

# THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXX.—No. 48

[REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL  
POST OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER]

Price Threepence

## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### Exit Another God!

THE invasion of Tibet by the armies of the Chinese Communist Republic marks the exit of yet another God and medieval theocracy. For Tibet, Buddhist or, rather, Lamaist in doctrine, is one of the few remaining lands in the current world where the conditions of life and of society formerly universal in medieval Europe still exist, hardly touched by the ravages of time and by the revolutionary changes in the means of existence and in the social order, which have befallen more advanced lands throughout the centuries. Upon this vast, secluded plateau on "the roof of the world" in Central Asia, ruled over by its God-King, the Dalai Lama, from his medieval Potala palace in the Holy City, Lhasa, we observe, substantially unaltered, the mode of social existence amid which Europe and our own ancestors lived for a full millenium throughout the "Dark" and "Middle" ages between the fall of Rome and the Reformation.

The self-styled "Buddhist" regime of Tibet has preserved such medieval conditions of life virtually unaltered since a period contemporary with the European "Dark Ages." Along with "Christian" Ethiopia and some isolated Muslim lands (Afghanistan and the High Yemen (Southern Arabia) represent the most obvious examples), Tibet has represented up to the present time a medieval oasis in the modern world; a "Hermit," a "Forbidden Land." Since "distance lends enchantment," romantic imaginations have located there an earthly paradise, the "Lost Horizon" of a Shangri-La; just as other romantics of the type of the late G. K. Chesterton have found the fabled golden age in medieval Europe with its troubadors, castles, and soaring cathedrals. In the case of both medieval Europe and of medieval Tibet, we can probably safely assume that "distance not only "lends" but actually creates the "enchantment"! In actual fact, when stripped of the religious halo that surrounds them such medieval paradises resolve themselves into rural slums.

In the case of Tibet, the medieval regime of the Lamas is ostensibly derived from Buddhism. We lack here, unfortunately, the space to outline with an appropriate detail this extraordinary and ironic evolution of the philosophy of Gautama Buddha into the Tibetan clerical theocracy of the Lamas. Whatever may have been the later perversions to which his doctrine was subjected by ignorant and credulous disciples, it appears undeniable that the historic Buddha was a Rationalist, an Agnostic, perhaps the first Positivist, the critical conclusions of whom anticipated those of such modern critical thinkers as Hume, Comte, Huxley, and Herbert Spencer; a critical intellect probably of the first rank. To derive from the critical philosophy of Buddha the gross superstitions of modern Lamaism, with its rosaries, praying wheels, demons, magical incantations, and divine reincarnations, assuredly represents one of the grossest mental perversions in recorded history. The actual difference

between Buddha and Tibetan "Buddhism" is far greater than between, say, Abyssinian "Christianity" and what Dr. Barnes understands by that creed!

In actual fact, Tibetan "Buddhism" appears in the eyes of History as a perversion of a perversion; "Mahayana," or Northern Buddhism evolved in the early centuries of the Christian era as a compromise between the original agnostic philosophy of Buddhism and the reformed Hinduism which eventually supplanted Buddhism in India, its original birthplace. (Modern Hinduism is profoundly influenced by Buddhism ever since Sankara, the Hindu counterpart of St. Thomas Aquinas, himself an ex-Buddhist, recast Hinduism into its present form.) From India, Mahayana Buddhism spread to Tibet, upon which primitive soil given over to Animism and Shamanism, it underwent a still further degeneration into Lamaism, which may be appropriately defined as primitive Mongolian paganism with a surface veneer of Buddhistic phraseology. The isolation of the remote mountain plateau of Tibet has, so to speak, preserved the medieval Lamaist regime in a fossilised form; incidentally, one may suspect that the attraction of Tibet to modern Theosophists, such as Madame Blavatsky, is due to the inaccessibility of its mountains rather than to the actual holiness of its monks. It is well-nigh impossible to check any statements about the "Forbidden Land."

As a religious system, accordingly, Tibetan Buddhism represents, we repeat, a perversion of a perversion; Buddhism perverted by Hinduism and then by a still more primitive Mongolian Animism. However, as and when considered as a theocracy, as a clerical political regime, Lamaism appears to owe much to a yet further source, the Roman Catholic Church. Many students of Tibetan Buddhism have commented upon the remarkable resemblances between the Roman and the Tibetan hierarchies; rosaries, monasteries, shaven heads, holy water, saintly relics, all these are common to the two regimes. Nor does the startling resemblance appear to be accidental. A modern Russian historian charges that Lamaism derived its ecclesiastical hierarchy directly from medieval Catholicism. In the thirteenth century when Marco Polo visited China, there was direct intercourse between a then Catholic Europe and Mongolian Asia. There was a Catholic Archbishop of Peking, who came directly from Paris, the university where Aquinas himself taught, and the Jesuits later penetrated to Lhasa, "the Holy City" of the Lamas.

Anyhow, wherever derived, the Temporal Power exercised for so long from the Tibetan "Vatican," the Potala Palace of the Dalai Lama, is now due to end. By the time that these lines appear in print, the Chinese Communists will already have entered the sacred precincts of Lhasa and put an end to the regime of the Incarnate-Buddha, the Dalai Lama, just as they have already abolished his former colleagues, the "Holy" Tsar and the Chinese "Son of Heaven." Presumably, upon the Russian model, we may expect a "reformed"

Buddhist Church to appear amongst the more intelligent inmates of the Tibetan monasteries; a Church which will combine Marxism with Buddhism, and the writings of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, along with the traditional Buddhist Scriptures. Perhaps, as we have suggested before in this column, the next Dalai Lama will be a reincarnation of Lenin! Political power will gradually shift from the clerical caste to the laity, as in modern Europe. Otherwise, the process of change is not likely to be very rapid. For, of all contemporary lands, Tibet is the least likely to conform with the ideal Marxist pattern of an industrial society run by the proletariat of its factories and mines. For, in the sparsely populated, windswept mountains and the icy plateaux of Tibet, both industry and the proletariat are conspicuous only by their absence; in such a primitive environment, it will be centuries before the Marxist "dictatorship of the proletariat" can ever be more than a pious fiction—even granted the suspected existence of uranium deposits in Tibet.

In the meantime, however, Secularism has undoubtedly made a step forward, another God has gone West! Incidentally, the manner of his going indicates the conservatism of Gods, even in modes of transport. For the Dalai Lama, the "Living Buddha," the last God-King of Tibet, fled across the Himalayas on an ass to India; on, that is, precisely the same humble but useful quadruped upon which Jesus, according to Christian tradition, fled into Egypt. Gods do not change; and, in both cases, their saviour was the ass. The Gods differ, but the ass remains constant, Providential, and how appropriate!

F. A. RIDLEY.

### THE STIRRING TIMES OF HENRY VIII

THE Rev. Arthur Ogle's *Tragedy of the Lollards' Tower* is a record of very considerable importance. This judicious volume (Pen in Hand Publishing Co., Oxford, 1949, 21s.) deals minutely with the infamous case of Richard Hunne with its sequel, the Reformation Parliament, 1529-33. Our historian possibly overstates the influence of the Hume murder in ministering the anti-clerical spirit which led to the humiliation of the Church. Yet all the many factors which enabled the secular Power to intimidate, overawe and penalise the clergy are carefully studied. These, of course, include the divorce of Catherine of Aragon and the king's determination to enrich the Crown at the Church's expense. Moreover, Dr. Ogle presents a powerful case for his contention that these drastic proceedings were stimulated and sustained by the general indignation aroused by the malevolent conduct of the clergy when dealing with alleged heretics, and their dictatorial conduct in all instances where laymen were their victims.

Chapter and verse are given for every contention our author advances, and he never hesitates to query the conclusions of eminent historians whose findings have been invalidated by documents more recently consulted.

