dismissed Baconian speculation, and facetiously suggested that a real test of the authorship of the plays " would be for someone to read over their respective graves the text of the dramas commonly used by actor-managers and others in modern revivals. The one who turned first in his grave, whether Shakespeare or Bacon, plainly would be the author."

T. F. PALMER.

AN UNUSUAL BELIEVER

PROBABLY most of those who have no belief in the consolations of religion will have wondered at those of their contemporaries who are still apparently content to dwell within one or other of the religious folds. For instance, that brilliant young novelist, Mr. Graham Greene, is a Roman Catholic, and few who have a feeling for first-rate writing would for a moment deny the acuteness of his intellect or his literary sense.

And I have just read the autobiography of a young writer of a very different type, a man who describes himself as a twentieth-century Calvinist. Now, Calvinism is a creed which most of us would have thought to be moribund; but Mr. Jack Clemo, author of "Confession of a Rebel" (Chatto and Windus, 10s. 6d.), has quite liberally adopted the Calvinist position after having found other religious persuasions unsuited to him.

His book is fascinating reading, even to those who are totally unable to share his theological position. Starting as the more or less illiterate son of a labourer in the china-clay pits at St. Austell, Cornwall, he has lived all his life in a small cottage. Writing from his early 'teens, enduring the heartbreak of fifty-three rejections of books, he yet made a mark a year or two back with "Wilding Graft," an intense, deeply-felt novel which many of the critics compared to the work of Thomas Hardy, and, largely as a result of that book, he was given an Atlantic Award, during the tenure of which this autobiography has been put on paper.

Mr. Clemo's philosophy is difficult to define. He says that he regards himself as being largely anarchical in his outlook; he has little social sense; he finds his greatest satisfaction in playing simple games with the children of the neighbourhood; yet at the same time he can write poems (published in such well-known miscellanies as "Penguin New Writing") which for sheer depth of feeling are exceeded by few writers of our day.

From the religious point of view, Mr. Clemo will, I think, not object if I describe him as a very odd fish. He has accepted a Calvinist attitude of predestination; he has been sure of his own future—so much so, indeed, that he was certain that Great Britain would emerge victorious from the war, since his work had to be finished! Yet, at the same time, he is aware that he is working contrary to most of the intellectual currents of his day, and he finds it one of the queerest of the developments of his life that he should be in the list of a publisher who numbers Mr. Aldous Huxley, Lytton Strachey, and similar fashionable writers among his authors.

To Freethinkers, Mr. Clemo is, I feel, likely to be especially interesting as a typical example of the person to whom their philosophy appears not repellent but irrelevant. His nearest affiliation in English literature is certainly Mr. T. F. Powys, whose "Soliloquies of a Hermit" is a book which Mr. Clemo admits to be one of his favourites.

But, even though there is much about his general outlook which most readers of these columns will find well-nigh incomprehensible, I think that Mr. Clemo is a writer who deserves to be welcomed by all who can appreciate an independent mind. The long history of English literature can record many of these solitary souls, who do worth-while work that does not fit in with any of the schools of literature into which the scientific classifiers of books would try to confine writers. Bunyan, Swift, Blake, Mr. George Orwell—they are all of the fraternity of oddities. Possibly the Powys brothers are the superlative examples in our own day of this group of individualists. And Mr. Clemo will certainly now have to be added to the list. I for one, though I share few of his ideas, am glad to have the opportunity of welcoming him. I do not think for a moment that he will ever come around to anything approaching a Freethought or Rationalist attitude; but at the same time he is one of the most striking figures to emerge into something like literary eminence in the past few years. He is only a little over thirty years of age at the present moment; so, atom bombs permitting, he may do much in the next thirty years to establish himself as a really important figure in twentieth-century literature. But, if he did nothing better than this queer autobiography of his, I think that he would have a niche all his own in the great edifice of English literature.

JOHN ROWLAND.

