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## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### Ghosts

ALL students of religion—I leave out parsons, as they are not students of religion at all—are well aware of the large part played by death in the formation of religious ideas. A great mass of evidence exists in favour of the thesis that nearly all gods have developed from ghosts, that beginning with the fear of the dead chieftain or ancestor we have a series of gradations which bring us up to the God of more developed religions. In the vast majority of cases, whenever the genealogy of a god can be traced back, it seems to lead to some primitive ancestor or great man, who became an object of fear and worship after his death. And when we find in parts of India and elsewhere the same process of god-making going on, and have unquestionable evidence of the transformation of men into gods, the proof seems almost complete. But, it may be noted, that this worship of the ancestor is not due to affection so much as to fear. The ghost is not loved but dreaded. A great many primitive customs are devoted to guarding the living against the visitations of the dead, and nothing would give the primitive mind greater comfort than to know either that the ghost had gone too far away to come back—as Spiritualists say of their choicer spirits that have migrated to the highest spheres—or that it had ceased to interest itself in the affairs of its relatives. Most gods are ghosts, and divinity is based on death.

### The Tyranny of the Grave

A well-known French writer has said that the greatest tyrants humanity has known are its dead. That is a melancholy truth, all the sadder because of the fact that this tyranny increases with the goodness of the man while living. The power of the tyrant is broken by death. That of the bad man passes away with him. But the admiration and love which the good man arouses blinds people to the evil of accepting him as a guide for future generations. Whether man or myth, Jesus has proved a greater tyrant than Nero, and his rule has caused evils at the side of which the greatest attributed to the Roman are of small account. No powerful organisation has been formed with the specific command, "Thou shalt do this or that," because Nero has commanded it. But the world has been forced to refrain from this or to do that because Jesus, or Moses, or Mohammed, has said it. For that reason there is no tyranny so great as a religious tyranny, and none so difficult to remove. A Secular tyranny has against it always a mass of discontent, and, in any case, its violation of right is obvious. But a religious tyranny rules in the name of morality and enlists some of the best motives of mankind in its service. It is a rule of the dead maintained in the name of justice to the living. No other rule has been so widely planted, and none is so difficult to remove.

### Phantoms from the Past

All religion, however disguised, is a worship of the dead. When it is not the transformed ghost in the shape

of a god, it is in customs, ideas, ceremonies. Go into any church and chapel, and the man who can look beneath the surface finds himself in a veritable charnel house. The phraseology used is largely that of the dead. The sentiments expressed are those of the dead. The ceremonies performed, the clothing of the priest, his postures, have all been ordained by the dead. None have been suggested by contemporary thought or demanded by contemporary needs. When one is watching a church full of people going through a set religious service one can hardly escape the weird feeling that one is observing a congregation of corpses that have been brought back to life to go through a set of ceremonies that may have meant much to them, but which can mean nothing at all to those who are living the life of to-day. And beyond the officiating priest one sees the ghost of the savage whose fear-stricken mind gave birth to it all, and whose successor now sits in an episcopal chair, voicing the ideas of the cave man in the language of Shakespeare. The whole priesthood has no greater authority than that it is continuing the rule of the dead. No one can claim that if the present generation had not found these priests in possession it would have created them. The power of the priest is based upon the dead; he perpetuates their rule as the condition of maintaining his own. He is the mouth-piece of the ghosts. If the people of the world were to revise their institutions in the light of the knowledge and needs of to-day they would all be scrapped *sans* ceremony. They are here as servants of the dead—interested agents for the perpetuation of their rule.

### Past and Present

Of course, it is not in religious matters alone that the dead tyrannise over us. It can be traced in many other directions. Legal procedure is full of it. Our laws of primogeniture enforce the ideals of a dead and gone generation, and the administration of property is in numerous cases determined by the wishes of the dead rather than by the needs of the living. We take our rules of decorum from the past, and frown upon the one who is bold enough to set them at defiance. From the cradle to the grave we are dominated by the dead, its rule is strengthened by the passings of each generation, and the strength of our chains is intensified by their invisibility. And it lies in the nature of human society that we cannot abolish this rule of the dead; at most we can only limit its power by an intelligent revision of its decrees. In social life this is largely recognised. Political action involves this. In legal affairs we create any number of fictions in order to lessen the weight of the dead hand. There are any number of directions in which the dead rule, but it is in religion alone that it is made sacred. Do what we will the dead will continue to wield enormous power over the living, but when we add to this inevitable influence the weight of consciously organised institutions, we are saddling the living with a load that may well become crushing. The great lesson we have to learn, and the one that most find it hardest to master, is that while the past is valuable for guidance, it becomes a power for evil when



we seek to fashion our lives by its decrees. Each generation has its own problems which it must answer—if they are answered intelligently and profitably—in its own way and in the light of its own knowledge and necessities. In most directions the reasonableness of this counsel will not be disputed. It is only in religion that in the name of morality we place the dead in avowed control over the living, and shackle the existing generation with the fetters of a bygone age.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY

I KNOW some Freethinkers do—very ruefully. They suffered from Sabbatarian suppression. I cannot say I did. I had not the utmost liberty. I had to go to Sunday school, and can hardly imagine what penalty would have been inflicted had I been found playing truant or buying sweets on Sunday. No child who did that went to Heaven; it was almost approaching the sin against the Holy Ghost. There were, however, hardly any restrictions as to reading. I am sure perusal of the *Boys' Friend* would have been frowned upon, but then the *Boy's Own Paper*—albeit a publication of the Religious Tract Society—was as entertaining and under no Sunday ban.