The remarkable Hume affair occurred in 1514 when Wolsey was supreme and when the Church seemed impregnable. As Ogle avers: "Luther had not appeared in Germany and Anne Boleyn had not appeared at Court. No bolt appeared to threaten from those blue skies under which the prelates . . . administered the age-long ecclesiastical system, and set their heel upon the few who dared impugn it. Yet within 15 years of Hunne's death Germany had been convulsed by the Lutheran movement; a proscribed English New Testament was being smuggled into England; the king's marriage had become

the question of the hour; and there met the historic Parliament which, by a succession of rapid strokes, brought the Papal authority in England to an end and with it the unlimited power of Convocation and Church Courts to legislate for, and discipline, the 'subject' laity."

Most of the martyrs who were burnt alive for heresy were friendless and obscure. Hunne, however, was a wealthy merchant and freeman of the City and a citizen universally respected in business circles as a man of unblemished character. Thus, when his body was found suspended in the Lollard's Tower, foul play was immediately suspected. For Hunne had incurred the enmity of the clergy by refusing a mortuary illegally demanded by his priest and had entered an action against the clerics under premonition, which he lost. He was then charged with heresy and imprisoned in the Lollard's Tower adjoining St. Paul's; and there his corpse was discovered. The clerical plea of suicide was set aside and after an elaborate inquiry into the merits of the case the jury found an unanimous verdict of wilful murder "against Dr. Horsey, the Bishop of London's chancellor and two of his underlings. The accused men were duly indicted, but never tried; and the successful efforts of the authorities, ecclesiastical and lay—prolonged for nearly a year—to protect Horsey from being brought to trial, served only to confirm the belief of Hunne's fellow-citizens: which was that the Coroner's jury were 'true men' and that Hunne was no heretic, but the object of clerical vengeance and the unavenged victim of a very foul murder." The scandal lingered long in public memory and even fourteen years later, Sir Thomas More tried to lessen public resentment with the skilful, special pleading of a lawyer deeply committed to the clerical caste.

During the 15th and 16th centuries the penalised offence of heresy in England embraced any adherence to Wycliffe's doctrines; the repudiation of image worship, pilgrimages, adoration of saints, the sacrament at the altar and, worse than all, denial of transubstantiation. For the Church declared that: "as the words of consecration were uttered by the priest the elements of bread and wine lost all substantive existence and that nothing of them remained but their 'accidents,' colour, shape, solidity, liquidity as visible and tangible abstractions. It affirmed that what was then alone present in 'substance' upon the altar under the form and appearance of bread and wine was the Body and Blood of Christ." This was therefore, the very Body to which the Virgin gave birth and which was later crucified, buried, and ascended to Heaven within sight of the Apostles. Moreover, the Blood was the very liquid that flowed from the Redeemer's side. These preposterous doctrines were made an inalienable part of the Catholic religion by the Lateran Council in 1215. No wonder then that at the celebration of the Mass that the officiating priest was popularly credited with making Christ and that belief in transubstantiation was essential to salvation.

Miracle-performing priests thus enhanced their social standing and Masses for the dead greatly increased. As our author avers: "A further effect was that the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, being clothed with a peculiar efficacy as an atoning sacrifice for the living and the dead, was established as a steady source of income. People would pray for Masses which would avail to buy off the wrath of God and its consequences for themselves and the suffering souls in Purgatory."

The clerical depravity so general was deplored by the Lollards and their indignation influenced Parliament to pass the Statute of Provisors in Richard II's reign. But

in 1396, when the autocratic Thomas Arundel became Primate, his intolerance led to his banishment. Later, Arundel ranged himself with the Duke of Lancaster who ascended the throne as Henry IV after the deposition and murder of Richard II. Henry depended on Parliamentary and clerical support so, to ensure the latter, Church and State combined to suppress heresy. In 1401, statute *De heretico comburendo* compelled the sheriffs to attend heresy trials and to take from episcopal hands and burn all those convicted. Not content with this, Arundel passed through Convocation certain constitutions which decreed the suppression of all Lollardy. Then, after Oldecastle's revolt, an Act was passed in 1414 under which all "magistrates and sheriffs were required to take the initiative in the detection and arrest of heretics and to deliver them to the bishops for trial." These merciless provisions drove Lollardy underground, where it remained until the reign of Henry VIII when *De heretico comburendo* was repealed.

One of the evils swept away at the Reformation was the legal protection granted to criminous clerks. So early as 1512 this privilege was annulled by Parliament. Previously clericals in minor orders below the degree of archdeacon, enjoyed immunity from punishment for their crimes. Benefit of clergy entitled a clerk charged with felony or homicide to appear before his bishop as he could not be tried by any secular Court. Even when a clerk was caught committing an offence that concerned him personally, no layman or lay official could detain the accused for a longer period than twenty hours, and even this slight right was questioned by some Canonists. Again, when tried in a spiritual Court, all the bishop could do was to put the accused on his oath and that of others who were prepared to swear their belief in the accused's integrity. "And if, by perjury or otherwise," observes Ogle, "he could clear himself, the bishop had no choice but to release him."

At one time criminous clerks were occasionally degraded, but their future was left undecided, and this was one of the problems which led to the murder of Becket in the age of Henry II, when that statesman was endeavouring to rationalise the law. But during the succeeding century the degradation of criminous clerks seems to have been suspended. In 1488, however, under Henry VII, measures were taken to remove the privilege enjoyed by a felonious clerk who could repeat his "neck-verse," but with little effect. As Ogle notes: "Within a generation Pope Leo X, in a Bull issued at the instigation of Wolsey (February 12, 1516) declared himself to be credibly informed that in the kingdom of England people took the first clerical tonsure and minor orders, not with any purpose of proceeding to the higher sacred orders, but in order to be free to commit excesses and crimes." Still, despite the changes in the law, for many years to come the clericals were more notorious for their misdeeds than famed for their enlightenment.

T. F. PALMER.

## ESPERANTO

I AM not writing to state the case for Esperanto. I should be pleased to do so if asked, and the case is, I think, unanswerable. Anyway, anyone interested can get free literature from the Esperanto Association, and verify for himself what is written.

I do, however, write to protest against Mr. Roy's article in your issue of October 29. He mentions a reviewer who had, perhaps, a "prejudiced view." His own free use of question-begging epithets and statements does suggest that this may be the case with him also.

Mr. Roy refers, for example, to what is after all the

only rational and successful solution of the international language problem as "the Esperanto craze," "artificial," "lingo," "mongrel," "hotch-potch." "An Esperanto addict happens to make a clever remark." The creator of Esperanto, whose clear-sighted linguistic genius succeeded where all others (including linguists and learned societies) failed, was "bemused," and sorely lacked "understanding of what is and is not relevant." These things are not worthy of a serious writer.

Opponents are accustomed to copy one another without investigation, and often without any knowledge of the language they presume to criticise. Mr. Roy seems to have done the same. I do not for a moment wish to decry the value of *The Loom of Language* in other ways, but as far as Esperanto is concerned it is definitely misleading. I sent the author a long list of errors and misstatements in these few pages.

Mr. Roy mentions a scheme which "has a great advantage over all its competitors, Esperanto included." But (a) this scheme has been dead for many years (if indeed it ever lived). And (b) what is needed is not a paper project easily guessable by an "educated European," but a living language in world-wide use by ordinary men of all nations. Mr. Roy himself says that we must "cater for the needs of the common people (trade, Labour movement), rather than for the needs of scholars." Well, Esperanto caters for both, but especially for the ordinary man and woman. Who are the 5,000 people from 50 nations who meet every year in various Esperanto congresses with complete understanding? Not, for the most part, professors and polyglots, but ordinary men, women, and children, who use Esperanto because it eminently "meets their needs"—it works. And there is nothing else to take its place.

Mr. Roy says that in no respect is Esperanto superior to English, and that the grammar of English is much simpler. One can only smile! And if Zamenhof had "no regard to Oriental speech," how is it that Esperanto is so strong in Japan, and that Chinese Esperantists point out the linguistic similarities between Esperanto and Chinese? In fact, in Esperanto East meets West: it is Eastern by structure and Western in vocabulary.

