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## IEWS AND OPINIONS

### The Sunday Question

ONE would surely have thought that, in this mid-20th century, the old Sabbatarian days, beloved of the Puritans, had gone for ever, and that most people looked upon a day of rest every week as a day of enjoyment. Yet, if we consider the majority of our "legislators" in the House of Commons, we find almost the same lugubrious, fun-hating crowd as graced old Cromwell's days. Nearly everybody who spoke recently on the question as to whether Fun Fairs should be open on Sundays at the Festival of Britain next year, was careful to precede his remarks with the very pious declaration that he was a Christian—but—but, he was all out for freedom in every way, though we must never forget that Sunday was the Lord's Day, and that it would terribly hurt so many people if other people had a go on a swing or a roundabout or fire an air rifle on the Day God himself set apart for his worship and adoration. To be fair, indeed, I believe that some of the speakers, gladly admitting that they were Christians, voted that all Sabbatarian restrictions should be abolished for those who wanted some fun and games on a Sunday.

The truth is, that so ingrained has Sunday been in our habits, so often are we told that it is the Lord's Day, the Sabbath Day, so insistent have our teachers, mentors, and parents been that the Day must be kept "Holy," a Day devoted to God Almighty, that it is only the most hardened unbeliever who can utterly divest himself from the fear that there is something in it—what, exactly, he does not know, but "there must be something."

In a pamphlet which will be soon published, I have gone into the history of the Sabbath Day very fully, and can assert that there is nothing whatever in Scripture which sanctions making Sunday the Sabbath Day of the Bible. Sunday is the first day of the week and was, in all probability, the day on which the Sun was worshipped. Through the centuries, there have always been "heretical" sects of Christians who, believing in the Bible, refused even on the threat of torture and death to celebrate the Sabbath on any other day but the Sabbath—which is the Saturday. The full recital of their sufferings is little known in these hectic days, nor are the books they published in support of their beliefs. But it was by no means the Roman Catholics who only believed in religious persecution. A pretty horrible story could be told of Protestant success in extirpating minor "heresies" of which their campaign against Seventh Day advocates is one of the worst.

The Jewish Sabbath Day, whatever its supporters may say about it, is one of the silliest superstitions ever devised by the mind of man. There is nothing wrong with trying to institute a day of rest—that is, a day on which the workers of the world could enjoy some leisure after six days of hard or monotonous working for a livelihood. Whoever thought of it in ancient times when most of the severe work in the world was done by slaves, if possible, deserves well of mankind.

Of course, it may not have been done in the interests of the workers at all, but in the interests of the priests and kings who wanted a day specially devoted to their worship or to the imaginary God in the skies they invented. We are not sure how or when a "day of rest" was instituted. In fact, some authorities are inclined to believe that it was a question of lucky and unlucky days. It was unlucky to work on a specially appointed day, and so it became the "Holy Day of Rest."

The two stories of its institution to the Jews in the Pentateuch contradict each other, but by the time they were written, it was already a very old custom. I think that I am right in saying that it is very doubtful whether the "kings" of Israel or Judah knew anything about it. But after Ezra, or somebody like him, "reconstructed" the Jewish religion, the seventh day of the week became increasingly holy, or more miserable, it depends upon the point of view which is meant.

The writers of the Gospels made Jesus a Jew (except in the opinion of religious Nazis) and so he kept the Jewish Sabbath. The one thing certain is that he knew nothing about Sunday being the Sabbath Day.

Some of us have wondered exactly how the Sabbath Day was computed—that is, how does anybody know which was the Seventh Day?

To be precise here means that one must know which was the First Day—the First Day of Creation. No one knows this, not even the most religious. Moreover, the Calendar has been corrected over and over again—and, of course, the problem is further complicated if one goes round the world and gains or loses a day in the process.

If the beginnings of the Seventh Day superstition are "lost in the mists of antiquity," how can anyone be sure what day our Sunday happens to be? And so the only *raison d'être* for Sunday is custom, and this seems a very poor foundation upon which to build a whole series of Sabbatarian laws passed solemnly and religiously by a number of M.P.s who, it would be safe to say, know nothing whatever about the history of the Sabbath.

For example, how did the early Christians keep Sunday—not, be it noted, as the Sabbath Day, but as a Day in memory of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ? One of the early Church Fathers, Tertullian, declared that it was unlawful to fast on a Sunday or to worship on the knees on that day. (For those who read Latin, here is the reference: *Die dominica jejunare nefas ducimus, vel de geniculis adorare. Tertul., De Cor., cap. 3.*)

St. Augustine agreed with Tertullian, but the Manicheans, it appears, were among the first "heretical" Christians who felt that Sunday should be a day of humiliation.

It was Constantine who made Sunday, "the venerable day of the Sun," as he called it, the Holy Christian Sabbath. The Sun was called the "Lord Sun," just as Mithra, who was really the Sun, is called the "Lord Mithra." The Syrians called the Sun by the name of Adonis—Adon is the Celtic name of the Sun—while the Jews, who are not allowed to pronounce the sacred name

of God, call him Adonai. Jesus, as we all know, is called "the Light of the World," which, if he was the Sun (as, incidentally, I believe), is very appropriate.

Godfrey Higgins, who was the author of that very able and very scarce work *Anacalypsis*, also wrote on the Sabbath question. His *Horae Sabbaticae* (1826), long forgotten, but still valuable as a fine contribution to the question, has the following in its summing up:—

As a human ordinance, nothing can be more wise than the observance of a periodical day of devotion, rest, and recreation: but, as a Sabbath, in the strict sense of the Jews and Calvinists, nothing can well be more pernicious. The practice of the Roman Catholics seems to be not only the most consistent with Scripture, but the most rational. After their devotions are over, they have no scruple to join in any innocent recreation or amusement.

He points out that in his day could be found people who would not read a newspaper on Sunday, and Scotsmen who would not laugh on the Lord's Day; and he recalled that, in the old laws of England, Sunday was regarded as a festival when leaping, archery, and dancing, were allowed.

To analyse in detail the farrago of twaddle that Parliament heard from the opposers of Sunday Fun Fairs would be as tedious as their ridiculous speeches. But it is almost heartbreaking that people like Mr. "Misery" Martin and his preposterous Society should or can dominate our "legislators" on both sides of the House. And it should be added that one Member of Parliament, at least, speaking on the radio, admitted that for Members to waste time discussing Fun Fairs when we are in the throes of perhaps the gravest crisis since Munich and 1939, was something too farcical to think about. He condemned the whole proceedings in no unmeasured terms.

Whatever may be said about Freethought, it at least has shown some sanity on the question, as it has on so many other aspects of our civilisation. But we must never forget that it has to be *Freethought*, the Freethought of our great Freethinkers.

H. CUTNER.

### A FAMOUS FABIAN PARTNERSHIP

SIDNEY and BEATRICE WEBB'S publications and pronouncements exercised profound influence on political opinion in the English speaking realms. Their standard works on Co-operation, Local Government and kindred themes contain a mass of solid information indispensable to future social historians. But these writings are not too attractive in style, and there is ample scope for more popular treatment of the problems they surveyed.

*The Webbs and their Work* (Muller, 1949, 15s.) is a well illustrated volume of essays edited by Margaret Cole in which their colleagues and others appraise their lives and labours. We are assured that: "Every contributor has been encouraged to write, uncensored, exactly what he thought about the Webbs in the circumstances of his own contribution—to be severely factual or mainly reminiscent; and no criticism has been removed."