Yet we had our Sabbath oddities. How often have I taken in the milk with the promise to pay tomorrow. I suppose I was more than twenty-seven before I ever saw the inside of a Sunday paper. This, too, in the absence of "Close of Play" editions on Saturday, which meant that I must wait until Monday to know the result of a protracted cricket match. I wonder what I should have done if I had found myself in an ungodly household in the cricket season. I fancy I should have had a peep behind the sheets!

Mark Rutherford—that fine delineator of nonconformity deserves more readers than he has ever had—has a delightful passage in his *Revolution in Tanner's Lane* dealing with this issue. Mrs. Coleman is to entertain a Major to tea. Military gentlemen obviously need lavish regalement.

"Tea was served early, as chapel began at half-past six. Mrs. Coleman, though it was Sunday, was very busy. She had made hot buttered toast, and she had bought some muffins, but had appeased her conscience by telling the boy that she would not pay for them till Monday. The milk was always obtained on the same terms. She also purchased some water-cresses; but the water-cress man demanded prompt cash settlement, and she was in a strait. At last the desire for the water-cresses prevailed, and she said—

'How much?'

'Three halfpence.'

'Now, mind, I give you twopence for yourself—mind I give it you. I do not approve of buying and selling on Sundays. We will settle about the other halfporth another time.'

'All right, ma'am; if you like it that way it's no odds to me.' And Mrs. Coleman went her way believing that she had prevented the commission of a crime."

Mr. H. Cutner, in his interesting pamphlet *What is the Sabbath Day?* (Pioneer Press, 1s. 3d.) traces the origins of these taboos. Like Sir Walter Raleigh, in his *History of the World*, he starts with the Creation. He is justified in so doing, for was not the precedent of the Lord's Day the resting of the Lord in his arduous task

of world-making? As Mr. Cutner points out, on what day he did rest must be a matter of conjecture, but not beyond the rashness of the faithful. I recall that the date of the Creation used to be assigned to a day in October—close to the date of my nativity, but I recollect that some writers put so fine a point upon it as to give the day of the week before one would have thought the Lord had had time to name them! Mr. Cutner quotes Saloman Reinach as saying that the ban on work on a particular day was "to codify an old taboo in which one day in the week was considered unlucky," but surely he goes too far in suggesting that "some who pride themselves on being Freethinkers refuse to travel on the 13th of the month or on a Friday because they are bad days."

Mr. Cutner goes, with much learning, into the Sabbath of the Babylonians, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans, but many will be more interested in his resurrection of Charles Dickens's pamphlet *A Sunday Under Three Heads* (1836) which orthodox Dickensians have assiduously buried. It is never included in his complete works; the *Dickensian* ignores it. Of course, I had much regard for it in my *Dickens and Religion*. Referring to the fact that this shocking production, with the exception of *Sketches of Young Gentleman*, was the only one pseudonymously published, I said:—

"*A Sunday under Three Heads* appeared in the same year as *Pickwick*, under the pseudonym of 'Timothy Sparks.' Why Dickens withheld his name can only be surmised. When, however, it appeared, Sam Weller was still unborn in literature, and *Pickwick* languishing. Probably he reflected that his name would add no weight to his opinions and that, as a promising author, it would be imprudent to impale himself upon the spears of the orthodox."

There are passages of shattering satire against religion. To be fair to the suppressors, I doubt if Dickens wanted it remembered. He was of the stuff that Wordly Wisemen rather than martyrs are made; as Gissing said, he never wanted freedom to offend his public. Yet, how ill his book compares with the rhetorical references to the New Testament story that gave the Victorian public what they wanted! If Dickensians still maintain that these were born of deep conviction and were not a matter of passing fashion, let them try to match their lusciousness in contemporary novelists. Dr. Johnson sapiently said that no man was a hypocrite in his pleasures, meaning that when there is no compulsion he goes to the level of his genuine tastes. It would not be much of an exaggeration to say that no man is a hypocrite in his letters. Where in those of Dickens do you find him reading religious literature or attending church? Here is a delightful passage from a letter of Shirley Brooks to Sir William Hardman—"The Mid-Victorian Pepys":—

"Dickens sent me a good story, but it is for the wise only. The moral is that in describing anything you should keep yourself well in hand, and not travel out of the record. A Methodist preacher was expatiating on the goodness of the Almighty in sending His only begotten Son to save us, and he went on, 'Think, my brethren, of this great, this unspeakable goodness—His Loved Son, His Only Son. His Dear Son, to whom He looked as the prop of his declining years.'"