Mr. Roy says that Esperanto ought to have letters for some compound sounds. Well, it has them. Yet he criticizes Esperanto just because it has these letters! Does he seriously propose that Esperanto should import Cyrillic letters into its Latin alphabet? This would indeed be a real "hotch-potch."

As to Mr. Roy's digression in praise of how good English might be if it were streamlined and simplified—if only it were what it is not—I merely point out that Esperanto does in fact possess those qualities whose absence in English he deplores: Esperanto has, English has not, a phonetic spelling.

One last point. Mr. Roy suggests that the majority of Esperantists are R.C.s., and says that the R.C. Church is foremost in boosting Esperanto. These statements are definitely very far from the truth. There is in Esperanto far more Atheist than R.C. literature. Esperanto is a language. It has no connection with any religious or political school of thought. But all may use it to spread their views and gain adherents, and those who are intelligent and awake to its possibilities will do so. But the R.C. Esperantist has to face more prejudice than others: he is told at once: "The international language of the Church is Latin." This is, of course, entirely irrelevant. But it passes for argument with the unthinking.

MONTAGU C. BUTLER, M.R.S.T.

(Education Secretary,

British Esperanto Association, Incd.)

## "SCRUPULOUSLY FAIR, AS A GENERAL RULE"—AN ELUCIDATION AND AN APOLOGY

IN this article, of April 30, 1950, now in tract form, I wrote that "Pope Leo XIII, in the Encyclical *Immortale Dei* of November 1, 1885, held that 'heretics were justly burned.'" The Priest-Director of the Inquiry Bureau of "The Universe"—after reading this tract has replied: "I can assure you that no such statement occurs anywhere in the Encyclical in question, and the statement is a lie." I thank the P.-D. for correcting me re the Encyclical named: I erred there, and apologise to publisher and to all readers for that mistake. On looking up my authority I find: "In those times the Christian Church was small and feeble, and had not yet snatched the cynical power whereby, ever since, it 'requires the acceptance and practice not of the religion one may choose, but of that which God prescribes . . . to be the only true one,' as asserted by His Holiness Leo XIII, in the Encyclical *Immortale Dei*, of November 1, 1885 (C.E. xiv, 764). Whereupon, the 'choosers' of their religion became 'heretics,' and were 'justly burned,' as that same Pope admits" ("Forgery in Christianity," by Joseph Wheless; New York, A. A. Knopf, 1930, page 396). Here the association of persecution with R.C. "prescribed religion" is so close that associating the two ideas became identifying the two. The same juxtaposition of quotation from that same Encyclical, under its other title of "The Christian Constitution of States," is immediately followed by a quotation of 33 lines from "Does the Catholic Church Persecute?" by the Rev. Joseph Keating, who upholds his Church's right to persecute ("No Friend of Democracy," by E. Moore, 1941; pp. 44-45).

If it is claimed, or intended, that my statement, that "Leo XIII held that heretics were justly burned," "is a lie," unfortunately, I cannot agree. "The power then of expelling heresy is an essential factor in the constitution of the Church" ("Catholic Encyclop." on Heresy, vii, 260). "Theodosius is said to be the first who pronounced heresy a capital crime, A.D. 382" (C.E. vii, 260). "The burning of heretics was first decreed in the 11th century" (C.E. vii, 260). "The Church's claim to be the accredited and infallible ambassador of God, which justifies her apparent inconsistency [of seeking toleration for itself while it denies toleration to others]. And though the Church exercises that right [to coerce its subjects] for the most part by spiritual sanctions, she has never relinquished the right to use other means. The non-Catholic Christians of our day are, strictly speaking, her subjects. She adapts her discipline to the times and circumstances in order that it may fulfil its salutary purpose" (C.E. xi, Persecution, p. 703, vol. xi). "The present-day legislation against heresy has lost nothing of its ancient severity, but the penalties on heretics are now only of the spiritual order; all the punishments which require the intervention of the secular arm have fallen into abeyance" (C.E. vii, 260). By a Bull of Pope Paul IV, in 1559, heretics are "to be deprived of every consolation of humanity" (Dr. R. F. Littledale, "Plain Reasons," p. 145). In "Question-Box Answers," New York, 1910, to the question "Does not your Church claim the right to imprison, torture, and kill heretics? the authoritative reply is: "No; the Catholic Church declares it sinful to force people to join her communion, or to punish for heresy or false religion, those outside her fold. As to inflicting bodily penalties, according to Canon Law, anyone who takes part in the shedding of blood becomes by the very fact irregular or incapable of receiving or exercising Holy

Orders. The state of heresy which used to be regarded as a political crime . . . these were times of severity and cruelty. Thank God they have passed away for ever" (p. 219). What a whopper! It reminds one of the sanctimonious Formula of Judgment at the sacred ceremonials of burning heretics with a prayer that they should be punished "as mildly as possible and without the shedding of blood."

And here I come to the Canon Law—a subject too little known—and to Pope Leo XIII. Dr. G. G. Coulton says: "The learned Cardinals Tarquini, Billot, and Lépicier, and the equally learned Professor de Luca [to name only recent], are ready to prove to you conclusively that the Pope has a right to inflict temporal punishments for unbelief upon any baptised person whatsoever, with negligible exceptions; and they have the whole weight of Roman tradition and practice behind them. Yet the Jesuit Vermeersh, whose quotations show him to be either ignorant or dishonest, is first put up to lecture, and then translated into English, in order to assure the 'outsider' of the exact opposite to that which his superiors, the Cardinals, with special papal approbation, have been teaching. It is what Dr. E. J. Dillon exposed unmercifully as 'the Book-keeping by Double Entry, which was being regularly practised within his own Church'" ("Romanism and Truth," ii, 86). Mr. Joseph McCabe says: "This new Code [Vatican new version of the Canon Law, 1918] is of the Private Law, and expressly says that it does not abrogate the Public Law, which is printed in Latin alone and is expounded even within the priesthood only to special students. But it is the Law of the Church to-day, just as it was in the days of Torquemada, without the sacrifice of a single syllable. It is taught in the Papal University at Rome, and in 1901 the Professor, Fr. Marianus de Luca, had his lectures on it published by the Vatican Press ('*Institutiones Juris Ecclesiastici Publici*'), with a glowing letter of approval by Leo XIII, 'the Liberal Pope'" ("The Papacy in Politics To-day," p. 16). A translated excerpt is given from M. de Luca in Mr. McCabe's "The Popes and Their Church," pp. 149-150. "A few years later another papal Professor, Father (later Cardinal) Lépicier, published his version of the Public Law ('*De Stabilitate et Progressu Dogmatis*') and gave the same ghastly principle as unquestioned in the Catholic Church. Dr. Cadoux shows in his "Roman Catholics and Freedom" (1936) that the claim is openly urged by the French Cardinal Billot in his "Tractatus de Ecclesia Christi" (1922) and by the Jesuit Professor Sortain in his "Traite de Philosophie" (1924), and that Father Ronald Knox and Mr. Belloc have acknowledged the claim of a right of physical compulsion" ("Papacy in Politics Today," pp. 16-17). Mr. A. D. Howell mentions other champions of death for heretics, and says, "Father M. de Luca, professor at the Papal University of Rome and author of a work issued from the Vatican Press and accompanied by a letter of approval from Leo XIII, advocates the greatest intolerance" ("Thou Art Peter," 1950, p. 725). "Leo XIII has recommended Thomas Aquinas as the best guide in philosophy as well as theology" (p. 725). "Leo XIII was little versed in it [Biblical scholarship] himself" (p. 576). "He [Leo XIII] made pronouncements on the Biblical question which caused Catholic professors, in my hearing, to speak bitterly of his ignorance" (McCabe's "The Popes and their Church," 1950, p. 93). Aquinas, the Aristotelian "Angelic Doctor," the upholder of death to heretics, the envisager of "the felicity of the blessed spirits in heaven having a perfect view of

the tortures of the damned is, to Pope Leo XIII and others, the beneficent guide required by the world.