Bernard Shaw was invited to write, but he declined, although willing to reply to a questionnaire. "I did not discover Webb," he says, "until he was a public man trying to ginger up the Labour Party to J. S. Mill's level," and G.B.S. recalls the fact that Mill converted William Morris who "on reading Mill's early somewhat half-hearted condemnation of Communism, at once declared that Mill's verdict was against the evidence, and that people who lived on unearned incomes were plainly 'damned thieves.'" Webb followed Morris's example

after Shaw directed him to read Marx and he was soon convinced that the Socialist groups led by Hyndman and Morris would lead nowhere. Shaw claims that in their early days, both he and Webb were firmly convinced of the inevitability of gradualness. They found no party they could join, but when Hubert Bland founded the Fabian Society: "I joined," avers Shaw, "took my place on the front bench at once, and wrote two leaflets for it." Then Webb became a Fabian and, "as joint authors of a *Plan of Campaign for Labour*, laid the foundations of the I.L.P. under Keir Hardie. I had to supply him with its programme."

Composed in his 91st year, E. R. Pease, secretary to the Fabian Society, 1890-1913, in his essay, avers that the Society passed through three stages: "ethical, sentimental and vague." Then appeared the realistic Webb, whose *Facts for Socialists* sold 16 editions, and sixty years after is still in request. Unlike other Socialist parties, the Fabians were never dissolved by disputes. "In all my fifty years' experience of it," states Pease, "very few resignations or differences of opinion occurred." This he attributes very largely to "Webb's good temper and persistence in conciliation. Annie Besant left the Society when she became a Theosophist, and regarded poverty and misfortune as a punishment for sin in a former existence." Graham Wallas resigned when he deemed Webb too tolerant towards religion in Church of England schools. Pease concludes that Webb, having no religion of his own and taking no interest in the matter, was disinclined to meddle with other people's beliefs. Still, Webb "had his reward"; Pease observes, "he was the only English social reformer who had the good fortune to live to see his policy adopted by his country and nearly all his proposals actually embodied in Acts of Parliament."

F. W. Galton, Webb's one-time secretary, describes his research experiences with Sidney and his wife. Lord Beveridge deals with the London School of Economics and the University of London. The Hutchinson bequest of £10,000 was partly devoted to the establishment of the School, and Beveridge claims it as: "A School of Economics and Political Science, where men should be free to study and teach scientifically, pursuing truth as they saw it, independent of any dogma, whether of Socialism or the reverse." He avows that, although in their writings the Webbs evinced a Collectivist tendency, their influence in the School never betrayed a Socialist bias. They were convinced that any impartial study of social phenomena must promote Socialism, and they consistently strove, none the less, to submit any evidence that seemed to negate their opinions.

The successes and failures of the Fabian policy of permeation are ably summarised by Mr. Ensor. Alan McBriar exposes the futility of the assumption that Webb was the father of municipal reform, in the light of the fact that provincial cities, notably Birmingham, had long adopted Collectivist principles denied to London, while Firth's Municipal Reform League had advocated Municipal Administration for London before the L.C.C. came into existence.

Beatrice Webb served on the Poor Law Commission, and was mainly responsible for the Minority Report, which then appeared revolutionary in its recommendations, but is now the law of the land. Joan Clarke's chapter on *The Break Up of the Poor Law* is very instructive.

Desmond MacCarthy provides an interesting study of the Webbs as he saw them, while S. K. Ratcliffe surveys the birth, trials, and ultimate triumph of the *New*

*Statesman*, the Fabian weekly founded by the Webbs. Its circulation was not doubled when it absorbed *The Nation*, then approximately 12,000. "Then, soon after 1934," states S. K., "when the *West End Review* with its modest figure came in, there began the ascending movement which carried the circulation to a higher total than has ever been reached by a weekly paper of this character in any English-speaking country. It has now passed the 85,000 mark.

Margaret Cole reviews the Webbs' protracted research activities. An ex-miner, Jack Lawson, recalls Webb's service to the coal workers when he gave his startling evidence before the Sankey Commission. At the moment Smillie was the miners' idol when "Webb, unemotional, practical and factual," avers Lawson, "won their respect. He got no headlines, but he won the esteem of those who had been long conscious of their need of such a man to state their case."

Sir Drummond Shiels reviews Webb as Minister in Labour administrations. He avers that as President of the Board of Trade and later as Colonial Minister, he was not an unqualified success. An illuminating essay by Barbara Clarke, entitled *The Webbs and Soviet Communism*, notes their earlier antagonism to the Russian Revolution, when Mrs. Webb: "Ten years after . . . in a letter to Sidney's women constituents at Seaham, Beatrice could still describe it as 'the greatest misfortune in the history of the Labour Movement,' very likely to delay economic democracy in Britain for fifty years. Later came their Russian visit with its sequel: *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, when even the obvious excesses of the Bolsheviks were excused or explained away.

In his chapter on the Fabian Society, John Parker opines "that the Webbs' enthusiasm for Russia in the latter part of their life was due in the main to the disillusionment that the two minority Labour Governments, particularly that of 1929-31, had caused. Henceforward they envisaged the coming universal establishment of Communism. To them the inevitability of gradualness was now out of date."

Leonard Woolf in an interesting essay reviews the Webb's political thought. He notes Herbert Spencer's influence over Beatrice, which persisted even after her conversion to Socialism. Still, Woolf's inept remarks concerning the great evolutionary philosopher's "system" make one wonder whether he possesses any real acquaintance with it.

There are other informative essays in this volume. In his sketch of Webb and the Fabians, Parker observes that in conversation, Beatrice "commented that Sidney still remained a convinced free-thinker, whilst she had always been a 'believer.'" That she remained a Christian in any sectarian sense is out of the question. Yet, despite the profound influence that Spencer exercised over her in her younger years, she was never completely emancipated from a shadowy mysticism.

T. F. PALMER.

Towards the end of his life, when Mark Twain was world-famous, he was at a reception where a lady was presented to him who was so overcome at meeting this great, venerable and distinguished-looking old man that she bent over his hand reverently and then looked up at him and said, "How God must love you." Mark Twain was an agnostic, and so, after she had passed on, a merry twinkle came into his eye, as he whispered to the man at his side, "I guess the lady hasn't heard of the estrangement!"

## WHAT I HAVE BEEN TOLD ABOUT CHRIST

BECAUSE the date of his birth is unknown, the feast was celebrated on January 6, until about the year now known as 354 A.D. But there was no official fixed date for the celebration of the Nativity by the Roman Church until about the year 530 A.D., when at the request of the Pope, the Scythian monk Dronysius Erigos, a poet and astronomer fixed our era, along with the date of Christ's birth, as December 25.

No one had known the day, date, week, month or year, as it cannot be found in the New Testament. Matthew has the birth in Herod's time. We now know Herod died 4 B.C.

Herod massacred infants up to two years old to catch Christ in the bunch. So that would put the birth back to 6 B.C. Mark knows nothing of the birth story. Luke has it happen when Cyrenius was Governor, which now makes it 6 A.D. Of course, a spread of 12 years coincides with one of the Bible's sacred numbers 12. Here are the dates named by Church Fathers:—

Tertullian (c. 193 A.D.) said Christ was born 1 B.C.; Jeromè (340-420 A.D.), 2 B.C.; Irenæus (120-200 A.D.), 3 B.C.; Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.), 5 B.C. Josephus gives Cyreneas as Governor in 6 A.D., Luke and Matthew the same.

Archbishop Ussher, whose authority was accepted for the date of Creation, gave it as 9 a.m. October 23, 4004 B.C. A tradition detailed by Epiphanius in the 4th century has the birth 100 B.C. A Jewish legend has a man named Christ crucified for sedition in 100 B.C. Dr. Albert T. Olmstead gives the birth in 15 or 20 B.C. He claims he found evidence in the Babylonian Calendar. *The New York Times*, December 19, 1943, writing about the Star of Bethlehem, says it may have been as early as 11 B.C.