Dickens off the record is never edifying to the religiously minded. He was fanatical, some would say, as regards his anti-Sabbatarian opinions. He regarded the absence of a Sunday postal delivery, which we so complacently accept, as "outrageous to the spirit of Christianity,"



unreconcilable with the health and rational enjoyment and the true religious feeling of the community." What he would have said of "Misery Martin" I know not. That gentleman recently recorded in the *Christian World* the epithets with which he had been assailed. There was a list of twenty-four, including Chadband, Judas, Kill-joy, Nosey Parker, Mugwump, Stiggins, Twerp, Wowser. Mr. Martin might be greatly shocked, but I fancy our great English novelist would have shied at him in the same way.

I was amused by this passage in Mr. Cutner's pamphlet:—

"The rabbis of the Talmud gave, says Jennings, thirty-nine negative precepts for the Sabbath. Jews must not walk on grass, for instance, as that was 'threshing'; they must not catch a flea as that was 'hunting,' and so on. Our own Sabbatarians do not seem to have advanced much beyond this: a comedian can sing a comic song on the 'Lord's Day,' but he must not have a red nose, or wear, say, a comic 'dickey.'"

However, there is always a consecrated compromise—even for Sabbatarians. Mr. Cutner has something to say of Seventh-Day Adventists. I once stayed at a holiday home where one was a guest. She asked to be excused from a frivolous game on Friday night, because her Sabbath had begun. Yet, on the said Sabbath, she climbed to the top of Snowdon with a married man, whose wife and child remained in the valley.

Mr. Cutner has written a most informative and interesting book which should go into the arsenals of all fighting Freethinkers.

WILLIAM KENT.

## AESTHETICS AND ETHICS

WHEN I gave the long-suffering readers of this journal my reasons for no longer holding a philosophical attitude which approximated to that officially held by the editorial direction of *The Freethinker*, I did not intend to embark on anything like a lengthy controversy, even though I knew that what I said would seem dangerously wrong-headed to some readers. Still, H. H. Preece trails his coat so persuasively that I'm unable to resist the temptation of a further note on the issues which divide us.

Mr. Preece affects to be puzzled by my article "The Heart and the Mind," which was published a few weeks ago. It should, I think, be obvious enough that when I spoke of "the heart" I did not mean the physiological organ which pumps blood around the body. I think that even Mr. Preece would admit that he knows what is meant by the phrase "a change of heart," and how different it is from the other change—"changing one's mind." In other words, I do not think that it is possible, by sheer rational argument, to *prove* the existence of God; but what I have been trying to say is that I have found that if one can accept certain theological beliefs (beliefs which are not irrational in themselves) one finds that they work.

And this is where Mr. Preece mistakes my musical and artistic analogy. The distinction between Beethoven and Hoagy Carmichael is not merely, as Mr. Preece says, that "highbrow is different from lowbrow;" it is that Beethoven is *better*—i.e., deeper—and that the person who appreciates Beethoven gets more emotional satisfaction out of his musical experience than the person who

merely listens to a theatre organ on the B.B.C. Light Programme or who keeps on "Music While You Work" as a background noise. It will, I hope, be observed that I am saying that someone who has brought himself to an appreciation of good music (the same argument, of course, applies to good painting or good poetry) gets more out of it than a person who is content with the lower-grade stuff of which we get so much to-day. In other words, this æsthetic difference is a difference in kind, not in degree. When I listen to the music of Beethoven or Bach or read the verse of Keats or (dare I say it?) T. S. Eliot, I am getting an experience different in kind from that which I get when I listen to Victor Sylvester or read a story by Edgar Wallace.

Similarly, may it not be possible (for Mr. Preece's sake I will put it no higher than a possibility) that if I work along theological lines which seem to me reasonable, though they are not lines which would be approved by many readers of these pages, I find a deeper satisfaction than if I assume that ethics are purely man-made or purely this-worldly? And that deeper satisfaction I may perhaps call a spiritual satisfaction.

I know that Mr. Preece will be able, once again, to accuse me of being vague and unsatisfactory. In this sphere it is not at all easy to be as precise as one would wish. At the same time, as I have said before, I have found that for me the new philosophy which I have been working out for myself in the past few months is a philosophy which serves me well. It is, in other words, a philosophy which works. Readers may say that for them it would not work. Very well; I don't ask them to adopt it; I'm not trying to make converts. But what I am saying is that it is only by acting as if some of these theological ideas were true that one finds out how well they work. In other words, if one accepts a rational theology, one finds that it is surprisingly effective—more effective than one had expected.

Let me give one small addition before I close. When I wrote my original article I said that I was not a member of any Church. Well, it so happens that since then I have gone to live in another part of the country. I am now within reach of a Unitarian Church, where, week by week, a message of sense (and, incidentally, some first-rate music) can be found. And I have discovered that pretty regular attendance there has brought into my life a kind of natural weekly rhythm which again yields what I can only describe as a spiritual satisfaction. And that is, after all, a long way from Mr. Preece's avowal that "to an Atheist, sin is what is natural." For religion does not fight against nature—or, at any rate, my religion does not. It asserts that man must seek help where he can find it. That I have found it in quarters which to me were very unexpected is what I have been trying to say in this controversy.

JOHN ROWLAND.