ACID DROPS

When Christ told his followers that they could handle serpents and drink poison—"and nothing shall in any wise hurt them" (Cf. Luke x, 19. Mark xvii, 17, 18), he made things extremely difficult and dangerous for his believers in modern times. A Middle-West preacher during a service died after being bitten by a snake, and the latest example of over-confidence in Jesus Christ occurred in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where, according to the *Scottish Daily Express*, the Rev. Taylor Lee tried to emulate Christ's 40 days' fast, but died after a mere 30 days without food. There seems to be a moral in this, either the Rev. T. Lee did not have a good feed before he started, or his faith was not of the kind that moves mountains. Of course, he may even have been mistaken in thinking that Christ's 40 days' fast had something to do with going without food.

We can understand prison governors being in favour of retaining capital punishment, and one need not be surprised that prison chaplains are of a like opinion; after all, their trade is vitally concerned with the after death. What is, however, a continual source of surprise is that padres can condense so much bunkum in so few words, and that they can be so conceited as to imagine that their bleatings could possibly pass as commonsense. For instance, the Chaplains' memorandum to the Commission states that "Society may act on behalf of God, and has a God-given right to cheek wrongdoers . . ." another passage runs: "It is quite extraordinary the amount of religious solace a man receives on the scaffold." And how well is the typical religious attitude brought out in the phrase, "Fear of punishment is a deterrent to crime." We would recommend as compulsory reading a few chapters from *The Town Labourer* to find out how the fear of punishment prevented crime.

The pugilistic powers of the Rev. Tommy Burns would have been extremely useful in the fracas at St. George's, Bristol, where members of the National Union of Protestants interrupted the service protesting about the "idolatrous nature" of the Anglican service. Father Hughes must have been expecting trouble, for at his signal, his strong-arm squad girded their loins and went to do battle and quickly dragged an interrupter out and bounced him through the door; other priests frog-marched two other interrupters and had their robes torn in the process; and Mr. Perkins, secretary of the N.U.P., after a scrap managed to slide out at the cost of a torn collar and coat. To add to the interest the organist pulled out all his stops and played—as loud as he could—we cannot vouch for this—"Fight the Good Fight." Turning of the Cheek was not the order of the day, but a good time was had by all.

After the way in which Roman Catholic priests are depicted on the screen as angels with halos, and the only religion is Roman Catholicism, it comes quite as a shock to see the Spanish Inquisition shown up as the vile, foul horror it was in a "Knight from Castile." The producer made no attempt to whitewash it either. The conquest of Mexico by Cortez is the theme, but unfortunately he is depicted as a great soldier, and not, as in truth he really was—a murderous ruffian who slaughtered millions of people for gold and had, if anything far less sense of honour than a Hitler. But he was a good and faithful member of the Church,

The Church has again scored. Letters have been sent in hundreds begging that all meetings of U.N.O. should begin with prayer; and so, after a meeting, the legal committee under Dr. Kerno, one of the assistant secretaries, passed the proposal without dissent—not even from Russia—that the General Assembly should begin with a two minutes silence for private prayers and meditation. Persistent propaganda often is rewarded—as both Christianity and Communism have joyfully learnt.

Bishop Murphy (R.C.) is dead sure about the Devil. He claims that his Satanistic Majesty is now moving among the nations driving them to persecution—which really means, according to the Bishop, not allowing Roman Catholicism to collar everything. What we need is plenty of the Holy Ghost who, adds the Bishop, is "no longer quiescent" but "jet-propelled." He is in a "powerful dive." After this egregious piece of sheer bunk, we are told "to be drunk with the Holy Ghost." It looks as if that is the condition of Bishop Murphy.

Dr. Funder, who is an Austrian Catholic, has been giving details of religion in Russia, and claims that the Greek Orthodox religion there is no longer regarded as "the opium of the people." It is considered as a "welcome popular tonic" which the State can use to its own advantage. During the war, the Church helped the Red Army to the utmost, and many ecclesiastics received war decorations. The Government has now opened religious buildings and seminaries, and one church in every 48 square miles. Missionary activities are allowed, and the clergy now have full rights of citizenship. They are well paid and religious processions are now also allowed. And so religion has once again come into its own.