Fortunately, the Roman Catholic Church no longer has the power it had to carry out its claims and principles by stake and rack.

GEORGE ROSS.

## MARY'S FLIGHT TO HEAVEN

### The Problem of Transport

NEW Roman Catholic dogma that Mary went to Heaven in body and soul raises not only ecclesiastic problems but also one of transport. According to Sir Harold Spencer Jones, the present British Astronomer Royal, this earth is 93,000,000 miles from the sun. If there is a Heaven it surely must be at least another 93,000,000 miles from the sun, otherwise there would be a danger that the many mansions that Jesus is reported to have prepared for us would be damaged by heat. But more remarkable still, based on a simple addition sun, is the distance separating this small planet from the celestial regions—196,000,000 miles.

If Mary set out at an even 30 miles an hour she would have been more than 700 years in accomplishing the journey. There is no information how she travelled. Aircraft was not available. Up to that date, two world wars to end wars had not taken place and witnessed marvellous developments in aeroplanes. Did Mary make a non-stop trip? If she did not, her flight would have occupied still more time. Even the most enthusiastic motorist would not care to go from Melbourne to Sydney without leaving his car on a couple of occasions to stretch himself. We are not told how Mary was kept alive all the time. It is hardly likely that there would have been on the route service stations equipped with hamburgers or delicatessens. Cook's had no agencies on that way, and government tourist bureaus were not thought of. Catering arrangements might have been made by Heaven; manna was miraculously furnished for the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness of Arabia.

Another more serious point is that it is reflection on the Heavenly authorities that this dogma has only just been revealed. Why was the world allowed to remain in ignorance of such an important event for nearly 2,000 years? Were previous Vicars of Christ unworthy of such confidence. It may well be that Popes John XXIII, Alexander VI and Leo X did not deserve to be informed of Mary's experience. On the other hand, in the eyes of Roman Catholics a great distinction has been conferred on the present Pontiff. When a future historian of the Popes he will devote much space in the account of the Popes to the promulgation of this dogma. This event will be regarded as the most important in his pontificate; his friendship with Mussolini and Hitler will be forgotten.

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? It is sad that, despite the advancement made in scientific knowledge and the higher educational standards prevailing in various countries, this nonsense should be announced with such solemn ceremonial and accepted by so many persons. At any rate, those who believe that the "virgin" gave birth to a son, although no man had previous relations with her, can just as easily swallow the latest dogma that she ascended to Heaven in body and soul.

"STUDENT"

Melbourne.

## ASK AT YOUR LIBRARY \*

BLOOMSBURY was always a favourite dwelling place for men of letters. The authors of this book have not only dealt with modern Bloomsbury, but have also given us some interesting pen portraits of famous men who have made Bloomsbury their home. A glance at a few of the names will show us that this part of London housed many of our great men.

It was here that William Morris made his first experiment of artistic principles to the designing and furnishing of the home.

It was in Red Lion Square that Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne Jones resided.

It was in Theobald's Road, once a fashionable quarter, that Abernethy made his home. His was a famous name in the world of medicine, and he will always be remembered as the founder of St. Bart's Medical School.

It was a wise idea of the authors to confine their investigations to one part of London, for London itself is too big to be dealt with fully in one single volume. The writers have succeeded in a double purpose: they have given us a book of modern Bloomsbury, and they have also brought to life many of the people who made the borough famous.

Although the present British Museum was not built until 1823, its forerunner, Montagu House, was used as far back as 1753. To-day the British Museum serves as a mecca for students, not only in Britain, but from all over the world. People of every nationality gravitate to Bloomsbury, whilst thousands of students attending London University, tread its pavements.

Freethinkers from the provinces and abroad ought to visit 110, Gower Street, where Charles Darwin lived. Darwin, who did more than any other man to smash the falsehoods of Christian teaching, was buried in Westminster Abbey. The Church have always been expert body-snatchers.

Frequently we read books full of nostalgic nonsense, dealing with "the good old days." Let us browse in the pages of this book and visit Euston Road, exactly one hundred years ago and read what the authors say:

"It is not surprising that cholera and fevers raged in the miserable shacks set amidst the dung and cinder heaps, the piles of rotting vegetables. Indeed, being naturally damp and marshy, it was ironically known as 'Ague Town.' . . . 'A perfect reproduction of one of the worst towns in Ireland,' said Dickens; while Canon Doyle, the great Minister of St. Pancras Church, testified before a committee of the House of Commons as to the extreme and unmitigated poverty . . . the houses were of the most wretched description, fitter for occupation of wild beasts than human beings."

For 20 years Ague Town flourished—"brute force, aggravated and liberally brought out by strong drink, is the ruling power"—and then it declined as abruptly as it had arisen. Within 30 years it might never have been, and St. Pancras Station and the extensive goods yards behind have destroyed all traces.

Charles Dickens lived in Bloomsbury in Doughty Street, and made the district the scene of many of the incidents in his books and the home of many of his characters.

The past history of Bloomsbury is skilfully combined with the borough of to-day, and its historical interest makes it a book worth buying and worth keeping.

F. A. HORNIBROOK.

\* *Book of Bloomsbury.* By Edward Gordon and A. F. L. Deeson. (Illustrated.) Price 12s. 6d. Published by Edward Gordon Limited, 9, Great Russell Street, London, W.O.1.

## ACID DROPS

The Sunday collection at Framlingham Church in Suffolk has recently been so disappointing that the vicar decided to give an open plate a chance rather than the usual bag. Buttons, farthings, and halfpennies are very difficult to put on a plate, and we must congratulate the vicar on his bright idea.

The Bishops' Church Fund is also complaining that money is not coming in as fast and as much as it ought to. The Rev. R. Fielding moans that "we are sixpenny-minded in the Church of England." For what is sixpence these days? Why, you can't even go to a cinema for it. Mr. Fielding did not see how it was possible to raise £11,000 from "casuals" who always came to church "on four wheels—first in a pram, then in a taxi, and finally in a hearse." Most of these casuals appear to us to prefer not going at all. In any case, finance has always been a painful subject with our wealthy Church, for most of its devout members hate to stump up.

One of the members of the depressing Mothers' Union, a Mrs. Canadine, is very concerned with our young soldier conscripts not kneeling in prayer "without having shoes, brushes, and books thrown at them." We are not aware that this is really the case, but if it is, we send our good wishes to the throwers. They are rightly disgusted at such pitiful grovelling. Prayers should be left to Mrs. Canadine and her friends in the Mothers' Union.

A gentleman called Ezra, in the *Methodist Recorder*, says: "Never condemn an Atheist until you know the kind of God in whom he was brought up to believe." Many, many Atheists used to believe in the same God as the Editor of the *Methodist Recorder*, and, looking back, they cannot see much difference between this God, a Roman Catholic statue, or the hoodoo god of an African witch-doctor. If Ezra can tell us the difference, we shall be pleased to give him the use of this journal, and a chance to reconvert our readers.

The Social and Industrial Commission of the Church Assembly has published their report against gambling. The Commission just hates the amount of money people are winning in football pools and on the race-course, but recognises the difficulty of suppressing the gambling instinct in man. "The only genuine remedy," it says, "is recovery of the Christian interpretation of life and work"—though what this rigmarole means it would be difficult to say. One thing is certain, however. If the Church could initiate a lottery on the lines of the one in Ireland, the rush for tickets from Church people would be phenomenal. Why not try it?

What exactly is meant by Bible or Scripture teaching has been discussed in the columns of the *Portsmouth Evening News*, and a very mixed bag of ideas has been the result. But one thing has emerged and that is, that nobody appears to know what it is that can be taught from the Bible. Needless to add, the "specialist," the theological student, complains that it is "presumptuous for parents to claim superior knowledge over those who have spent years at a theological college studying the Bible." But surely even a parent knows that the story of Adam and Eve, the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Devils, Angels, and Miracles of the Bible, are all just drivel? Is there any theological student who could prove any one of these things?