So long as a certain book—a collection of sublime ideas; beastly thoughts and acts; disjointed and jumbled scraps of history; tatters of fiction; shreds of lyric prose; poetry in which the Jew is the central figure—is held up as sacred—so long as a Jew is made a God, a Jewess the "Mother of God," another Jew the step-father of God, and whole rafts of other Jews are worshipped as members of a nobility that surrounds the throne of that celestial temporal King—so long, in other words, as the Gentile world predominantly manufactures itself into a debtor to another set of folks of a *debt too huge and crushing ever to be repaid*, just so long will there be "anti-Semitism"—that is, manifestations of human nature that has no love for the creditor whose account is non-cancellable. —DANIEL DE LEON (*Anti-Semitism, its cause and cure*).



## ACID DROPS

**Unitarians are still** at logger-heads as to the "divinity" of Christ. In the *Inquirer* one of them, discussing this, says that Unitarians are often told that they believe that Christ was a mere man, and he pertinently asks what is here meant by the phrase "mere man?" Most of us would answer a "mere man," but this will never do for any theologian, Unitarian or Christian. He spends more than a column arguing that Christ is much more than a mere man—and that he and Unitarians in general believe in the Divinity of Christ and the Incarnation "more than any other church." But if that is so, why not go over to Rome and have done with it?

**Sunday listeners**, the other week, must have got a shock from the B.B.C. A play had been adapted from the "case" of Sarah Chandler (1875)—a little girl of twelve who had picked a geranium from a garden and, at the instigation of the Rev. E. Moore, who was a Justice of the Peace, was hauled before his court on a charge of theft, and given the monstrous sentence of 14 days in prison and four years in a reformatory which, incidentally, was not in those days exactly a home from home. The people in Spalding were furious, but the gallant Christian gentleman moved heaven and earth to see that the sentence should be carried out.

**Fortunately the case** was brought up in Parliament, and the Home Secretary ordered the instant discharge of the "criminal." But the point to note is that the B.B.C. recital did not spare the Rev. E. Moore in any way. He was painted as a lying brute of the worst kind, and pious listeners must have been left wondering where was, in his case, the redemptive power of the Cross? In any case, the B.B.C. must be congratulated on such a complete exposure of a Christian blackguard.

**The assassin** of the Prime Minister of Persia is like similar assassins—thoroughly religious. He spends his time in prison reading the Koran, and no doubt is quite sure that he will eventually sit at the right hand of Mohammed in a kind of Ladies' Paradise. The assassins of Lincoln, Garfield, Henry III, Henry IV, and many others were, however, pious Christians, and naturally their Heaven was rather different from that outlined in the Koran.

**Two of the foulest** German criminals now awaiting death (unless the religious scruples of the U.S.A. High Commissioner reprieves them) are Ohlendorff and Pohl who murdered between them at least 10 millions of men, women, and children. They cheerfully sent little children to be shot in large batches. Brig. General J. H. Morgan has been interviewing them for the *Daily Mail*, and it should cause no surprise to learn that Ohlendorff is thoroughly religious, that he reads the Bible every day, and is praying for a religious revival in Germany. Pohl admits that he skinned his victims to make material for gloves, etc., which he sold at fantastic prices.

**Still, both these Christian gentlemen**, having "repented," are sure of a comfortable place near "our Lord" when they get to the Pearly Gates; while their millions of victims, as Jews, were unbelievers, and therefore must be classed with those sinners who will not repent. Their place now must be, if Christian doctrine is believed, in a flaming Hell where the Fire is eternal. Pohl insisted, by the way, that the German Army and its generals helped him in every

way by providing all the necessary ammunition and orders to carry out his work of extermination.

**The only way** in which you can get religion across in schools is by compulsion. It must be forced on to children at no matter what cost. This is what, no doubt, was meant by Mr. M. Lloyd, the Headmaster of Uppingham, when he said that if religion "was not compulsory it would be considered comparatively unimportant by the school authorities." Still, he wanted one service to be voluntary—Holy Communion. We are shocked. Surely every child should be *dragged* to the altar to have the privilege of communion with Christ Jesus!

**The Rev. W. Hannah**, in attacking Freemasonry, has been revealing some of its awful secrets to *Reynolds News*. It appears that although the "innermost secret" is concerned with "the nature of God"—the name of "Jesus Christ is excluded from all Masonic rituals under the jurisdiction of Grand Lodge." Moreover, the names "of certain pagan deities are pronounced with great solemnity in the Royal Arch ritual." This is simply terrible. To hear Freemasons pronouncing Adonis "solemnly" and omitting all mention of a much greater God like Jesus is a crime for which Mr. Hannah cannot subscribe a too horrifying punishment. We suggest slowly boiling oil—one of the methods his forbears delighted in when dealing with blasphemers.

**Unitarians appear** to be much disturbed at the shocking unbelief of Atheists. In a leader recently, the *Inquirer* dealt fully with the "religious Atheist" and of course, showed as much knowledge of Atheism as the average Jehovah's Witness. We believe "in a dead Universe." We have no "problems." Everything is dead—including, we presume, Unitarians. But if the Universe is not "dead" for us, we are not Atheists. We are on the way of discovering God and the beauties of religion. That there are Unitarians who believe in this twaddle is evident, but, oh dear, may the Lord save us from such!