That near-heretic, Bishop Barnes, drew a full congregation, including fifty clergy to Birmingham Cathedral when celebrating his twenty-five years as Bishop, and that despite the solemn injunction by the more "respectable" Christians to boycott the service. The opinion of Bishop Barnes in his book *The Rise of Christianity* is so much at variance with the religion he upholds that we wonder how he can still hold out his hand for his wages or salary—or stipend. Indubitably, there is a different code of morality in Church life.

When speaking about the Rev. L. Snell's Church service for animals—in honour of St. Francis—Mrs. Snell said that the atmosphere of the service must have had some effect on the animals present. There was not an interruption, not even a howl from the dogs during the singing. This touching picture was somewhat spoilt by another newspaper report: "the only discordant note was the braying of a donkey!" Strange how the Ass looms so large in the Christian Mythology! The Founder is said to have been born next to one; he went to Egypt on one and rode to Jerusalem on two!

THINGS WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW—

When Arthur Horner, Communist Secretary of Mineworkers, stood to attention during the British National Anthem at the International Miners' Congress, was he honouring "God" or the "King"?

Was there any particular reason for appointing Sir Charles Scott (Roman Catholic) as architect for the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool, and Sir Edwin Lutyens (Protestant) for the R.C. Cathedral in the same city?

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

S. BERRY.—For "The Freethinker," 3s.
W. J. FREEMAN.—Thanks for cuttings.
A Dutchman, aged 28, would like to exchange correspondence with an English Freethinker of about the same age. Write in the first instance to Box 106, Pioneer Press.
T.S.—Thomas Paine was quite right in attacking Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. The Bible distinctly says that God spoke to Moses—and this is too much even for our modern bishops. The best book for your purpose is Foote's "Bible Handbook"—but you must master its contents.

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.

Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.

SUGAR PLUMS

There is just time to remind London readers that Mr. Glanville Cook, Editor of "The Rationalist" (Australia), will lecture to-morrow evening (Monday, October 24), in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, on "The Roman Catholic Church in Australian Politics," at 7-30 p.m. The Roman Catholic Church has for a long time been fishing in the muddy waters of world politics and this should add to the importance and attraction of Mr. Cook's subject. Admission is free.

The Lewisham & District Branch of the N.S.S. will hold its first meeting in The Hope Hotel, 73, Loam-Pit Lane, Lewisham, S.E.13, this evening (Sunday, October 23), at 7-15 when Mr. L. Ebury (Vice-President, N.S.S.) will lecture on "The Christian Myth." A very useful task for every branch member would be to induce an intelligent Christian friend to attend. Mr. Ebury is a well-known speaker on our platform and puts his message over clearly and pointedly. South London readers are asked to give this opening meeting their full support.

Accrington readers will be able to hear Mr. J. Clayton to-day (Sunday, October 23), in the King's Hall Cinema. He will speak on "The Question of Personal Survival." Those who are looking forward to another life, and those who are not, should make certain of attending. Questions and discussion follows the lecture and with an experienced speaker like Mr. Clayton, courteous treatment and good sense can be promised. The lecture begins at 6-30 p.m. and admission is free.

The Executive of the N.S.S. is always ready to send speakers to other organisations and in that connection Mr. F. A. Ridley will address the Oxford University Heretic Club on Wednesday, October 26, on "The Origins of Christianity." On Friday, October 28, he will speak to members of The International Friendship League in Wandsworth Baths, London, on "The Principles of Freethought." The Friday evening address is open to members of the public and will begin at 8 o'clock.

The Manchester Branch N.S.S. lunch hour meetings at the bombed site at St. Mary's Gate are now a much-sought-for local feature and good audiences assemble. Messrs. Billing, Woodcock, and McCull take turns on the platform and the variety of speakers is an additional attraction. The Branch is to be congratulated on its successful experiment. The meetings begin at 1 p.m., and literature is available.