There is now a London School of Religion in Bloomsbury, and readers of *The Times Educational Supplement* are asked to write for particulars, if they wish to study religious and Bible problems. "Persons of all religious opinions" are welcome, but what about those whose object is to shatter all religious opinions? Is there anybody in this School ready to meet them?

Some of our religious journals are tardily dealing with the religion of George Bernard Shaw, and they can hardly conceal their disgust at his known anti-Christianity. This proves, we are told, that he was no "thinker," that he was "wrong-headed," and prejudiced. According to the *Church Times* Shaw believed "in a God who is completely immanent in nature and history and man—who achieves his purposes by an unwearying process of trial and error, becoming gradually more conscious, and growing in wisdom and goodness." If this is true, then the God of Shaw is far, far away from the Christian conception of God, and to all intents and purposes Shaw was as much an Atheist as Bradlaugh.

On the other hand, Mr. W. R. Titterton in the *Univers* calls Shaw "an unbeliever whose life was an example to those of us who have the faith and a warning to those who have not. He was so righteous and so wrong." Thus, whatever else he was, he was also an "unbeliever" which puts him in the right category no matter how furious it makes pious people. In other words, Shaw joins the glorious throng of unbelievers—Shakespeare, Darwin, Shelley, Wells, and countless more.

The "Universe" has come to the conclusion that "the question of Atheism stands in a class by itself," and that "the poisonous element" in Communism is "the Atheism." In fact, "the fight against Atheistic Communism will end in a fiasco if we are going to assume that what is wrong with it is a particular theory of economics." To put it another way, when the Churches attack Communism they prefer to call it "Atheistic Communism" so that they can get a smack at Atheism. As we have pointed out, Communism as such can be wholeheartedly accepted by Christians; but Atheism never!

There is sure to be another Holy War soon between the Churches and the B.B.C. It appears that the trouble is not so much that some of the B.B.C. speakers (like Mr. Fred Hoyle, for example) give lectures which are clearly Atheistic, but that "Christian truths are treated as if they were an open question," as one very Catholic critic puts it. All we are concerned with is this—that if the Churches can broadcast their services regularly, any speaker who has to deal with science should be allowed his uncensored opinion to come across the air, and if this treats "Christian truths" as being more or less "untruths," so what? How frightened Christians are of the truth!

No one more than our bishops recognise how much indifference if not open hostility to religion has gripped most intelligent people. Here we have the Bishop of Norwich admitting that the "most powerful enemy in our midst is the widespread acquiescence in a practical Agnosticism," which is quite true, though the Bishop is obliged to add, "it is timid." It certainly is timid—otherwise the majority of Agnostics would recognise that the proper attitude is an uncompromising Atheism, and there is nothing timid in that.

# "THE FREETHINKER"

Telephone No.: Holborn 2801.

41, Gray's Inn Road,  
London, W.C. 1.

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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. When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, John Seibert, giving as long notice as possible.

## SUGAR PLUMS

Tickets are now available for the G. W. Foote Centenary Dinner on Saturday, January 13 next, in the Charing Cross Hotel, Strand, London W.C. 2. Speeches by well known Freethinkers and a first class musical programme will follow. The accommodation is strictly limited and as soon as the covering tickets are sold further sales must cease. As usual the unlucky ones will be those who delay the applications for tickets. Cash, 15s. per ticket, must accompany applications, and it must be noted if the vegetarian menu is required. Tickets from 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. 1. Dinner served at 7 p.m., reception at 6-30 p.m.

The Memorial Service held in Conway Hall on November 16, in memory of the late Adam Gowans Whyte, was well attended. Excellent and touching tributes came from Miss Marjorie Bowen, Prof. A. E. Heath, Mr. H. J. Blackham and Mr. Hector Hawton stressing, not only the man and his work, but his uncompromising attitude against supernaturalism in all its forms. In addition, Miss Adelina Leon beautifully rendered excerpts from Bach, Fauré and Percy Grainger on her 'cello, and Mr. G. C. Dowman sang Sidney Homer's "Requiem" and Liza Lehmann's "Myself When Young," with fine effect. Mr. C. Bradlaugh Bonner suitably thanked all who had contributed to make this tribute to the memory of a well-beloved comrade a success.

Birmingham readers will need no second reminder to attend at Satis Cafe, 40, Cannon Street, off New Street, this evening (November 26), to hear Mr. F. A. Hornibrook, who will speak on "Freethinkers, Awake!" Mr. Hornibrook is well known and appreciated in Birmingham, and with his forceful manner behind his subject lethargic Freethinkers had better look out. The lecture begins at 7 p.m.

All readers helping Cardiff in the fight for the Sunday opening of cinemas can have supplies of "Sunday Cinemas" leaflet for distribution from the General Secretary, N.S.S., 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. 1.

## THE SUPERSTITION CALLED SPIRITUALISM

### II

A FEW months ago occurred the death of Mrs. Piper, one of the most outstanding of all mediums. She figures in all the histories of Spiritualism, and she certainly convinced a great number of eminent scientists and literary men that through her they could be put in touch with the "spirits" of dead people. So famous indeed did she become, and so impressed was the Society for Psychical Research by her success, that they gave her a pension for life.

It was in 1884 that she first became known, and soon she was controlled by the spirits of Mrs. Siddons, Bach, Longfellow, Commodore Vanderbilt, Dr. Phinuit, and many others. From 1885, she came under the charge of Dr. Hodgson who had made a big name for himself by "exposing" Madame Blavatsky—an exposure which should have crushed Theosophy, but did nothing of the kind. For my own part, after reading how Hodgson carried on his investigation, I always felt that if M. and Mme. Coulomb had not double-crossed Mme. Blavatsky, he would have been fooled as easily by that astute lady as he was later on by Mrs. Piper.

In its obituary notice, the *Psychic News* actually told its readers that "Mrs. Piper devoted her life and gifts to scientific research" (my italics), about as fatuous a piece of ignorant twaddle as I have read for a long time.

There is not a scrap of proof of any kind that Mrs. Piper ever got in touch with any spirit whatever. Her principal control, "Dr. Phinuit," who was supposed to be a French doctor, didn't know a word of French. The brother of another of her "controls," known as "G.P." whose pseudonym was "George Pelham" (it is given by the *Psychic News* as Pelman) wrote to the late Edward Clodd about a report of a seance in which G.P. appeared—"Pelham's" so-called communications were 'uneducated banalities beneath contempt.'" Prof. John Fiske, who knew "Pelham," asked Mrs. Piper certain things which the departed "spirit" alone could have known, and "she was either silent or entirely wrong."

In his book *Sixty Years of Psychical Research*, the author, Joseph F. Rinn, has a great deal to say of Mrs. Piper, Dr. Hodgson, Prof. Hyslop, Sir Oliver Lodge, and many other people who sat with her. Rinn arranged for a sitting under Hodgson and, learning that Phinuit had been a doctor in real life, "asked what certain drugs were for." Phinuit, says Rinn, "dodged my medical questions. Even when I gave the name of the drug in English, he showed complete ignorance of what it was used for. I then began asking the meaning of certain diseases, but the spirit control knew less about them than the average layman."

Rinn also laid a trap for Mrs. Piper into which she fell—asking about a lady who never existed, and was given a suitable reply by Phinuit as if she did. Both Hyslop and Hodgson were angry, and they appear never again to have invited Rinn to any of her seances. Hodgson's Report showed that he fully believed in the spirit explanation after being, in a way, quite sceptical. Rinn hints that he thinks Hodgson was not altogether sincere.

Later investigation showed that "Pelham" had really lived (his name being Pellew) but his family had the greatest contempt for Mrs. Piper's "revelations" which they considered a huge fraud. In Rinn's book is given in full a communication from Prof. Pellew, his brother, far too long to quote here; but its contents showed that "Dr. Hodgson lied outrageously," Rinn

points out, "on many important points in relation to 'G.P.' and his family. Yet it was this Report of his, and belief in Dr. Hodgson's honesty, that caused thousands of people through the years to become converted to a belief in Spiritualism."