Now that we have the year (?) let us look up the month. Clement of Alexandria makes it November 17, 3 B.C. The Early Christians held the festivity January 5. The Russian and Greek Orthodox Church January 6. The Easter Church celebrated the birth January 7. Others held it in on April 19, 24, 25, or May 20. Quarto-decimans observed it on March 25, while other authorities fix the month through the year. But in the 4th century the Church chose December 25, the birthday of the Sun and vegetable gods, Mithra and Saturn. Therefore, Christianity to succeed had to become paganised and a Church Council in 354 A.D. settled for December 25, although the Russian and Greek Orthodox Church still hold it on January 6. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* says Christians count 133 contrary opinions of different authorities concerning the year he was born. Lupi, a learned Jesuit, at the close of the 18th century, showed that Christ's Nativity had been consigned at one time or another to every month of the year.

Therefore, I find no *historical* evidence worthy of credence concerning Christ. Our sole evidence is the four Gospels which do not agree, and they did not appear until 150 years after the reputed authors were dead.

Professor Adolf Harnack, D.D., says, "In the three synoptic Gospels we have not enough reliable information concerning Christ and his Gospel that could not be written on a single page." Bishop Jacob of Edessa, "Nobody knows the day of Christ's birth. The Church created Christ. Nobody knows what day he was born, and if anything at all is certain, it is that his birth did not take place at Christmastime." Rev. Samuel Shaw, "The 25th December has been fixed as the anniversary of Christ's birth by the Roman Catholic Church, and we want a higher authority than the Roman Catholic Church

for it." Rev. Octavius B. Frothingham, "Christ is inaccessible to scientific research." Dr. Adam Clark, "The Nativity of Jesus in December should be given up." Dr. Farrar says, "It must be admitted we cannot demonstrate the exact year of the Nativity." Thus, the day and month of the Nativity were absolutely unknown to the Early Church Fathers and there is scarcely one month of the year which has not been fixed upon as probable by modern critics.

Renan, who wrote a life of Jesus, found by a study of original manuscripts there was no historical foundation for the narrative of the Virgin Birth. No trace of the Virgin Birth story is to be found before the year 120 A.D. Even Dr. Loofs who pleased the Church for his attack on Haeckel about Evolution discredits the notion of a Virgin Birth. I was also surprised to find alongside this don't know *when*, no one knows where Christ was born. Matthew has him born in a house; Luke has him born in a manger in a stable. The Apocryphal Scriptures in the book, *Infancy of Jesus*, says, "He was born in a cave." The Protevangelion also says he was born in a cave. Justin Martyr, born at Shechem, was familiar with Palestine and lived less than a century after Christ, places the Nativity in a cave. Farrar's *Life of Christ*, says, "The grotto of the manger in the Church of the Nativity is certainly a cave." The cave shown at Bethlehem as his birth-place, from time immemorial is a place of worship in the cult of Tammuz and was known at the time of Jerome, 375 A.D., as the Cave of Adonis. Caves were as common as temples for worship; also stables, mangers, and manger baskets for the baby gods. Nearly everybody worshipped in caves; Apollo, Herakles, Hermes, Cybele, Demeter and Poseidon, were all worshipped in caves. Hermes, in the manger cradle, was surrounded with cows. In fact, nearly all the pagan Saviours were born at the Winter Solstice at the moment of the Constellation Virgo. The Roman Calendar showed December 25 as the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun.

The Saviour god Mithra was in possession of December 25 ages before Christianity. The Romans put on their conical hats of freedom as we do at festival parties and dinners. They had stalls laden with presents and wax dolls. The slaves were freed for one day and no work was performed from December 17 to December 25. By Roman law, no war could begin during this period called Saturnalia: "It was a time of peace and goodwill towards all men."

So, Compliments of the Season!

PETER T. LECKIE.  
(Canada.)

### EGYPTO—ENGLISH

Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN wrote in *The Freethinker* two important statements: first, the necessity to study words, their origin, meaning and correct use in language; second, that knowledge of ancient Egyptology is valuable, yet, only the fringes of this marvellous information had been investigated.

During the recent B.B.C. broadcasts about Man's Idea of God, the speakers, especially a Rabbi, laid stress on the Almighty's name, which he gave to Moses as, "I AM THAT I AM," which is purely ancient Egyptian with a peculiar interpretation which is learned from priest-philosophers with their colleges in the cities of ON, THIS, and THAT, names used in the Bible.

Following this brief introduction, I would like to submit part of my thesis, and hope that some of the readers

will be induced to study an invaluable portion of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

Etymology is usually a dull subject, but they who understand the words are intelligently equipped for social and industrial activities; for, philosophy is a golden key for ancient and modern wisdom, by which wonderful Egyptian language is revealed as a primary root of the English tongue. This knowledge from ancient Egypt's colleges proves that our English word "teach" is derived from the hieroglyphic TEK, to show or explain; and TAHT is the Egyptian for taught. The TEKA Teachers were observers, they who REK-ON or know the sun's for time and seasons; the TEKA or technics from which Egyptian roots, the Greeks derived techné, art; and teckton, a child; also teckton, to build educationally, as did TEKI the Egyptian goddess of technics. These primary word ideas from Egypt passed to ancient Greece and thence to the English language, but many Egyptian words came to England direct; for example, CUN, an ideograph for wisdom; and KAN, the pictorial glyph, displaying cleverness. The cunning one is literally a wise person, and the Egyptian KAN is the root of the English word can, meaning ability. The letters "K" and "C" are permutable like several others. An ancient British Chief was called "CUN," because he understood men and things, and these Cunnings and Kennings explain the meaning of modern place names, as Canning Town, Cannon Street, Kennington, Kensington, and famous Billingsgate, which can be shown by Egypto-English word analysis, as an ancient royal residence BELINS-KHET, of the BELI, kingly priests of Baal, the Sun God worshipped in Great Britain, being the Island of Beli, identified as original Egyptian. Thus Beli, plural Belins, and the Egyptian root KHET for gate, reveal the origin and meaning of Billingsgate, BELINS-KHET, which Chambers's "Etymological Dictionary" defines as foul and abusive language; London's fish market, and no derivation given!

These examples account for deficiencies of English lexicons and correct egregious blunders of professional philologists, by means of ancient Egyptian etymons, which have lain concealed during thousands of years; and, until 1820, remained sphinx-like mysteries.

Sir J. Norman Lockyer, the renowned astronomer, proved mathematically that more than 8,000 years B.C. the Egyptians were an advanced noble nation and marvellous masters of arts and sciences.

Tangible proofs of these sublime facts are revealed by exquisite objects from royal tombs and from the deciphering of the Rosetta Stone, which lithographically proved the keystone in the arch of learning; for men to search out all the wisdom of ancient Egypt to enrich English scholarship.

These marvels in philology and philosophical history urged famous scholars such as Dr. Thomas Young, Prof. Richard Porson and Champollion to discover Egyptian heavenly observations modernised as "divine revelation from on High," which equally enhances town life below, by adding zest with civic interest, to see and know things, and even correct LONDON'S false derivation, given by eminent antiquaries or lexicographers, who teach that London is from the Latin "Londinium," whereas the Romans coined this word from the existing name of London when they conquered this city. LONDON is more ancient than Julius Caesar. Its Egyptian ideographs are EL-ON-DON; EL, the; ON, sun; DON, lord; the city of "The Sun Lord," as London was before the flood and the present dark ages. The word LORD according to other etymologists

originated from the Anglo-Saxon "hlaf," a loaf of bread; but, an englisised lord evolved from the Egyptian DON, as did the titles Sir, a college master, an educational fellow, the DON; singular radicals from ON, together with the Egyptian letter D, an equilateral triangle, and are the oldest hieroglyphics, denoting Lords of Egypt, in whom ideal expression of nobility was ADON, *one Lord only*, THE ONE, AL-ON, which Egyptian roots give our English word ALONE, as the Latins had their SOL-US, alone; and SOL the sun, from the one and only ON of Egypt. An English Lord, therefore, is neither crusty nor crummy bred.