DAVID—THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

I

IN the year 1761, there appeared a pamphlet, very famous at the time, but now most undeservedly forgotten. We are sometimes too apt to forget that splendid department of English literature which consists of pamphlets, chiefly controversial in character, and to which some of the greatest names in our literature have contributed. Such literary masterpieces of the controversial art as, for instance, *The Monstrous Regiment of Women*, the *Martin Mar-Prelate* series, that superb apology for regicide, *Killing No Murder*, Milton's *Areopagitica*, and Swift's masterly political analysis of *The Conduct of the Allies*, represent perhaps the greatest triumphs of a great literary sub-section.

Perhaps on the same level as the masterpieces which I have enumerated, I would place *The Life of David—the Man After God's Own Heart*, which appeared anonymously in 1761, to disturb the bottomless self-complacency of the aristocratic society of the mid-eighteenth century England, and to disturb rudely the highly respectable and equally complacent theological circles of that era, that is, if we are to judge from the numerous "replies" which the pamphlet provoked from outraged Church dignitaries. The 1761 edition of *The History of David* in the British Museum, bears the name of "John Noorthouck." Voltaire, who read it, and commented upon it with enthusiasm, ascribes it to the well-known Deist, Peter Annet, in the latter's own lifetime: an identification accepted, though with obvious hesitation, by Miss Ella Twynan in her scholarly pamphlet on Annet, published by the Pioneer Press a few years ago. It seems, however, rather unlikely that Annet, who acknowledged all his other literary offspring, should not have acknowledged his masterpiece, if such it is, and should have explicitly declared, as the author did in his later reply to Dr. Chandler, that he would not "run his head into a wasps' nest," which Annet was always doing.

A clerical contemporary, Dr. Farmer, named John Graham, otherwise unknown, as its author, and other names have been suggested. On the whole, it seems better to respect the anonymity of the original.

The pamphlet was highly praised by Voltaire, it was translated into French by the hardly less famous French Freethinker, Baron D'Holbach. (Rather curiously the pamphlet is only mentioned in a footnote by Leslie Stephen in his well known book on the period.) It was reissued in Liverpool in 1769, and also by Richard Carlile in his periodical *The Deist*, in 1819. The unknown author followed it up by a supplementary defence of its thesis against the controversial attack of a contemporary theologian, Samuel Chandler, D.D., to whom the author ironically dedicated his second edition. Both Chandler's "reply," which was of much greater length than the original pamphlet, and the author's defensive polemic, appeared in 1762.

The purpose of *The Man After God's Own Heart* was to give a lucid, unexpurgated and candid account of the life of King David, the national hero of Israel, the reputed author of the *Biblical Book of Psalms*, the traditional ancestor of the Messiah, and, according to the Gospel genealogies, of Jesus Christ. This task our author accomplished to perfection. He lets the "facts" in his hero's unsavoury career speak for themselves. He does not overburden this crime-stained career with over-much comment, but such comments are witty, forceful, to the point, and extremely pungent. Whilst his concluding summary represents a veritable masterpiece of

precise and devastating condensation: a notable achievement, and a theological eye-opener.

The hero, or villain would perhaps be the more appropriate term, of *The Man After God's Own Heart*, is King David, who, if any credibility is to be attached to Biblical narrative and ancient Hebrew legends, flourished about 1000 B.C., when he reigned over a minor kingdom, in what is now Palestine, where he seems to have met with some success in the interminable tribal wars of the era and to have been the first Hebrew ruler to consolidate the ancient "Twelve Tribes of Israel" into something like a united nation. Assuming the above conjectures to have a foundation in fact, since, otherwise no historical basis exists upon which his character can be discussed, the character of David is that of a typical "hero" of a barbaric age and race: cruel, treacherous, lustful, one can easily find parallels amongst barbarians in states of primitive society analagous to that of ancient Israel a thousand years or so before the commencement of the present era. Among the Greek "heroes" of Homer, who, if they ever had any historical existence, must have lived under similar tribal conditions and at about the same time we find very similar virtues and vices to those ascribed to David in the Old Testament. Similarly, in the German and Icelandic sagas of the Nordic barbarians of the Viking Age. Achilles, Odysseus, Hengist (and the inseparable Horsa) and the "heroes" of the "Nibelungenlied," were all birds of much the same feather, with a particular appeal to races of war-like barbarians.