The way in which Dr. Hyslop was "converted" also to believe in Mrs. Piper's mediumship is thoroughly gone into by Rinn, who says, "the simplicity of the man was saddening to an old friend like me." Hyslop was bamboozled time and time again. Podmore, of course, supports Rinn's conclusions, but his careful—and, for that matter, sympathetic—analysis of Mrs. Piper's mediumship leaves no doubt that spirits from "beyond" no more influenced her than they do me as I write this. Yet we are told by the *Psychic News* that "die-hard psychical researches were prepared to admit" the truth of some of her claims. The only ones who ever did so were always bamboozled.

In my last article, I pointed out how the two Joans of Arc of the movement, the Fox sisters, publicly confessed the frauds they had for years committed. But as Rinn points out, so did Mrs. Piper, and not many people are aware of this. He gives in full the "Statement of Mrs. Piper" from the *New York Herald* of October 20, 1901. In this, "the brilliant psychic powers" of Mrs. Piper, "which convinced Sir Oliver Lodge," according to the *Psychic News*, appear to have completely forsaken her. She declared:—

"I have always maintained that these (psychic) phenomena could be explained in other ways than by the intervention of disembodied spirit forces. I must truthfully say that I do not believe that spirits of the dead have spoken through me when I have been in a trance state. I have never considered myself a Spiritualist. I cannot see how it can be scientifically proved that we hold communication with the so-called spirit world. When I read the reports of the Society for Psychical Research, it all seems to me that there is no evidence of sufficient scientific value to warrant acceptance of the spiritistic hypothesis. . . .

And so on.

Of course, Dr. Hodgson could not allow this to appear uncontradicted, so he calmly told the *Westminster Gazette* of October 26, 1901, that "the statement made by her represented simply a transient mood." And the American Branch of the S.P.R. declared that Mrs. Piper "has withdrawn her confession." Our readers can take their choice—but it must make some furious to think about the way in which so many famous mediums admit their huge fraud. Still, it is not surprising to find Spiritualists believing anything, no matter how incredible, when we get millions of people believing in the Assumption of Mary merely because somebody says it is true.

But Rinn was never content merely to "expose" mediums. He once worked out a plan for producing "psychic phenomena" designed especially for the members of the Society for Psychical Research, because he thought that they were "the easiest marks for me to begin on." It was a wonderful meeting—he gives the fullest details—and at the close, Prof. Hyslop told his audience that they had seen a "scientific demonstration of the truth of telepathy that cannot be questioned." And he also predicted that "some day in the near future, Mr. Rinn will develop into a great medium." And Rinn replied that he had fooled "this intelligent audience by producing phenomena by fraudulent means. . . . Every feat I performed tonight was done fraudulently." He then showed how they were done. And the point to note

particularly was that he had not produced his phenomena through ordinary conjuring, but "had fooled" the intelligence of his audience.

What chance has a "scientist" in face of such a daring unbeliever? None at all!

H. CUTNER.

## PHILOSOPHY FOR FUN

"THE anti-Metaphysician is really a Metaphysician." Mr. Preece (October 22, 1950) is of the opinion that this is a ridiculous assertion. "By 'ridiculous' I take him to mean 'unreasonable.' I intend to show that my assertion is anything but unreasonable, but first I must ask Mr. Preece to excuse the somewhat elementary process of definition. This is necessary, for Mr. Preece indulges in the use of loose emotive terms which have no descriptive content whatever. Does he really mean, for instance, that my (crude) assertion is uncooked, or raw, i.e., in its natural state? Similarly, 'It is not for logical reasons but simply because of the uneasy consciousness of their own amateur status' that amateur Metaphysicians, in dealing Metaphysics, refer to their work as anti-Metaphysical, and describe themselves as anti-Metaphysicians.

Further, Mr. Preece would do well to take a course in the logic about which he writes so much. For he is confused in his thinking on a number of points. He is confused when he draws the analogy between a Metaphysician and a Christian. On the one hand, Metaphysics is a method, but on the other, Christianity is a body of dogma. While it is perfectly valid to use method against method, it is not usual to use dogma against dogma, at least, it is not usual for logicians who have passed the elementary stages. As the method is an essential characteristic of Metaphysics, it follows that his "analogy" is formally invalid (and as we have seen, it is materially false). Even apart from this, the absurdity of his contention can readily be seen if one takes the trouble to substitute Christian and Christianity for Metaphysics and Metaphysician, his remarks then are patently silly. Again, his confusion becomes apparent when one considers that one is not anti-Metaphysical in the same sense that one is anti-Christian, for as we have seen, the two are qualitatively different. The confusion is made worse confounded by his choice of prefixes, the correct ones being of course, anti-Metaphysics and non-Christian. In the one case, the non-Christian's work has a positive content, which in many instances, happens to be inimical to Christianity. In the other case, the anti-Metaphysician (as distinct from the non-Metaphysician), by the very fact that he is using the same method, is necessarily what? A Metaphysician, of course. I intend to return to Mr. Preece's confusion in due course.

I am aware that Materialists desire that that which is difficult shall be made pleasurable and funny, i.e., shallow. This is understandable when one considers that it is precisely because they are shallow thinkers that they are Materialists. In any event, Philosophy is a serious study, requiring intense and concentrated effort. The desire on the part of the Materialist that Philosophy should be made pleasurable and funny, appears to me to be something in the nature of a defence mechanism, realising as I do that a Materialist coming to any serious work is at a great disadvantage, for he attempts to study a serious subject-matter with little in his mind but "relics of a bygone age." It is significant that most of those people who call themselves Materialists have only a vague idea of what Materialism really is, and I have yet to meet one who can supply a lucid and intelligible



reply to my criticism that Materialism is a body of outworn, discredited ideas. The majority seem to think that Materialism, Freethinker, and Anti-Cleric, are synonymous terms.

Mr. Preece betrays his need for a grounding in (Inductive) Logic when he claims that the statement, "Science first frames an hypothesis then devises experiments to test it," makes science mere guess work. This is idiotic. Scientific method, as any mere laboratory worker will tell you, is essentially a process of either (a) *Direct Induction*, which consists in: (1) An accurate observation of the facts under question. (2) The formation of an hypothesis (usually a suggestion of a possible cause) which is usually suggested by analogy. (3) The testing of such an hypothesis by one or other of the six Methods of *Direct Induction*.<sup>2</sup> (b) *Indirect Induction*, which consists of: (1) Precise observation of the facts. (2) Formation of an hypothesis. (3) The deduction of the consequences of such an hypothesis. (4) Verification of the deducted consequences with observed fact.\*

To state that the result of the above, i.e., scientific knowledge, is guess work, as I have asserted, is idiotic. The actual hypothesis is the offspring of a prepared, highly trained, and well stocked mind. It is not suggested out of nothing, but is intimately dependent on the suggestions of accurate experiment and observation. "As in its origin the hypothesis depends on facts, so for its verification the relevant facts must be examined with the most rigorous exactness, and if there is any discrepancy, the hypothesis must be modified."<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Preece then goes on to imply that Russell's logic and the logic of Empiricism are not the same, when this is certainly not the case. He then attributes to Russell the attempt to explain Induction in terms of Deduction. I do not think (though here I am not sure) that Russell does attempt to do this. What Russell does say (somewhere) is that Induction and Deduction are ultimately the same. If this is the case, then it is a vastly different thing. In any case, I am sure that Russell is not likely to be as facile as Mr. Preece would have us believe. However, if he will give references I should be greatly obliged.

He then goes on to display yet another confusion. The "Assumption of the Intelligibility of the Universe" does not mean that the Universe is intelligible here and now. What it does mean is that the Universe is understandable to human intellect. It is, of course, impossible for a Materialist to demonstrate why the Universe should be intelligible to us at all. I am afraid that he is again being idiotic when he states that the Assumption of the Intelligibility of the Universe is a watered down version of the older idea that the Universe must have an Intelligence to account for it. Here he commits the "fallacy of Equivocation."