These philological illustrations are portrayed in Egypt's heavenly philosophy with its divine attributes drawn from the life-giving beauteous SUN and physically conferred on mankind. Such was an Egyptian ritual, the basis of excellent ethics. A perpendicular line I signified uprightness, straight in personal character and regular in continuity. An O symbolised the solar disc, true brilliancy as worthy of men designated MY LORD in perpetuity. These hieroglyphical signs, capital I and the great O, are the Alpha and Omega of secret wisdom which Plato learned in Egypt, 430 years B.C., and where Pythagorus also studied mathematics, 580 years B.C., and Pharaomic Lords of Learning, who explained astro-physical science in Sun City Colleges of ON, whose teachers were titled MA-I. MA in Egyptian is truth, and I, the upright one, wise men MAGI, scientific masters of the heavens and earth, or MAGI-STARS, MAGISTERS. Masters of Arts (stars), M-ASTER and also of Masonic Lodges primarily Egyptian, the Greek to Latin and also in the English language.

W. AUGUSTUS VAUGHAN.

(To be concluded)

## MATERIALISM AND SCIENCE

SCIENTISTS who are both Marxists and materialists seem to hit the headlines these days. Those who work on behalf of Soviet Russia, who learn the secrets of the countries of which they are nominal citizens, and then pass those secrets on to some Communist bureau of information, are rightly enough I suppose regarded as news. But those who do not do anything spectacular in the political sphere are often disregarded.

Yet there is a change of outlook in the world of science which is so fundamental that it may gradually, in the course of a few more years, make the whole position of the scientist quite different. It rarely gets any prominence in the Press; it is unsuspected by many Free-thinkers; yet it is important and in many ways surprising. I refer to a new feeling of accommodation between the scientific and the religious outlook. Within the past few weeks there have been published two books stressing this fact; one, entitled *Scientific and Religious Knowledge*, was written by Miss Gertrude Quinton, who is a teacher in a West of England Grammar School (I recently wrote of this volume here); the other, entitled *Christianity and Physical Science*, is by Dr. G. D. Yarnold, at present a lecturer in a Diocesan Training College, but formerly Lecturer in Physics at Nottingham University.

It is not long ago that eminent scientists were writing confident books and articles to suggest that their investigations had shown all religious belief to be a form of wishful thinking. But now many of the greatest scientists—Einstein, Max Planck, and the like—are saying that the religious view of the universe and its

workings is a point of view which is tenable and which may ultimately prove as satisfactory in its way as the scientific point of view has proved in the past.

Here is a recent statement by Einstein—probably the greatest scientific brain of our day:—

"The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mystical. It is the sower of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead."

That, after all, is a statement to which most of the religious leaders of the ages would assent. But probably Prof. J. B. S. Haldane and Dr. Julian Huxley would regard it with surprised contempt! Yet here again is Max Planck, discoverer of the famous Quantum Theory, which has revolutionised physics within the last fifty years:—

"The natural scientist recognises as immediately given nothing but the content of his sense experiences and of the measurement based on them. He starts out from this point of a road of research, to approach as best he came the supreme and eternally unattainable goal of his quest—God and His world order."

The book from which the extract is taken—*A Scientific Autobiography, and Other Papers*—was published in this country only two or three months ago. Planck died in Germany in 1947, so that this book is, in a sense, his last word to the world.

But it is obvious that those scientists who remain pure materialists are not any longer typical. They are, in a sense, suffering from a mental hangover from a period of fifty to a hundred years ago. To believe that science, designed to unravel the problems of the way in which the universe works, can possibly be in flat and complete contradiction to the attitude of the religious man, who holds that the universe acts according to rules because it has a supreme Ruler, is, after all, something of a quibble in logic.

There is a superficial plausibility about Marxism that seems to deceive many, even of the most intelligent men of our time. I know, of course, that there are thousands who do not accept the Christian explanation of things, but who nevertheless do not regard themselves as followers of Marx. But that there is a changing climate of opinion in science is something which I do not think can be denied. It is noteworthy that many of the leading scientists of the day (if not a hundred per cent. orthodox, in that they would be docile members of any Church) are at least sympathetic to a religious attitude to life. And that is such a new thing in modern times that I think it cannot well be ignored by anyone, whatever his theological point of view.

JOHN ROWLAND.

## STAKE WITHOUT FAGGOTS

Stake without faggots; faggots without fire;  
Such is the Roman Church in modern days;  
Impotent now, but with intense desire  
To seize the torch that faggots set ablaze.

But modern times a kindlier story tell,  
Bruno and Holy Office treat the same;  
The Church, now balked, still preaches fiery Hell,  
Where heretic and sinner feel the flame.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

## ACID DROPS

**Not all parsons** see the "struggle as one between Atheistic Communism and Christianity." Canon Green, of Birmingham, for example, preaching to a large congregation in San Francisco, said that "the struggle for the world to-day is between Secularism and Christianity." If he could have made it clear that genuine Secularism is impossible without the principle of Freethought he would have been nearer the truth. The Secularism of Bradlaugh, Foote and Holyoake had in its essence *tolerance*, and they hated Totalitarianism.

**There is going to** be a National Pilgrimage to Canterbury led by Viscount Craigavon and Lt.-Gen. Sir G. Martel "to uphold Christianity against Communism." The pilgrims are going to pray that the Church "may be cleansed from all subversive doctrines and delivered from all false teachers." We wonder what is going to happen to the "Red" Dean if God listens to all the prayers. Will a miracle eject Dr. Hewlett Johnson from his job, or will the Lord pathetically admit that, like the Archbishop of Canterbury, he has no power to give him the sack?

**Lord Craigavon himself** is adamant that, in spite of some "wooly-headed people," Christianity and Communism are incompatible. "Any clergy," he declared, "who show sympathies with Communism are traitors to Christianity," though he later admitted that he had no desire to make any "personal" attack. All the same, the Red Dean was a "false" teacher. From all this, it appears that Dr. Johnson is not liked by Christians and quite a number of Communists could dispense with him. Some people are hard to please.

**A writer** in the *Guardian* (November 10, 1950), has already discovered that George Bernard Shaw was "to a very great extent a Christian without knowing it." This was said of Charles Bradlaugh and Robert Ingersoll and Blatchford and many more Atheists, and is a favourite way Christians have of claiming non-Christians for themselves. We record this merely as the first we have seen about G.B.S., but no doubt the same Christian lie will duly appear over and over again.

**What with Fatima and Lourdes** it is obvious that the Roman Church is not anxious for competitors, and so we can quite understand it doesn't want another shrine in Ireland, however authentic the circumstances are. Ten year-old Mary Barrett has seen the Virgin Mary there 22 times (no doubt in honour of the Hebrew alphabet having 22 letters), but the parish priest won't believe her. This is too bad. We, personally, can guarantee that the visions are just as true as those of Bernadette, and anyway 3,000 faithful sheep believe her for they are patiently waiting for the 23rd vision. It will be an awful blow for the priest—and the Church—if "our Lady" does turn up, as well she might out of spite.

**A determined effort** to bring religion into the homes of the pagan English "by modern advertising methods" is being made by a group of Roman Catholics this Christmas. Three thousand 10 ft. by 6 ft. posters showing the Nativity are appearing on the hoardings, and it that doesn't make 'em come in, well—no doubt another effort on modern advertising lines will be tried. We think it's a waste of good money. A few earnest

prayers cost nothing and God Almighty could send a number of glamorous female Angels who, with dimpled smiles, could probably gather in more converts in a day than three millions of dead posters would in ten years. What about putting a Catholic publicity agent on the job—for nix of course—and see how "our Lord" responds to modern advertising?