**Our Methodist friends** are full of joy at the way the B.B.C. is boosting religion; they have nothing but praise for the "wonderful measure of time devoted to religious services and programmes," and they hope that all this will bring together representatives of all faiths and religions in perfect harmony and eventually in Unity. They are particularly joyful that Catholics and Protestants do not attack each other on the air—a contingency, by the way, that would never be allowed on the air in any case. But the point to remember is that, unlike some religious bodies, Methodists fully recognise that religion is being beautifully boosted up by the B.B.C., and that no direct opposition is as yet permitted. What a howl there would be if opposition were allowed!

**We always like** "opposition" in some form, and therefore were glad to see a letter by a Muslim, Mr. B. A. Orchard, in the *Glasgow Herald*, protesting that the Christian God had a monopoly of "divine succour." God in the Koran is named Al-Rahman and Al-Rahim—the "gracious and the merciful," and Mr. Orchard contends that being thus designated in his Holy Book proves it up to the hilt. "Islam teaches that communion with God is the greatest of all blessings," he adds, and all Muslims must carry out "the will of God for the purpose of pleasing God." All this strikes a familiar note—or does it? It does.



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## TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. G. BELLAMY.—Many thanks for your communication. Teachers all over the country mark their pupils' homework much in the same way, and it is not surprising that they discourage any expression of Atheism in school. After all, to refer to any eminent person as "his nibs," should be criticised at school, don't you think so?

J. COULTHARD.—We can only repeat, your letter would have been published had you made an attempt to answer your critic. Merely to say again you are quite right when you are altogether wrong because you are not a "yes man" is most unfair to the reputation of a very great Freethinker.

F. C. HENWOOD.—We were pleased to read the letter you sent to *Reynolds* and we thank you for your kind efforts on our behalf.

W. MARTIN and others.—Many thanks for useful cuttings.

*Will correspondents kindly note to address all communications in connection with "The Freethinker" to: "The Editor," and not to any particular person. Of course, private communications can be sent to any contributor.*

*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).*

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*Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.*

*Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only and to make their letters as brief as possible.*

## SUGAR PLUMS

The Annual Dinner of the Glasgow Secular Society was definitely a successful and enjoyable function. The dining hall was well filled with a select and enthusiastic party with the President, Mrs. M. I. Whitefield, in the chair. The menu provided by the Grand Hotel was well tackled by the diners, after which a number of speeches followed. A pleasing feature of the evening was a presentation cheque made up by members of the Society to Mr. R. M. Hamilton for his long and esteemed service as chairman and counsellor. The presentation was made by Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who was the guest of honour. He paid tribute to Mr. Hamilton's character as a man and Freethinker. The presentation came as a surprise to the recipient and he was obviously deeply impressed. The tables were then cleared and dancing went on until the call of regulation time. On Sunday evening a well filled hall in the McLellan Galleries listened to a lecture by Mr. R. H. Rosetti on "What is Civilisation?". Questions were asked and answered until Mrs. Whitefield, who was in the chair, had to announce closing time according to the hall contract, and so a very enjoyable week-end brought the indoor session of the Glasgow Secular Society to a close.

An improved audience attended the demonstration organised by the Executive of the N.S.S. in Conway Hall, and would no doubt have been larger but for the mystery surrounding the posters sent to the billposter. The speakers, Messrs. C. Bradlaugh Bonner, M.A., L. Ebury, F. A. Ridley, and J. W. Barker, were all in good form, and the audience took full advantage of the opportunity for questions. Mr. R. H. Rosetti was in the chair. A register of London readers within a reasonable circle of Conway Hall who are willing to help in such special meetings by passing advertising slips to interested friends, etc., is being compiled and names and addresses of such are now asked for.

Dr. D. Stark Murray will lecture this evening (March 25) for the West London Branch, N.S.S., and all readers and their friends in the area are invited to attend. His subject "Can We be Rational in Health?" makes a personal appeal to all. The lecture begins at 7-15 p.m., admission is free, and there should be a full house.

Blackburn readers will be pleased to note that Mr. J. Clayton will speak for the local N.S.S. Branch in Blackburn Market at 3 and 7 p.m. to-day (March 25). Mr. Clayton's matter and manner has made him many friends and given him a good following in Blackburn, and a well attended open air meeting has a magnet effect upon the more intelligent passer by.

The Rationalist Press Association's Annual Dinner and Dance takes place on Thursday, May 17, next, at the Connaught Rooms, Great Queens Street, London, W.C. 1. Those wishing to attend are advised to get the necessary tickets without delay to avoid disappointment. Applications should be sent to The Secretary, Rationalist Press Association, 5-6, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4, enclosing cash, one guinea per ticket, and stating if a vegetarian menu is required.