F. A. RIDLEY.

FREUD AND "FRAUD"

If Mr. Simmons merely takes offence at the title of my article—or rather the word "fraud" in it—he will find me conciliatory in this matter of secondary importance. "Fraud," after all, has the meaning of: imposture, deceptive trick, and Freud certainly cannot be accused of forgery himself. Yet, certain of his followers can, and since we have mainly to deal with them and their fashionable craze, I wanted to make my point quite clear. The Freudian mythology, I stated, "is being born under our very noses."

Modern psychology could not be thought of without the valuable research work of Freud, which I freely admitted. It is only where Freud leaves the field of psycho-therapeutic practice and tries to build up a metaphysical philosophy that we have to step in with all vigour. That Freud himself considered religion a mental derailment cannot, as it were, constitute a mitigating factor.

There always have been *quite a number of people who refuse the crude notion of God, yet allow it to enter at the back door in a somewhat refined disguise*. Only recently we experienced a similar case in a long-winded discussion in these columns. And as we are just now in the midst of a Goethe celebration, may I remind you that that very poet who, in his "Faust," coined so trenchant remarks against the Church, at the same time complained in his "Farbenlehre": "It has often and with truth been said, that unbelief is an inverted superstition, and our age suffers greatly by it." We cannot allow Goethe, the deist, to pass as a Freethinker, let alone Freud whom I indicted as the creator of a modern brand of Theological Dualism.

If we want to do him justice, we must see him and his doctrine in all their limitations. Like language, symbols are not reality, but merely guides to find out what is described by the former. The prevalence of a certain temper can help to form a diagnosis, but never can that frame of mind be the *cause*, say, of cancer of the stomach, though they go together.

Being a product of his environment, he himself suffered socially and neurotically from inhibitions, hence he was afraid of the last consequences in his findings which constantly lay open to ferocious attacks from the part of ruling reaction. As a result of his judeo-christian education, he was a mixture, at the same time, of extreme honesty and the most cunning of dishonesty, of clear-headed reasoning and authoritarian conceit. But his essential limitation is that he did deal with secondary phenomena, not with the foundation of the matter itself. Social life is too intricate a problem, yet he and his disciples think—to quote again from Goethe's "Faust"—that our "eternal ohs! and ahs! so thousandfold, are to be cured from a single point."

If that must not be called "fraud," then let it be "bunkum."

PERCY G. ROY.

CORRESPONDENCE

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

Sir,—The book on Psycho-analysis by Frank Kenyon has earned my highest praise. It is a work of art.

"H. E." by his criticisms and subtle posers, is a reminder that a materialist has served an apprenticeship in the analysing and overcoming of numerous resistances, and that the complication of psycho-analysis is not a happy ground in which to begin.

"The plea for morality," says H. E., "comes strangely from a mechanist! Where in the brain does this higher morality reside?" But morality is not something in a residence. Surely praise and blame are both caused; and each become causes influencing or modifying conduct. The mechanist is quite at ease. Except in cases of insanity, extreme infancy and so on, praise and blame are useful and necessary concepts in social life and it is the mechanist who truly values morality and invests it with full importance.

The obscurity of the causes of our actions, or their character, or the difficulty in application (insanity and etc. excepted), cannot cancel the utility of the praise and blame concept. Nor has the devilish intent, scooped from the psycho-analytic sewerage, exceeded in horror the concepts and aspirations of the conscious mind distorted by the outside and visible world. Bad as they appear, the psycho-analysts have hardly outdone the past, and yet Society has held together. Mr. Kenyon might therefore reconsider p. 132 where he saddles the psycho-analysts with the meaninglessness of praise and blame.

I submit that no analysis is so fundamental, so searching and so cleansing, as that of the materialist; he applies the highest test of all, that of the truth and Mr. Kenyon's books are outstanding and most acceptable examples. The wider acceptance of materialism would mean a long step towards saner living in which would not arise either the neuroses and their tribe or the psycho-analysts who deal in them.—Yours etc.,

J. G. BURDON.

ON TELEPATHY

Sir,—It seems to me that Mr. Cutner missed one of the most important explanations with relation to telepathy in the issue of October 3, at any rate he seemed to be going the long way round prior to quoting it, may be it will appear in his second article.