**Spiritualistic journals** are every week packed with marvellous cures of incurable diseases performed by white coated healers, but we don't remember that a case of poliomyelitis has yet figured in the records. However, the *Universe* reports that a girl of 17, stricken with this dread disease, was completely cured in two days after prayers to Bl. Clement Campion (who is in Heaven with the Blessed Virgin). Why so many cases are reported every week which must cost the country thousands of pounds, to say nothing of the suffering of the victims, when such a simple method could be adopted is beyond us. Is it perhaps that our medical men have the temerity to deny these cures?

**So after all** we Atheists do—sometimes—get away with it! Mgr. G. Rogers must have astonished a rally of the Motherwell Catholic Truth Society when he rightly declared, "It has always been a problem to understand why Catholics, excellent as they are in every other respect, fail when it comes to answering attacks on their faith, and allow professed atheists to get away with arguments." Mgr. Rogers ought to have added that the real reason was that the professed Atheists were right, and that the genuine Catholics were completely wrong. And now what is the Catholic Truth Society going to do with the reverend gentleman?

**Religion and the B.B.C.** has often formed a topic here but what about religion and television? The *Church Times* is complaining that TV has not yet been captured in the interests of religion, and points out that in France the Roman Church gets a good hour and a half on TV every Sunday, and why don't we get the same? We learn further from the book published by the S.C.M. Press, *Christianity and Broadcasting*, that nine million people listen to the Sunday hymn singing on the radio, and only two millions to the religious service; yet there are Christian journals who complain that the B.B.C. is kowtowing to Atheism!

**The above book** puts in a plea for far more religion—particularly for what are called "the working classes." We ought to have more "working class" speakers on religion. And in any case, "enquiries" at the B.B.C. "bring news that developments in religious television may be expected next year." So we can expect religion more and more to get control of both radio and TV. Still, Freethinkers need not despair. A few lectures like those of Mr. Fred Hoyle can undo the harm a thousand sermons are responsible for—and the religious authorities know this quite well.

**A young Catholic lady**, speaking to 200 Young Christian workers thinks it would be a good thing to "apprentice girls to motherhood"—which strikes us as an unfortunate way of putting it. However, she really meant that if girls knew a little more how to make a happy home, "there would be less juvenile crime and husbands would have to rely less on fish and chips and the tin opener." All of which strikes as being eminently practical, and very good *Secularism*.

# "THE FREETHINKER"

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

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

P. McLAUGHLIN.—We are not sure whether your letter received a reply. We agree that philosophy and metaphysics require special knowledge which can only be acquired by reading books dealing with these subjects. But surely, other parts of this journal ought to be intelligible even to an "office girl"? After all, we prefer not to write down to our readers.

BENEVOLENT FUND N.S.S.—The General Secretary gratefully acknowledges the following donations: Annie Shiel, £1; Glasgow Secular Society (Branch of the N.S.S.), £1 13s.; W. J. Medland, £1; A. Addison, 10s.

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

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

The following periodicals are being received regularly, and can be consulted at "The Freethinker" office: THE TRUTH SEEKER (U.S.A.), COMMON SENSE (U.S.A.), THE LIBERAL (U.S.A.), THE VOICE OF FREEDOM (U.S.A., German and English), PROGRESSIVE WORLD (U.S.A.), THE NEW ZEALAND RATIONALIST, THE RATIONALIST (Australia), DER FRIEDENKER (Switzerland), DON BASILIO (Italy).

## SUGAR PLUMS

There is every promise that the Annual Dinner of January 13 next in the Charing Cross Hotel, will provide a very enjoyable evening. It will be the Centenary of the birth of G. W. Foote, founder of *The Freethinker*, and the successor to Charles Bradlaugh as President of the National Secular Society, until his death in 1915. Mr. Sidney Silverman, M.P., will be present as a guest of honour, speeches from well known Freethinkers, and a first-rate musical programme should provide a full and happy evening for all those fortunate enough to be present. There are still a few tickets left to be had, cash with order, 15s. per ticket, from the offices of The National Secular Society, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

The *Rationalist Annual* for 1951 keeps up the high standard it set itself in the past, and has a feast of good articles for all tastes. Prof. Haldane can always be depended upon for a vigorous championship of Evolution in its many aspects and here, in his "The Rate of Evolution," will be found much valuable data based on the latest discoveries. For the sceptics who think that Psycho-Analysis is a delusion, Dr. Flugel's article "Where stands Psycho-Analysis To-day?" will give them much food for thought and possible enlightenment. For those readers who prefer a discussion on "bourgeois philosophy," especially from a Soviet angle, Mr. R. Skinner's article should prove an excellent disruptive or corrective, as the case may be.

There are many other fine articles written by Avro Manhattan, Lord Chorley, Archibald Robertson, Maurice Burton, F. H. George, Royston Pike, and Dr. Stark Murray, all helping to make up a fine number of the *Annual*. Finally, there is the last article written by the late A. Gowans Whyte, "The Great Divide," which shows no falling off of his gentle, witty, but completely deadly way of dealing with the opposition. The *Rationalist Annual* costs 2s. 6d., and is published by Waits & Co.

## AN ENGLISH MESSIAH

CHRISTMAS DAY, December 25, has been a religious festival in Europe continuously since Roman times; to be precise, since December 25, A.D. 274, when the Roman Emperor Aurelian (270-275) proclaimed the day as the feast of Mithra, of "The Unconquered Sun" (*Sol Invictus*) and as a public holiday. Long before even this fairly remote date, a long series of Deities in East and West alike, in Egypt, India, and many other lands, Krishna, Horus, *et al.*, had their birthdays celebrated upon this day, the immemorial Feast of the Winter Solstice, the shortest day in the unreformed (pre-Gregorian) calendar.

Christmas Day is, accordingly, the day upon which Messiahs, the Saviours of Mankind, appear; upon this auspicious date, the reverent thoughts of mankind turn instinctively to Gods; not Gods in the remote splendours of the Heavens, but God's who have appeared in human form, as Messiahs who descend from heaven to save their erring sheep. Nor, contrary to the exclusive mythology of early Christianity, have Messiahs been confined to the Jewish "chosen people." Contrarily, they are to be found in all lands—even in England!

For the modern English, like the ancient Jews, have often regarded themselves as a "chosen people," and a chosen people must have its Messiahs born of its own stock. There have been many such in, what we may, perhaps, term the margin of English history. In the days of the Commonwealth, when a Messianic atmosphere pervaded the entire nation and when even the great Cromwell seems to have seriously considered himself as, at least, the forerunner of the Messiah, there was a whole spate of Messianic movements. There was the powerful movement of the "Fifth Monarchy Men," who believed that King Charles would be succeeded immediately by "King Christ" and His Universal Reign; indeed, the followers of the "Fifth Monarchy" were actually powerful enough to cause serious concern to the successive governments of the Commonwealth, the Protectorate, and the Restoration monarchy.

Then there was the fantastic interlude of James Nayler, the rival of George Fox for the leadership of the Quaker movement, who rode through the muddy lanes of Somerset and entered Bristol amid pouring rain surrounded by a band of adoring disciples chanting, "Hosannah to the Son of David"; a nine days' wonder followed by a nine days' debate in the Puritanical Parliament, which ended in the infliction upon the English Messiah of tortures hardly less savage than those inflicted upon the original Jesus by the Romans in the Gospel story.

Then, in later times, we have a whole succession of Messianic pretenders, all now deservedly forgotten except Joanna Southcott and, perhaps, the comparatively recent Smith-Piggot and his notorious "Abode of Love."