Among the new series of "Thrift Books" at 1s., issued by Messrs. Watts and Co., is *The Ladder of Life*, by the late A. Gowans Whyte. Consisting of 120 pages, this book, as its sub-title "From Molecule to Man" indicates, deals more particularly with the evolution of the nervous system and the gradual growth of intelligence. It is written throughout strictly in accordance with the latest accepted scientific opinion on the subject, but from a conversation we had with the author not so very long ago, we were led to anticipate that it would go a little beyond. In discussing the *Body-Mind Puzzle*, the "Becher's Brook" of the average psychologist, although the "ghost" in the brain is banished, something very similar is allowed to remain.

The likening of the brain to a telephone exchange to which "messages" are sent, and from which "messages" are transmitted, suggests a presiding influence indistinguishable from the "ghost" that has been banished. The misleading suggestions are avoided if we substitute "impulses" for "messages" and "cerebral co-ordination," which needs no independent control, for a "telephone exchange" which does. This is the only criticism we have to make of an extremely interesting and useful work. A "List of Useful Books" for further study of the subject is included.



## "ONCE DID SHE HOLD THE GORGEOUS EAST IN FEE"

AS, just at present, all seems quiet upon the religious front, I propose to follow the example of my learned colleague, Mr. T. F. Palmer, and turn my attention in the following paragraphs to the domain of secular history.

Recently, I had the pleasure of visiting that citadel of proletarian culture, the Whitechapel Art Gallery, where so many excellent art exhibitions have been displayed in the past. Upon this occasion, the magnet which drew visitors from all parts of London was an exhibition of Venetian paintings; not the more famous artistic masterpieces which date from the Renaissance, of which the great painter Titian, was the outstanding Venetian master, but work belonging to the last years of the Venetian Republic in the eighteenth century.

This is not the place, nor is the present writer the qualified person to assess adequately "the sunset scene" as Professor G. M. Trevelyan once described the last years of the Venetian Republic. To be sure, the artists loaned to the Whitechapel Art Gallery, Canaletto et al, appear, to a certain extent, to share as well as to depict "the slow and inglorious decay" into which the Venetian Republic had sunk in the era which preceded its violent annexation by Napoleon in 1798, when Wordsworth celebrated the passing of the maritime Republic upon the Adriatic in his sonnets, the first and best-known line of which is quoted at the head of this article. But whilst the artists of the decadence of the Venetian Republic were, perhaps, painters of talent rather than genius, the era which they depict, the closing years of the Venetian Republic, are of surpassing interest to the student of history and of (what is now the fashion to term) geo-politics.

In that style of violent rhetoric and recurring purple passages, of which an unkind critic (Augustine Birrell) once remarked that it is constitutionally incapable of telling the truth about anything, Lord Macaulay once treated the Papacy to a panegyric as the most remarkable of recorded institutions. Far be it for us to deny the large element of truth in the Whig historian's assertion! Certainly, no one who has studied the chequered history of the Vatican will be disposed to deny at least political genius to its occupants. However, that Italian contemporary of the medieval Papacy, the maritime Republic of the Adriatic, Venice, in its amazing political and naval career, runs the Papacy very close, at least, for the premier place in the history of European institutions. For more than a thousand years, the group of insignificant islets which formed the metropolis of the Venetian Republic, ranked as a sovereign power of considerable standing in its contemporary world. And during the Golden Age of the republic of St. Mark, for an era roughly corresponding to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Venice, the standard of which bore the emblem of the Lion of its patron saint, St. Mark, ranked as a great European power and was the leading maritime and commercial state in the entire Western world.

Actually, if the present writer were asked to name the most remarkable political institution of a secular nature—for ostensibly religious bodies like the Church of Rome occupy a rather different category—to be found anywhere in the course of European history, he would be inclined to place Venice at the head of the list, with ancient Imperial Rome and modern Imperial Britain ranking as about equal for the second place.

Emerging in the darkness of the "Dark Age" which followed upon the Fall of Rome, and traditionally founded by refugees from the mainland during the invasion of Italy by Attila, the Hunnish "Scourge of God" (452 A.D.), the Republic of St. Mark emerges as a sovereign

state into the full light of history in the year 814, when it concluded a Treaty with Charlemagne, the Frankish Founder of the medieval "Holy Roman Empire." Thereafter, Venice remained as a State-power and as a factor in European and, in time, world politics for close on a thousand years until its final suppression in 1798 by Napoleon who, incidentally, soon after closed the also millennial career of the "Holy Roman Empire" (1806).

As a great European power, Venice, however, was the creation of the Crusades. For the Adriatic Republic transported the soldiers of the Cross to conquer and to plunder the wealthy lands of the Muslim East, to the greater glory of the (Christian) God and to the exceeding temporal prosperity of the Republic dedicated to the Holy Evangelist, St. Mark; the alleged bones of which Holy Saint were stolen by pious Venetian seamen from Egypt, their original place of burial and were duly transported to Venice where, we understand, the bones of St. Mark are still enshrined in the splendid cathedral named after him.

Venice received a rich temporal reward for her pious work of expediting the Crusades. She acquired the major part of the carrying-trade of the Mediterranean. In 1204, Mammon superseded God; for in that year, Venice brought financial pressure to bear upon an army of valiant but impecunious Crusaders bound for the Holy Land. The astute Venetian capitalists persuaded the Crusaders to turn their arms against schismatic Constantinople which also happened to be the chief commercial rival of Venice! I have elsewhere described this war as the first commercial war in modern European history. Venice reaped a rich reward.