We all know, or should do I suppose, that everything—and I mean everything—large, infinitesimally small, divided, broken or otherwise—has its own definite wavelength and corresponding frequency at which it oscillates.

Take the shaky bridge with its marching soldiers, why do they march out of step, just in case they work up to the same frequency (or harmonic, possibly) as the bridge and so cause its collapse. What about the vase, gong or glass that responds to a played or sung note. Presumably this again is "resonant" frequency and the "rebound" is assisted purely because both were in tune.

Now let us take yawning and the consequent repetition that seem to occur in sympathy. Can we not assume that the part of our physical structure that insists that one yawns covers a wide waveband and due to its apparent sensitiveness is easily responsive to anything at a similar frequency "irritating" it.

The radio and its range of wavelengths needs no introduction but this is man made and its waveband can be easily controlled, still the point is that one has to be in resonance before reception is perfect.

Regarding the "transference of thought trains," surely this is feasible enough if two "minds" happen to be constructed on "similar lines," that is that they have a similar wave-frequency band.

Normally it might only be possible to pick up occasional thought trains but this could no doubt be brought to a pitch of perfection by practise and concentration.

When one looks at telepathy in this light "survival" and "spirits" do not enter into the picture at all and scientific materialism just calmly stands as firm as ever. Many performances of telepathic flavour are undoubtedly fraudulent but there should be no occasion at all for anyone to break out in a rash or start howling and scraping and making the sign of the cross just because they see a genuine demonstration.—
Yours, etc.,
H. W.

FASCISM IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Sir.—An article in the "Daily Mirror" (26th September, 1949), reports that the Reformed Dutch Church of South Africa is showing concern at the rapid growth of Communism amongst the Coloured people of South Africa. It condemns, in a resolution sent to the neo-Fascist Malan, the Government's of racial segregation and mixed marriages' act. Now it will be remembered that it was this same group that urged Malan to make representation to the British Government concerning the mixed marriage of Seretse Khama and an English girl . . . a matter concerning a country other than their own. It would appear from this that they are prepared, as so many Christians before them, to put the "Natives" in their place, outside their own country, but when it is necessary to put their own house in order, the Dutch Reformed Mission Churches have a contradictory policy. In fact it would appear from their representation to Malan that they condone mixed marriage within the "Union" of South Africa, but condemn it in Bechuanaland.

Two days later in the "Daily Mirror" an article about a Fascist was featured . . . said man intends to raise a memorial to Hitler, and guess where . . . good old South Africa . . . not only is he being encouraged by the dear Dr., but the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa has written to the "Kingdom Herald" (published by our up and coming Fascist) that he is "glad to have such good friends in England."

I think that the Dutch Reformed Mission Churches had better take heed of this warning, for the Church of Rome thought that it could play with Adolf Hitler and get away with it . . . the results we all know! Hail to Fascism in South Africa. Hail to racial segregation, Hail progress (backwards).—Yours, etc.,
PETER CROSS.

"IN ITS PLACE."

Sir.—Re Chapman Cohen's article on the above, and his analogies of those injurious, unnecessary and therefore superfluous entities, such as smoke impeding hygiene, strictures the physiological functions, weeds the growth of flowers. Are these analogies appropriate? Is religion an unnecessary entity of life? Chapman Cohen himself declares "Religion has no organic, no necessary connection with the real things of life." Briefly, religion is not an entity, but an interpretation of life, albeit an erroneous one. We may not want to replace one God by another, but surely a false interpretation requires replacing by a true one. If a doctor makes a false diagnosis, is it sufficient to destroy it and not replace it, or is a new and truer diagnosis required?

History furnishes us with a series of religions (interpretations). Is it not likely that there is a more fundamental problem of man's outlook, inherent in his nature, to which religious explanations are mere cobwebs?