The most extraordinary of the English Messiahs is, perhaps, the least known. This was John Nichols Tom, the son of a Cornish publican, whose extraordinary teachings, still more extraordinary personality and pretensions, and violent end in armed rebellion against the British government, caused a brief but violent sensation in the opening months of what was eventually to prove the eminently placid and respectable reign of Queen Victoria.

The bizarre story opened in 1832 when England was still in the throes of the violent agitation caused by the revolutionary disturbances which heralded the stormy passage of "The Reform Bill" of that year. In the

month of September of that year, a glittering and mysterious personage took up residence in the "Fountain Inn" of Canterbury, the metropolitan city of the English Church. The new arrival at first gave his name as "Count Moses Rothschild," a high-sounding title which he presently exchanged for that of "Sir William Percy Honeywood Courtenay, Knight of Malta, and the only surviving son of the last Lord Courtenay." The purpose for which his Lordship had honoured Canterbury with his presence was to stand for the new reformed Parliament in the forthcoming elections.

Stand he did, with a flourish of trumpets and a display of prodigality such as the quiet Cathedral city had never seen. Oyster barrels full of golden guineas kept on arriving at the Hostel where "Sir William Courtenay" had taken up his residence. Whilst ceaseless manifestos proclaimed:—

"Follow Courtenay, and you will see the good old days back again, the old days of the good old England, with roast beef, nut-brown ale and plum pudding for all."

This so alluring prospect, backed by the overwhelming personality of "Sir William" persuaded 375 worthy burgesses of Canterbury to vote for the flamboyant newcomer. A remarkable enough result, particularly in the conservative atmosphere of a quiet cathedral town! However, the number, though encouraging, was not sufficient; "The Knight of Malta" was returned at the bottom of the poll.

"Sir William Courtenay," however, was not discouraged. He stayed on in Canterbury and his next venture was to issue a paper called *The Lion*, which combined a political and economic programme of extreme radicalism, that actually anticipated the demands of the Chartist movement of a few years later for annual parliaments, universal suffrage, and drastic social reforms, with a violent defence of Christianity. In the latter connection *The Lion* described "Tom" Paine:—

"This weak-minded beggar, from the ashes of Voltaire's filthy productions, has done England more mischief than any other character the British Isles ever produced."

However, "the Deliverer of the English poor," as *The Lion* grandiloquently described its editor, soon began to get into deep—and hot—water. After only four issues, *The Lion* had to discontinue publication, on account of the unfortunate incarceration of its editor in the city gaol for debt. However, "the English poor"—and not all "Sir William's" supporters belonged to this category—soon came to the rescue of their "deliverer." The debt was paid and the "Knight of Malta" was triumphantly escorted from gaol to his hotel by his cheering supporters.

F. A. RIDLEY.

(To be concluded.)

## SCIENCE, RELIGION AND MORALS

### X—CHRISTIAN DIVERSITIES

(1) As previously mentioned, one great difficulty for an inquirer is to ascertain what constitutes Christianity.

(2) In the foregoing brief sketch the theological principle of the Atonement was taken as the nodal point.

(3) The definition given there was a tentative one for purposes of fixing some essential principle in this religion.

(4) There are some who deny the doctrine of the Atonement and yet "profess and call themselves Christians."

(5) It is impossible in these notes to follow further the quest for some all-embracing definition.

(6) Here certain basic principles will be taken as representing Christianity as a recognised world religion.

(7) Theologically the main distinctive principle of Christianity will be considered to be the Atonement.

(8) Philosophically the main principles will be taken to be a belief in objectivity and personality.

(9) Personally the basic belief, Transcending all others, is taken to be that of personal Human Immortality.

(10) Christianity as a system of Morals and the practice of Morality will be considered separately later.

(11) It may be said that there is much more in Christianity than the static belief in any doctrine.

(12) There is a dynamic Faith in a living truth, which is something more than belief in a mere theory.

(13) This may be granted; but faith has to be faith about something, it implies a positive attitude.

(14) Faith will be considered later, here it is only noted that it must be a belief in certain ideas.

(15) At present an endeavour is being made to ascertain what these ideas are for ordinary Christians.

(16) There appears to be in modern times a decline in "theoretical" and an increase in "practical" religion.

(17) Frequently one is met by the statement that it is not theory but practice that really matters.

(18) There seems to be an increasing tendency to deprecate "mere theory" as useless verbal quibbling.

(19) This indicates confusion of thought because behind any purposeful action there must be a purpose.

(20) This purpose is a subjective factor and involves some idea, however vague it may then be.

(21) This "practical" attitude, in the majority of cases, seems a Cloak for indefiniteness of thought.

(22) This inquiry is an endeavour to ascertain the ideas which provide the motivation of these actions.

(23) This can be done frequently when the real motivation is not self-conscious to the actors.

(24) Psychology is exhibiting increasing evidence of the large part played by the unconscious.

(25) It may be asked: "Under these circumstances why is any definition of Christianity necessary?"

(26) It is recognised that many forms of religious belief, such as mysticism, are very undefined.

(27) A lack of definition enables the term Christianity to be extended to include all morality.

(28) This lack of limitations is often found convenient for quite ingenious theoretical contortions.

(29) A further complication has been introduced by Christian modernists in their "dynamic" theories.

(30) Only a limited number of Christians restrict the basis of their religion to the statements in a book.

(31) Jesus appears from the evidence of the Christian Bible to have believed in objective reality.

(32) Yet some Christian Churches seem to repudiate objective reality or at least materialisation altogether.

(33) Jesus appears to have believed in a dualised system of personified powers of good and evil.

(34) Yet some Christians seem to deny these personifications, if not, indeed, moral distinctions.

(35) The Gospel Jesus seems to have believed in a Judgment Day and a separation of Saved and Damned.

(36) Yet this distinction appears to have been greatly obliterated, especially by some modernists.

(37) One would not expect a coincidence among Christians in all details of their beliefs.

(38) An inquirer would, however, expect some coherence in a religion which professed to be the salvation of humanity.

(39) For these reasons certain few presumably basic theories are here conceded as generally agreed.



- (40) Those who stand outside, or repudiate, these theories must necessarily be left unconsidered.
- (41) It may seem that undue emphasis has here been put on these distinctions and definitions.
- (42) This is justified, however, by the growing tendency in religion and other spheres to indefiniteness.
- (43) A religion may be considered of little worth when its name is merely a label for heterogenous vagueness.
- (44) Either Christianity stands as the name of a reasonably coherent system of principles and beliefs.
- (45) Or it means anything to anyone and indicates nothing more than arbitrary indefinableness.
- (46) Some modernist Christians maintain that their religion is a living and developing one.
- (47) Whatever basis there may be for this, it does not seem to justify fundamental changes in principles.
- (48) If the most cardinal principles of historic Christianity are abandoned a new name is desirable.
- (49) Either Christianity has some fundamental connections with the reputed Jesus or it has not.
- (50) Here the purpose of this inquiry will be served if these historic bases are generally accepted.

W. EDWARD MEADS.

### OPEN LETTER TO LORD ELTON

I HAVE just had the experience of listening to your Lordship's summing up of the B.B.C. series "Man Without God" (Home Service, 23rd November, 1950). In passing, allow me to apologise to the artists in "Take it from Here," for your Lordship followed this programme, and at the beginning of your address I thought "Take it from Here" was continuing after its scheduled time, and that it was even more inane than usual. The programme's inanity was accounted for when I realised that it was you and not they who sought to "entertain" me.

I have never previously heard so much "twaddle" in such a short time, no—not even from the Materialists. It is all very well to put up your own "Aunt Sallies" in order to display a certain amount of dialectical skill or knocking them down, but if those skittles are irrelevant or false, then such methods deceive no one. The fact that you have to misrepresent Agnosticism and Atheism suggests to me that this is due to your inability to meet the true Agnostic and Atheist case with cogent enough arguments and consequently that you are compelled to put up a show in order to bolster up your own case.