Emboldened by these dazzling successes Venice engaged in a life and death struggle for supremacy with her chief Italian rival, the also maritime republic of Genoa. Her eventual victory gave the Adriatic republic two golden centuries of dazzling prosperity; her Age of Gold when she dominated the Mediterranean.

However, History has a sense of irony all its own. It was the maritime defeat of Genoa which paved the way to maximum glory for her victorious competitor. But it was, also, a Genoese who finally inflicted a mortal blow upon the Republic of St. Mark. This was Christopher Columbus who, by discovering America in 1492 ushered in the modern Atlantic age and thus inaugurated the decline of the Mediterranean, the "great sea" of modern and of medieval times, and the modern impoverishment of Italy. Venice was the principal sufferer from this geo-political and geographical revolution. She yielded pride of place in maritime power successively to Spain, Holland, and England, and had long degenerated into a gorgeous ruin before her forcible extinction by the army of Napoleon at the end of the 18th century.

The internal policy of Venice was a close aristocratic oligarchy, which centred upon the secret "Council of Ten." Incidentally, Venice was the first European State to insist upon the secular direction of ecclesiastical affairs. Even the Inquisition was subordinate to the all powerful "Ten." However, when Venice surrendered Giordano Bruno to the Roman Inquisition, she made possible one of the most horrible crimes in ecclesiastical history.

Actually, Wordsworth's eloquent "obituary notice" of the Republic was a little premature. For in 1848, "the year of revolutions," Daniel Manin temporarily revived the Venetian Republic, which perished gloriously in August, 1849, after a heroic resistance against the Austrians. Barely a century has thus passed since the Lion of St. Mark ceased finally to fly over the lagoons of the Adriatic.

F. A. RIDLEY.



## PHYSICAL SCIENCE

Modern civilisation rests upon physical science; take away her gifts to our country, and our position among the leading nations of the world is gone tomorrow; for it is physical science that makes intelligence and moral energy stronger than brute force. The whole of moral thought is steeped in science. It has made its way into the works of our best poets, and even the mere man of letters, who affects to ignore and despise science, is unconsciously impregnated with her spirit and indebted for his best products to her methods. She is teaching the world that the ultimate court of appeal is observation and experience, not authority. She is creating a firm and living faith in the existence of immutable moral and physical laws, perfect obedience to which is the highest possible aim of an intelligent being.—Huxley.

## CORRESPONDENCE

## CAN ETHICS SUPPLANT RELIGION?

SIR,—I find the above meaningless question raised in your editorial of February 25, in the copy sent to me by my brother, perhaps because of the comment under "Acid Drops" about the questions whether Unitarians are Christians. I cannot speak for other Unitarians—they all speak for themselves, not others—but I happen to call myself a Christian in Thomas Huxley's sense—"Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the Will of God. Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this"; and again "the religious feeling which is the essential basis of conduct." The latter applies to Agnostic or Atheist alike. There is no ethic without a religion to make it work. So, I repeat, your question has no meaning.—Yours, etc.,

ROBERT H. CORRICK.

## METAPHYSICS AGAIN

SIR,—If Mr. Preece considers that his latest effort is adequate to meet my criticism, then it would appear that further discussion between us is pointless. However, other readers may have been misled by the correspondence, and it is for their benefit, seeing that Mr. Preece is apparently incapable of grasping the true nature of my criticism, that I write this concluding letter.

With regard to the dispute about Russell, "attempting to explain induction in terms of deduction," allow me to point out that I was completely taken in by Mr. Preece's statement, consequent upon his latest letter I even went so far as to check the index references to "induction" and "deduction" in Russell's "Human Knowledge." On p. 155 ff. Russell makes it quite clear that, in principle, he accepts the usual view that we can arrive at new knowledge by the processes of induction, and yet on pp. 171-2 he states, "... deduction has turned out to be much less powerful than was formerly supposed; it does not give us new knowledge." A consideration of these two passages show that Mr. Preece cannot be serious in this matter, and while I have come to regard materialists as a crowd of mediocre comedians, I have hitherto believed them to possess some elements of good taste.

As an Agnostic I definitely do not like the fact that "metaphysics" to the materialist is that which the materialist does not understand, but I do appreciate this state of affairs, and consequently, I place the appropriate value on criticisms regarding "metaphysics" which come from materialists.

I have made references, previously, to Mr. Preece's deplorable habit of misrepresenting writers with whom he does not agree, and these misrepresentations are too frequent to be mere accidents. I can only conclude that Mr. Preece regards his case to be so weak that he feels compelled to use any methods, however dishonest intellectually, to bolster up his position. In his latest letter he misquotes me twice, and deliberately falsifies the true state of affairs, as anyone who has followed this correspondence can readily see.—Yours, etc.,

VERNON CARTER.