Origin, purpose, destiny and values of life must surely occur to man, especially as man, the individual, seems of such small significance with his "brief span." These are not questions of the sophist, but spring from man's own logic. We welcome imagination in forming a scientific hypothesis, why pretend to ignore it as applied to ourselves? If need be, much better to expose any fallacy in the questions, than merely to say "there is no answer," and then devote all one's energies to attacking mere dogma.

Mr. Cohen also says that existence of evil is Christian's concern.

Is there no other evil then? Or again, ". . . when the person of Christianity no longer operates, human life will freely supply all that is necessary to life and happiness."

Does Russia illustrate this, Mr. Cohen?
For progress, destruction of Christianity is a necessary step, but unfortunately, not an all-sufficient one. It is not the panacea for all evils.—Yours, etc.,
FRID ROBINSON.

JAMES JOYCE

Sir.—The writings of James Joyce, having—as Mr. Harry Lewis points out in his introduction to "The Essential James Joyce"—"weathered rejection by publishers, objection by printers, suppression by censors, confiscation by customs officials, bowdlerisation by pirates, oversight by proof-readers, attack by critics and defence by coteries," now find themselves up against the invective of Mr. Cutner!

But how our latter-day critic manages to find "Ulysses" "humourless" and "boring" I just cannot conceive. For almost from the first page that novel confronts us with wit and comedy, besides ever carrying us along on a rhythmic prose that is rich and significant, and who, after a careful and full reading could fail to sense the hard-won freedom inspiring its author?

"Finnegan's Wake," I admit, is a difficult nut to crack. It may also be said, I suppose, that it is far too much the product of a vast and singular scholarship to ever be finally grasped in its entirety. Mr. Cutner is deceiving himself and his readers, however, by ridiculing a certain isolated section of that great "funeral," as Joyce himself called his last work. Let anyone read the "Mookse and the Gupes," and "Onna Levva Plurabelle"—one of the most magical pieces of prose in the English language—and then sneer at Joyce's accomplishments!

I cannot help regarding as deplorable Mr. Cutner's ridiculously prejudiced approach to Joyce and his work. His coupling of Joyce's name with that of Hitler is more worthy of the sensationalist than the Freethinker.—Yours, etc.,

RICHARD KEAN.

[Mr. H. Cutner writes: "There is little to answer here. Mr. Kean has again utterly failed to prove that Joyce was a Freethinker."]

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

INDOOR

Accrington (King's Hall Cinema).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: "The Question of Personal Survival," Mr. J. CLAYTON (N.S.S.).

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: "Some Medical Problems—Have We Got The Answers?" Dr. MARJORIE WILSON, M.D.

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, 7 p.m.: "Freethought in Australia," Mr. W. GLANVILLE COOK.

International Friendship League (Boardroom, Wandsworth Baths).—8 p.m.: Friday, October 28: "The Principles of Freethought," Mr. F. A. RIDLEY.

Lewisham & District Branch N.S.S. (The Hope Hotel, 73, Loam-Pit Vale, Lewisham, S.E.13).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: "The Christian Myth," Mr. J. ENRY (Vice-President N.S.S.).

National Secular Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Monday, October 24, 7-30 p.m.: "The Roman Catholic Church in Australian Politics," Mr. GLANVILLE COOK, Editor of "The Rationalist" (Australia).

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: "The Modern Slave State," Mr. DON BANNISTER (Commonwealth).

Rationalist Press Association (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, October 25, 7 p.m.: "Reason and Belief in Social and Moral Behaviour." (Fourth Lecture: "Reasoning in the Relations of Social Groups," Max GLUCKMAN, M.A., D.Phil.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "The Black Year of 1849," Mr. JOSEPH McCABE.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: "The Need for Marriage and Divorce Law Reform," Mr. R. S. W. POLLARD.

West Ham Branch N.S.S. (Loco, Men's Institute, 62, Forest Lane, Stratford, E.18).—Tuesday, October 25, 8 p.m.

OUTDOOR

Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: A Lecture.