The strength of the Agnostic and Atheist case appears to be due to a certain inability on the part of the Christian to describe in an intelligible way his relationship to God. Whatever you may mean by "God" I take it that you do not assert that God is a phenomenal object, consequently, any description of your "imago dei" would have to be drawn from some intra-experiential relationship and then extended analogically to a reality which is other than ourselves. It simply will not do to assert that you experience "a sense of unreality" when discoursing with the unbeliever. As Dorothy Emmett points out (*Nature of Metaphysical Thinking*, p.98),

"Those who speak of religion as based on an immediate experience, when they are asked to describe the experience, notoriously do so in the terms of the religious tradition to which they belong." Such terms as "infinite," "omnipotent" and similar metaphysical compliments are meaningless to the unbeliever. The problem of man's relationship to God "must be capable of being conceived in some determinate form: otherwise we must come to the Agnostic conclusion that religious

symbols are proliferations of feelings in face of the completely unknown" (Ibid, p. 116). Some hold that this difficulty can be resolved with the aid of analogy, but an initial difficulty has first to be met. How can that which is qualitatively other than experience be described in terms drawn from experience? An analysis of experience shows that there is, and must be, a complete break between the phenomenal and the non-phenomenal, consequently it is reasonable to doubt the validity of analogies drawn from the former and extended to the latter. This, I believe, is the strength of the Agnostic position, because one cannot establish the validity of such analogies with pre-supposing that they are "ab initio" valid. If one holds the converse, i.e., that one can draw such analogies, is to suppose that one can compare a phenomenon without something which is not phenomenal, which is manifestly absurd.

As we shall see, your arguments are factually false and logically invalid. You claimed in effect that the (to me) indisputable fact of early Christian martyrdoms thereby proves the existence of God. It seems self-evident to me that it does nothing of the kind; it may suggest that the martyr really and passionately believes certain things to be the case it does not prove that what the martyr happens to believe is the case.

I do not seek to argue with you on your "direct modes of experience," though I should be interested to learn your criterion for testing the validity of an experience. For instance, how do you know that an experience "x" is an experience of "God"? You can only feel sure it is if you preclude any possibility of error, or any probability that you are not subject to illusory experiences (and we must remember thinking or "feeling" a thing does not make it so).

Your "argument" that it is just as futile to attempt to disprove the existence of God, as it is to prove metaphysically, that the car which the driver can control does not exist, is really a weak analogy, and the logicians assure us that analogy is, at best, only an illustration, and never an argument. However, this argument rests on three confusions. First, the unbeliever does not attempt to prove the non-existence of God, indeed, how can one disprove that to which (to the unbeliever) a meaningless term refers? Secondly, no one is likely to attempt to disprove the existence of a car which can be controlled. If its existence is doubted, one can either stand in front of it when the car is moving, or one can go and look. Now, if the car does exist, then different persons (with standard vision) placed in the relevant situation will all have a similar experience, which for convenience may be described as "seeing a car." Thirdly, in contra-distinction to the previous confusion, people who assert the existence of God cannot agree on the nature; the attributes; or of the description of God, so different are their conceptions, and so certain are their conceptions of the truth of their individual conceptions that men have actually martyred each other, for different conceptions, of what is, presumably, the same God. In the terms of your own argument, this fact of martyrdom will prove that each of these different conceptions is true. How then can two contrary and incompatible predicates be asserted of the same subject?

You seem confused regarding the cogency of metaphysical argument. In the sense already noted, you imply that metaphysical argument is futile, yet you later affirm "The existence of God can be proved metaphysically." In the one case, metaphysical argument is futile, in the other, it is cogent enough to prove the existence of God. Personally I should be interested to

learn these "proofs," realising, of course, that "existence" is not a predicate.

You claim "Nero was a fair example of what a man can be without God." As an Agnostic I take the strongest possible exception to this remark. Your sense of "fairness" is "worthy of your creed." However, it simply is not true that Nero was without God. Nero was God! In any case he was mad. On the other hand Torquemada was no lunatic, yet presumably he was a man "with God." I assure your Lordship that if you choose to engage in a mud-slinging contest, then undoubtedly you will be sorry.

Your remarks on Christianity and social progress have been dealt with elsewhere, and are now seen to be a series of superstitions in keeping with your general attitude. (See Bowen's *Christianity and Social Progress* and the well documented writings of Joseph McCabe.)

You doubt that "man is the measure of all things" by implication you asserted that "God is the master of all things." This latter proposition is meaningless to me, and I venture to assert, to all rationally minded persons. I do not mean to imply that if one finds meaning in this proposition, then one is *ipso facto* irrational, but if any person can see any meaning in this proposition, then it is incumbent upon them to demonstrate it. God is said to be "all powerful" (whatever that is), and while there may be some mitigating circumstance in the case of man, there can be none in the case of God, after all, God is "all powerful" while no one claims that man is. Consequently, God can, while man cannot (at least in the same sense), alter the state of things. Your Lordship has one consolation though, I am trying.

VERNON CARTER.

### JEHOVAH WANTS SOME COACHING

PRIOR to the decipherment of their language a little over 30 years ago, we had hardly any information about the Hittites who formed a connecting link between two great cultures of the ancient world, the Greek and the Assyro-Babylonian. The Greek only mentioned them in legend, as of the Amazons of Cappadocia who, in point of fact, were armed priestesses (and sacred Eunuchs) of their great Mother-Goddess, MA. The only sources of information available were scanty references in Assyro-Babylonian tablets, Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, and the Bible; however, Jehovah's knowledge of the "Sons of Heth" seems to have been very hazy and his revelation misleading.

Abraham, he tells us, purchased his family vault, the cave of Machpela, from a Hethite or Hittite; according to the Old Testament Heth was the son of Canaan, and the Bible always mentioned Syria as the home of the Hittites. And Esau (Edom) in contrast to his pious brother Jacob, married Canaanite women, the daughters of Arabs (Ishmael) and Hittites (Gen 28, 8; 36, 2).

In reality, *Khattushash* (now Boghaz-keui), some 150 miles north of Ankara, was the capital of the Hittite kingdom which gradually, in deadly conflict with the ancient kingdom of the Pharaohs, established its power throughout the whole of Northern Syria. Following the great—but indecisive—battle of Kadesh, on the Orontes, an Egyptian-Hittite treaty had established Syria and Palestine as a buffer-state, divided into two spheres of influence. The Pharaoh dominated the south up to the Nahr al-Kalb (or Dog River) near Beirût, in Syria, and the region north of it was to be Hittite territory "for ever." So the Hittites or "White Syrians" (in contradistinction to Syrians proper, whom the Egyptians

depicted as "Red") whom Jehovah considered as the native settlers in Palestine, were there only as colonists.

Thirteen years after the conclusion of the treaty with the Hittites (1266 B.C.), Rameses II married the daughter of Khattusilis, the prince of the Kheta, Khattu or Hittites, in pursuance of the policy of his predecessor, Rameses I, who, on his accession, had made an attempt to enter into friendly relations with Supiluliu, the great Hittite king.

For a long time the Hittite Empire had been the political power of Asia Minor, a country of passage between East and West, whose entire history is a record of immigrations to and fro across it from Central Asia to Europe and from Europe to Asia as far as India. The Hittites probably came from Europe; their language bears a certain resemblance to Archaic Greek, as though both had been derived from a common source. Excavations near the village of Boghaz-Keui had brought to light many cuneiform tablets in the Hittite language, which so far defied any attempt at deciphering. It was soon shown that the language used in these inscriptions was identical with that of the country *Arzava* (i.e., Western Cilicia), of which examples had been discovered in the archives of Tel-el-Amarna, containing the correspondence of Amenophis III and IV with temporary kings and princes of Asia Minor. In 1915 the ingenious Czech, Professor B. Hrozný, found a brilliant solution of the Hittite mystery and gave new contours to a blank area on the map of Asia Minor; the history of the oldest Aryan race took shape and comparative philology was enriched by his grammar of the most ancient of the Indo-European languages.