I would be pleased if he will demonstrate, how, in what way, his ideas are different from his experience. Does he mean qualitatively different? If so, we have here yet another absurdity. I should be indebted to Mr. Preece, as an aspiring logician, to learn from where else wholes can be inferred. (He affirms that they can't be inferred from parts.)

And so I could go on almost indefinitely. I am sorry to have had to go on to such length, but unlike Mr. Preece I am not content to make simple unsupported assertions. I have never previously been bracketed with such a galaxy of stars as Hume, Berkeley, Hegel, Russell and Whitehead, to mention only a few. It is indeed a great compliment. Thank you Mr. Preece.

VERNON CARTER.

## HEAVEN

HEAVEN? Yes! There are two ways to take heaven in view. One is the religious. It should have passed away a century or so ago; but, curiously enough, it is prevalent, although in a figurative sense. It was natural enough, many centuries ago. Heaven, then, was a ceiling to the earth. Quite reasonably, from that estimation, one could "ascend to heaven," a Jerusalem could be built on it as a foundation, God and the angels could stroll over it, and so on, *ad lib.*

There was only one entry, however, and St. Peter was the doorkeeper. Just so; but what about the time when Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Venus and other "cadicoli," or heaven dwellers, were there? Well, much the same! They used to descend to earth on their varied pursuits; Jove, in many cases, to have another amour with mortal maids, to the intense indignation of Juno; Mars, to superintend some Cæsar or Alexander campaigning; Mercury, on some furtive prowl or other.

Somehow, after all, those old Greek and Roman gods are more attractive than Jehovah or Allah. All of them, of course, are anthropomorphic. If God made man in his image, man, in any case, has made the gods in *his* image.

But the other viewpoint. Heaven, in this, which may be termed scientific, is the infinite space in which move myriads of suns. Shelley, in his admirable poem on "Heaven" so addressed it: "Heaven, even thy name is as a God, in which man his nature sees. . . . Their unremaining Gods, and they, like a vision pass away, Thou remainest such alway."

Some verse stirs the mind like a military band playing a march.

It is amusing to read the Bible, the Word of God, since it reveals that God did not understand the universe He had created. (That majuscule letter is worth while applying to the deity created by man.)

This is impressive:—

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. . . . And I, John, saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Well, well! A believer reads that with reverence. A sceptic, aware of the tremendous force of gravitation, smiles, thinking that the walls, buildings, etc., of this "New Jerusalem" would shatter into fragments when it fell into the bosom of Mother Earth. She is, usually, a Kindly Old Dame; but, good gracious! She would not stand for an approach like that!

The earth won't pass away, but it will die, something in the future. Heaven, or space, will last eternally. How could it be otherwise? As Lucretius asked the question: "What does the fate of earth or heaven matter to us mortals?"

GEORGE F. LAWS.

The way to combat "Godless Communism" according to the Bishop of Lichfield is to "make more Christians." But what is going to happen if the Godless Communists also make more Godless Communists?

<sup>1</sup> "Essay on Metaphysics," R. G. Collinwood. (O.U.P.) p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> See any elementary textbook of Logic for a statement of these. L. S. Stebbings' "Modern Introduction to Logic" contains a fine, lucid account of these methods.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. S. H. Mellone. "Elements of Modern Logic." (U.T.P.) p. 248.

\* I am conscious of the fact that this statement of the constituents of scientific method over-simplifies the case, and in some measure "distorts" the picture. This is unfortunate but unavoidable.—V. O.

## ONCE UPON A TIME

"PHILOSOPHY for Pleasure," by Hector Hawton, is an excellent study of the subject, unusually light in its touch. He shows scepticism in dealing so lightly with it and also shows a dawning suspicion of his own approach, which is only expressed as a belief. But he is still mystified in metaphysical abstraction. Metaphysics, he says, is concerned with "wholes." Maybe he does not connect the reverent solemnity he strives to avoid with the mystic's search for "wholeness" but the word solemn comes from the Latin *sollus*, Greek *holos*, meaning "whole." He seems quite at home with the metaphysical arguments of philosophers, but his own metaphysics comes out in dealing with logic and the empiricism of science.

This recalls a ridiculous statement by Vernon Carter in his argument with Bayard Simmons in *The Freethinker* a short while ago: that the anti-metaphysician really is a metaphysician. This crude assertion of the identity of opposites usually takes the form that one is involved in metaphysics even in challenging it, so in dealing with metaphysics and studying metaphysics, one becomes a metaphysician. By the same sort of logic it is often argued that an anti-Christian is a Christian without knowing it, and an Atheist is really a believer at heart. Perhaps someone ought to write a book "Philosophy for Fun"—some of the arguments really are funny.

His historic survey follows orthodox lines, beginning with the Reason of the Ancient Greeks, but gives little consideration of Scholastics such as Aquinas. Following Descartes, Locke and Berkeley, he deals interestingly with Hume and is doubtful of Kant's reply. He fights shy of the psychology of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, though giving considerable space to the physics of more modern philosophers. He sees absurdity in Hegel's logic, continued in the dialectic of the Hegellians, but is somewhat puzzled by the contradictions of Bergson. He has a glimmering of the absurdity of Alexander in the idea of God as an emergent, but is perplexed by the mystical paradoxes of Whitehead and sees no absurdity in Russell's mathematical logic. It is little wonder, then, that he fails to see the logic of empiricism.

Science first frames an hypothesis then devises experiments to test it. This, roughly, he says, is scientific method. But this makes it all guess-work or chance. With empiricism, it is not simply that experience must be "given," not only is our experience our problem, but without analysis there is nothing to synthesise: A chemist can only make a synthetic product after successful analysis. Science begins with analysis and a problem wrongly stated is a handicap. The first step is logical analysis of questions involved. What is in the premises follows in the conclusions: the methods and instruments used determine the consequences of experiment—and any assumptions there may be appear in the conclusions drawn. Science is methodical discrimination for the purpose of eliminating the errors of unwanted assumptions.

As with his failure to see the logic of empiricism, so also with Russell's logic, which he deals with at some length. Russell tries to explain induction in terms of deduction, but just as synthesis is the opposite of analysis, this is just as absurd as trying to fly the Atlantic in a submarine. Russell tries to show analogy as the basis of logic with a mathematical analogy  $A$  is  $B$  or as  $p$  so  $q$ . Could anything be more ridiculous?  $A$  is different from  $B$ .  $A$  is the first letter of the alphabet,  $B$  the second, and so, one is two. Nor is it any better if these letters are algebraical quantities, for if they are the same quantity it is a mere tautology. As Chapman Cohen has so

often said, if things are different they are not the same. If analogy has its place in our thinking so also has contrast.

Coming down to a further consideration of science, he says, I believe science must, that we must, begin with at least one assumption. But it becomes almost comical in the example he gives—we must assume that the Universe is intelligible, if it is not intelligible we could not understand it. But surely, if it is intelligible we can understand it. What is all the philosophic argument about? Are we trying to make it unintelligible? It is the fact that it is not intelligible—that we are puzzled by it—that our ideas are different from our experience—that drives us to such strenuous efforts in trying to make it intelligible and to get an understanding of it. If the Universe is intelligible and we fail to understand it, the logic of such an assumption is that we are unintelligent.

This assumption that the Universe must be intelligible is a watered down version of the older idea that the Universe must have an intelligence to account for it, which goes back further to the Pantheistic idea of the World as an intelligent Being. It is Russell's as  $p$  so  $q$ . As there is reason in the world, so either there is reason behind it, or as with Russell's  $A$  is  $B$  the World is Reason. But he should have learned from Hume that wholes can not be inferred from parts—which is also shown with Alexander's idea of emergence. And as we saw with Russell, deduction cannot explain induction. If reason is a whole, one half of it is being omitted, and this assumption is derived by deduction from false analogy without discrimination by logical analysis.