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

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Bombed site, St. Mary's Gate).—Every day, lunch-hour lectures, 1 p.m.: Messrs. BILLING and WOODCOCK.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Platt Fields).—Sunday, 3 p.m.: Messrs. KAY, SMITH and BILLING. (Alexandra Park Gates).—Wednesday, 7 p.m.: Messrs. KAY, SMITH and BILLING.

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

Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barkers Pool).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. A. SAMMS.

RUSSIA PUTS THE CLOCK BACK

THE above is the title of a recently published book by Mr. Langdon-Davies, with a Foreword by Sir Henry Dale, O.M., F.R.S., in which the pros and cons of the "Lysenko" controversy are discussed with a wealth of relevant detail.

As Freethinkers, we are not going to be side-tracked one way or the other by political prejudice and bias. No doubt most of us have inclinations left or right, but "The Freethinker"—strictly speaking—is not the place in which to express such tendencies.

We are concerned, however, with the right of individuals in society to speak, write and publish views and opinions on any subject freely and in their own way; without fear of persecution and coercion from any constituted or self-constituted authority.

As Freethinkers, we freely extend this right to all the cranky and fanatical cults of the day, many of their abler representations have found the pages of "The Freethinker" open to them. This Freethinking platform is also no recent political whim, it has a long history of courage and devotion to a cause; that even if it has not gained great numbers to its ideal, it has gained the respect of honest-thinking men and women.

Perhaps two corollaries emerge from this principle of freedom of thought:—

1. The pursuit of truth for its own sake is first and foremost to all other considerations.
2. Tolerance of views and opinions that differ from our own.

Mr. Langdon-Davies has done a useful piece of work in bringing out with consummate ability all the implications of the "affair Lysenko" and he has clearly demonstrated, not merely that freedom of thought and expression has virtually ceased to exist in Soviet Russia, but that all points of view that dare to challenge seriously Communist philosophy or Party line, are ruthlessly persecuted and suppressed there.

This is by no means the end of the sad story. Mr. Langdon-Davies also proves beyond question that eminent scientists in this country are guilty of evasion and dissimulation. It is almost unbelievable, until one reads this book, that men of scientific eminence are so anxious to defend their religio-political Paradise that they can defend this charlatan Lysenko against all the demands of scientific integrity and freedom.

But the facts and references are here for the consideration of all. To those of us whose respect for Bruno and Galileo borders on veneration, will read of the disappearance—if not the judicial murder—of one of the great scientists of our time, Vavilov, the Russian botanist, as something approaching a martyrdom to science, *in our time*.

ROBERT F. TURNEY.

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H is the Harpie, your money to shrink.
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J is the Joke, it may well be you.
K stands for Knowledge, so difficult to gain,
L is the Laughter, of which Spirits complain.
M stands for Medium, who groans in the dark,
N is the Noodle, a mark for a shark.
O stands for Occult, to instil you with fear,
P is the Psychic, whose trance costs you dear.
Q stands for Query, the sceptic should ask,
R is the Rapping, the spirit's big task.
S stands for Seance, where fraud is the rule,
T is Telepathy, all ready to fool.
U stands for Untruth, the spirits all love.
V is the Vanity, which fits like a glove.
W stands for Whopper, more or less glib,
X is the Excuse, just like a damp squib.
Y stands for You, so hearken to this,
Z is the Zany, no spiritualists miss.

H. CUTNER.

WANTED.—In good condition, "The Devil's Pulpit," "Diegesis," by Robert Taylor. "Warfare of Science with Theology," by Andrew Dickson White. "Devil Worship in France," by A. E. Waite. "The Priest in Absolution," Parts 1 and 2. Offers to Box 105, Pioneer Press, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1.

Under the Auspices of the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

Mr. GLANVILLE COOK

(Editor *The Rationalist*, Australia)

will lecture on

The Roman Catholic Church in Australian Politics

on MONDAY, OCTOBER 24

Mr. AVRO MANHATTEN

(Author of *The Catholic Church against the 20th Century*)

will lecture on

The Vatican in World Politics

on TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Both lectures will be held at the

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