The political system of the Hittite Empire was established on an hierarchy of petty kings under one supreme ruler, or "king of kings." Well situated in the heart of Asia Minor, controlling the routes from the Mediterranean to the Fertile Crescent—owners of rich iron mines—they subjugated neighbouring peoples. Up to then no effective and economic methods had been devised for producing in bulk iron of good quality; this process, revolutionising the whole human race, was first evolved among the Armenian tribes in what the Hittites called *Kizwadana*. Considering the great superiority of iron weapons over bronze weapons, the production remained a guarded secret and output was controlled in virtue of the normal State monopoly over the metal trade. However, barbarian mercenaries serving in the Hittite army, eventually learned and divulged the secrets of the production of iron weapons. To these "traitors" we owe it that iron became cheap and democratised agriculture and industry.

At that time, the Hittite Empire underwent a sudden relapse in every respect and the records ceased abruptly. Another Aryan people, the Phrygians, installed further to the south, attacked that great nation, which had dominated Asia Minor for eight centuries. King Midas, who conquered the Hittites, was taunted by the Greek legend as Silly King Midas to whom Apollo had given asses' ears. Nowadays we know better, thanks to the amazing ingenuity of one man who found the keys to sundry palæo-Asiatic languages and inscriptions, and I propose to dedicate another article to the work of Prof. Hrozný who brought to life documents that had been considered dead past redemption.

P. G. ROY.

\* These were the Phœnicians to whom Solomon sent for help in the building of his temple (2 Chr. 2). It is noteworthy, however, that this "House of the Lord" closely resembles the Hittite temples and their paraphernalia.

## CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS

A FINE historical novel, "Fires in Smithfield," by Jack Lindsay, came the writer's way recently. Mr. Lindsay is a student of history, and the facts of the cruel and bloody reign of Mary Tudor are woven unobtrusively into the narrative. Roman Catholics do not care to be reminded of the dreadful atrocities committed in the name of their religion when it held supreme power and, nowadays, there are many non-Catholics who sympathise with them. Mr. Lindsay is a plucky man, and it would be interesting to know what the circulation of his book has been in England and America.

Apart from its subject matter "Fires in Smithfield" is an absorbing tale of love and adventure, and the author really does succeed, in dialogue and descriptions of people and scenery, in transporting the reader back to that vanished period. Mr. Lindsay's women characters are especially delightful and alone make the book well worth reading. Every Freethinker should possess a copy and circulate it among his Christian friends.

There is no doubt that Rome is cashing in profitably on the present fear of Communism. Roman Catholic and Protestant unite in a common hatred.

In South Africa a meeting of Protestant ministers was held recently in Pretoria during which several of the reverend speakers expressed concern at the way Catholic influence was spreading in the country. It was even suggested by someone that too many Catholics should not be encouraged to settle here! All Freethinkers should condemn bigotry whether of the Protestant or Catholic variety. Students of South African history remember that a large proportion of the Afrikaner people derives from the Huguenots who fled from the persecution of His Catholic Majesty Louis XIV in the 17th century. The tradition of Protestantism is still powerful among them, but the ancient enemy has lost much of his fearsomeness in the stress of modern international politics. Even in this ultra-Protestant land the softening-up process of Catholic propaganda is meeting with some success.

With Mr. Ridley's recent articles in "The Freethinker" on totalitarianism I am in cordial agreement. Both Moscow and Rome must be watched. Rome is plausible and dangerous with her centuries-old training in the subtleties of diplomacy. Let totalitarian Communism be repudiated by all means, but beware that in casting out Satan we do not admit Beelzebub!

"S. A."

## CORRESPONDENCE

### COMMUNISM

Sir.—I feel sure that not many of your readers will agree with J. G. Bellamy's views expressed in his letter (*The Freethinker*, 3rd December). He says, "Aggressors must be taught that aggression does not pay." Since when has that come about? It just depends who are the aggressors. This country of ours has been the greatest of aggressors, hence our possessions all over the world, and now the U.S.A. is out to emulate us. Our sons are taken from us to fight and die in foreign countries. Had South Korea attacked and overrun the North, would that have been aggression in the eyes of U.N.? It is only the Communists who are charged with aggression. Mr. Bellamy is afraid that Communists are going to dominate the world. Well, what of it? Millions of people in the Eastern countries have been treated like serfs, toiling for a handful of rice, uneducated and living under primitive conditions. These people want Communism, it is their salvation. The truth is, the Western Powers are afraid of Communism spreading to their own countries, and by lying propaganda and oppression are trying to stop it.—Yours, etc.,

W. ASHTON.

## SUNDAY FILM FANS

Sir.—The Rev. Frank Martin is not the only Rev. gentleman who is more "than sick at the threat to the sanity by some of his fellow Christians on the question of the Christian Sunday."

The Rev. Canon J. J. A. Thomas, M.A., Vicar of St. Mary's Parish Church, Swansea, shares the same views. He recently said, "In the past and indeed until quite recently the attitude of many Christians to the Lord's Day has had an Old Testament rather than a New Testament flavour, with the result that Sunday was hedged about with prohibitions and restrictions which were, to say the least, irksome."—Yours, etc.,  
(Councillor) D. EVANS, J.P.

## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Sir.—I have often wondered what it is that makes a grown man, famous in some field or another, whose genius cannot be disputed, believe in fantastic tales which school teachers are now having difficulty in making children believe.

If religion was not taught in schools until the children were 16 or more before broaching them on the subject there would be very few Christians. But there would be some because of one thing—the psychological problem.

I believe there is a yearning in some men for the supernatural—something to turn to when everything is going against them. Without this they are lost. If it was announced and proved tomorrow that there was no God and the cunning devil who wrote the Bible came forward and made a clean breast of it I expect these men would still pray to God. They couldn't bear not to have something to appeal to. It does, I think, show a certain weakness in their character. But once this feeling has caught a hold on them it is indeed hard to shake off—almost impossible, and very, very few have done it.

It is because of this that it is a hard task to attempt to introduce some sanity into the world. Keep your hard-hitting *Freethinker* going, and good luck!—Yours, etc.,

J. G. BELLAMY.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

### Report of Executive Meeting held December 14, 1950

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

Also present: Messrs. Griffiths, A. C. Rosetti, Ridley, Morris, Johnson, Ebury, Woodley, Corstorphine, Barker, Hornibrook.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Financial statement presented. New members were admitted to the Parent Society.

The portrait of Chapman Cohen painted by the late J. H. Amshewitz, R.B.A., was acquired for the National Secular Society.

Notice read of a legacy of £250 under the Will of the late J. E. Fysh, of New Hebrides, coming to the Society. The legacy will be subject to reduction due to exchange rates.

Instructions given for the despatch of the first Annual Conference notice.

Correspondence dealt with from Bradford, Glasgow, World Union of Freethinkers, Geneva, Perthshire, and London districts.

Arrangements made for future lectures in Conway Hall in the new year.

Details concerning the Annual Dinner on January 13 were reported and suggestions discussed.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for January 4, 1951, and the proceedings closed.

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.

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

RETIRED CIVIL SERVANT (Freethinker) requires bed-sitting-room, or similar accommodation in quiet house. Anywhere within easy reach of London. F. Kenyon, c/o Freethinker Office, 41, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1.

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