There is another aspect that has been overlooked. Analysis is the opposite of synthesis: Instead of going back to a beginning it begins now—going back in memory or in retrospect into history. The modern idea of reason as rationalisation goes back to Schopenhauer's idea of reason as recognition, which connects with Locke's idea of experience built up in memory, just as his "will" is Kant's "categorical imperative" which is seen also in Hegel's idea of history as reason. In the same way, Kant's *a priori* reason goes back through Berkeley's idea of innate reason, to the Christian Divine Reason, with the Scholastic analogy of the macrocosm and the microcosm in the animism of the Necessary Being of Aquinas, which combines Aristotle's reason as cause or purpose and Plato's idea of reason as dialectic. We can see then that the Ancient Greeks had vague and conflicting ideas of Reason.

Age-old conundrums are a necessary part of our education, but there seems something childish about looking back to the wise men of old. Going back to the Reason of the Ancient Greeks carries the assumption of reason as a known quantity, but it is a philosophic problem. That we explain by reason is not inconsistent with the fact that we learn from experience. In discrimination it is not a matter of abstract Truth but whether in fact theory explains fact. To reason from a mis-statement of fact or a pure assumption is to land in illusion. Owing to their lack of experience we use the expedient of a once-upon-a-time-at-the-back-of-beyond in fairy tales told to children, but they grow out of such nonsense, just as science learns the absurdity of unnecessary assumptions as childish fantasies inherited from the past.

H. H. PREECE.

Among the European nations a few years of war places the victor in almost as desperate a situation as the vanquished. War is a gulf in which all channels of prosperity are swallowed up.—VOLTAIRE (writing in 1750).

## CORRESPONDENCE

## ESPERANTO

Sir.—P. S. Roy's diatribe against Esperantists is ill-natured and humourless. Professor Gilbert Murray once described Esperanto as "a delicate and beautiful piece of work." Professor Collinson (philologist of Liverpool University) is an ardent supporter, while Professor Charles Sarolea of the University of this city, whose 80th birthday was honoured the other day, declared in Edinburgh many years ago that Esperanto was "applied logic." He is a practical philologist knowing some 18 Western and *Oriental* languages. So far from calling Esperanto a "mongrel hotch-potch" Professor Sarolea said: "From the literary point of view, as an instrument of literary expression, Esperanto has very few rivals among so-called historical, natural, and national languages."—Yours, etc.,  
H. ARTHUR.

## MARXISM

Sir.—Had I been destined to fill your chair and continued to receive letters from quasi-freethinkers calling themselves socialists and communists, I should feel much of my life work had been in vain or only half done. It is of little practical importance to be merely anti-religious as a Freethinker, but it is of the highest social value to be a completely intellectual Freethinker. All positive beliefs tend to restrict the activity of the mind and to make a man bigoted, biased and intolerant; the negation of which is just what freethinking signifies. None of the greatest of Freethinkers, Bradlaugh, Foote, etc., would ever hold positive political beliefs. It is hard to explain other than by the diagnosis of Swift why these fifty per cent. Freethinkers should fail to realise this, or ever become a disciple of such a detestable character as Marx with his false theories and absurd prophecies and with his meagre intellectual equipment, except by the fact they are perhaps unfortunately afflicted with the "common imbecility of human nature." The social chaos, misery, despotism, bloodshed and horrors resulting from Marx's teaching are little less in magnitude due to time than Christianity. To-day this barbarism threatens our civilisation. As the great Roman civilisation was overthrown and significant that the boundaries behind which these Marxian communistic hordes are confined are the same as them. Viewing events to-day one can as usual only find fitting words from Shakespeare—"When we are born we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools."—Yours, etc.,  
M. BARNARD.

## METAPHYSICS

Sir.—My learned friend, Mr. H. H. Preece, seems to have definitely adopted the pastime of trying to pick holes in my articles in recent issues of this journal. Mr. Preece, as his friends well know, is an erudite man, but is apt to veil his ideas in a rather obscure style which it is not always easy to follow. In the present instance, I suggest that if your readers care to look up my articles and see what I actually said, it will become evident how entirely baseless are Mr. Preece's misrepresentations of my ideas.

I would also add that my critic would be well advised occasionally to emerge from his "ivory tower" and have a look at the real world where people have many more urgent problems to attend to than the abstruse problems of metaphysics which appear to engage Mr. Preece's entire attention. The present age is, pre-eminently, an age of fear and of social tension. Until the primary causes of this extreme tension are removed, fear of war and economic insecurity, I see very little chance of people thinking rationally either about religion or, for that matter, anything else.

A point of view, Mr. Editor, which, with your sanction, I shall continue to insist upon from time to time in future issues of *The Freethinker*.—Yours, etc.,  
F. A. RIDLEY.

## OBITUARY

It is with sorrow that we announce the death of Edith Saphin, wife of that veteran lecturer and worker for Free-thought in association with the West London Branch N.S.S. for very many years.

After the death of her husband, which took place in January of this year, Edith Saphin went to live with relatives in Birmingham, and it was there that she died on November 7. Her remains were cremated in The Lodge Hill Crematorium, Birmingham, and before an assembly of relatives a Secular Service was read by Mr. C. H. Smith, Secretary of the Birmingham Branch N.S.S. We offer our sympathy to the remaining members of the family, to which I add my personal sorrow over the death of a charming lady.  
R.H.R.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

## Report of Executive Meeting, November 16, 1950

The President, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Griffiths, A. C. Rosetti, Ridley, Morris, Johnson, Ebury, Page, Corstorphine, Barker. Mrs. Venton.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Merseyside, Glasgow, Lagos, West London and the Parent Society.

Permission was given for the formation of a Branch of the Society in Lagos, to be known as The Nigeria Branch of The National Secular Society.

Lecture reports noted from Merseyside, Coventry, Brighton, Clayton. Arrangements made for the President and Mr. J. T. Brighton to speak at Bradford. The booking of the Conway Hall for new year dates confirmed.

Further Press advertising of the Society's Principles and Objects agreed upon. Instructions given for reprinting the N.S.S. leaflet "Christian Ethics." Owing to an error in quotation the leaflet "Scrupulously Fair, as a General Rule" is withdrawn from circulation.

A report of The World Union of Freethinkers, London Committee, meeting discussed. A vote was given for an International Freethought Congress in 1951 in France, with the promise of support from the N.S.S. A week-end Youth Conference in England next summer, with invitations to a limited number of young continental Freethinkers, was approved, and support from the N.S.S. promised.

The Executive expressed its willingness to co-operate with outside bodies on specific purposes within the scope of our Principles and Objects, but an essential condition of our co-operation must be an equal confidence with the other co-operating bodies in all the arrangements for the purpose in hand.

Correspondence from various parts of the country, and from Fyzabad and Geneva, were under discussion, instructions given, and the proceedings closed by fixing the date for the next Executive meeting on December 14.

JOHN SEIBERT, General Secretary.

## LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

## OUTDOOR

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (St. Mary's Gate, Blitzed Site).—Lunch-hour Lectures every weekday, 1 p.m.: Mr. G. WOODCOCK.

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

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

## INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Satis Cafe, 40, Cannon Street (off New Street)).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. F. A. HORNIBROOK (London), "Freethinkers, Awake!"

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: E. STOCKDALE, "A Clear Head or a Pure Heart."

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall Library, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Tuesday, November 28, 7 p.m.: S. K. RATCLIFFE, "The Demise of English Poetry."

Glasgow Branch (McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: A Lecture.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: R. O'NEILL MONTGOMERY, "The Scourge of Venos."

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: Dr. DOUGLAS (Saxondale Hospital), "Socialist Medicine."

South London Branch N.S.S. (The London and Brighton Hotel, 139, Queens Road, Peckham, S.E. 15).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: TOM COLYER, Esq., I.L.P. (N.S.S.), "The Great Protestant Swindle."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: THE RT. HON. THE LORD CHORLEY, M.A., J.P., "Ethics and Politics."

West London Branch N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W. 1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, "Religion, Freethought and the Future of Civilisation."

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