## WILLIAM RUFUS

SIR,—In Mr. A. R. Williams' interesting article on "Revivals," he says of William Rufus that "it would be hard to say a good word." I wonder whether Mr. Williams would be good enough to tell me where I can find authentic references to this king? As far as I can gather, all we know about him is what monkish writers have told us—and he was always at loggerheads with the Church. Is it not almost true to say that he was deliberately assassinated at the instigation of Rome?—Yours, etc.,

H. CUTNER.

## RESPECT FOR THE EMOTIONAL SIDE OF LIFE

SIR,—It was a "red letter" day when I read the issue for March 11. Because Mr. Kenyon has given "Light." We need it, indeed, in the dark and bitter world! I hope he has lit a torch that will never go out and lead us to the unity of man, the fraternity of all nations and all Colours—to Peace and Good Will to the Human Race!

That Torch is, of course, The Golden Rule. Where it leads all things come right in the long run, and they endure. True, there is much to be done for our fellow humans. They are suffering, for one thing, from over-population and semi-starvation. Some reduction and stabilisation of our world-population is vital and necessary. We know that this cannot be done by the religious method—abstinence or "continence." It can be done by Knowledge and Good Will.

For generation after generation the offspring of Women, in pain born and in love nurtured, have been made into work-slaves and cannon-fodder—not by the will of the Mothers of the World or the People but by others whose "education," "intelligence" and "profound thought" should have taught them something better—they lacked all respect for the emotional side of life. Theirs was a vile perversion of human nature, a barbaric victimisation of Women, a cruel violation of their hearts and minds, and a veritable "rape" of their bodies. It is 1951 now, and unless Humanity ends this barbarism once and for all the Human Race is doomed to poverty, hatred, and universal war.

As Mr. Kramrisch says, greatest intelligences and profoundest thinkers are intimately bound up with issues concerning our relationships with other Peoples in other lands. If we educate and use our Representatives in these issues the Peoples in other lands will do likewise. This is not enough, Education and Intelligence is not enough. Mr. Kenyon's "educated rogue" might easily get in and wreck all good will. Both these gentlemen have put their finger on vital spots. Education is not enough. The Golden Rule must be used and respected by us all—before it is too late! It is mankind's weapon of defence—let us learn to use it and respect it amongst all peoples, races, and creeds. It is the only key to the gate of the garden of human welfare. And there are no other means of entry. Human love and the voice of the Peoples is the Supreme Law.—Yours, etc.,

RUPERT L. HUMPHRIS.

## LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

## OUTDOOR

Blackburn Market Place.—Sunday, March 25, 3 and 7 p.m.: JACK CLAYTON. A Lecture.

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, March 25, 7 p.m., Dr. PARDHY, F.R.C.S. (Birmingham): "Indian Philosophy."

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute, Science Room).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: A Lecture.

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: Miss JANET WALTERS, "Progress in the Colonies."

West London Branch N.S.S. (The "Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, Marylebone, W.1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: Dr. STARK MURRAY, "Can we be Rational in Health?"

WANTED.—Bound volumes of *The Freethinker* prior to 1940. Good condition. Also: *The Parson and the Atheist*; *War, Civilization and the Churches*, and *Fascism and Christianity* (pamphlet). All by Chapman Cohen. J. Gordon, 105, Braidholm Road, Giffnock, Glasgow.

AGE OF REASON. By Thomas Paine. With 40 page introduction by Chapman Cohen. Price, cloth 3s.; paper 2s.; postage 3d.

AN ATHEIST'S APPROACH TO CHRISTIANITY. A Survey of Positions. By Chapman Cohen. Price 1s. 3d.; postage 1½d.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK. By G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball. Price 3s.; postage 3d. Ninth edition.



## THE HIERARCHY AND HITLER

ARTHUR D. KAHN—a Roosevelt partisan who served in the Office of Strategic Services during the war, and after V.E. Day was appointed Chief Editor of Intelligence, Information Control Division of the Military Government in Germany—published last year under the title *Betrayal*, an historical documentation with a view to exposing to the American people the “actual results of the Truman Doctrine in the nations where it is applied, how it betrays our war aims and aggravates international tensions.”\*

As soon as the Americans arrived in a German town, they contacted the local clergy—the only institution then still intact—to assist the M.G. officers in dealing with the population and in organising the municipal administration. The priests made no bones about their alarm; they were frightened at the “bolshhevik menace” now that the Nazi “bulwark” against this peril had crumbled, and warned M.G. against the administration of a genuine denazification programme. A few days after V.E. Day, a Protestant minister in Stuttgart summarised the attitude of many of the Evangelical clergy towards Hitler, boldly declaring: “We enthusiastically admired many of his aims,” and von Galen, Bishop of Muenster—renowned for his “opposition” to Hitler’s anti-church campaign—openly told the Yanks to get out: “We Germans don’t want you here. For us, you are the enemy.” “One of the Bavarian bishops stubbornly refused to attend the showing of our concentration camp film”; his national pride would have felt hurt.

The Catholic bishops, in their annual episcopal conclave at Fulda, in 1945, issued a pastoral letter crammed with hostile and belligerent insinuation. “Then in a deliberate slur on the occupation troops, the bishops urged the arming of the German police and strong Allied counter-measures against rape and lawlessness on the part of our troops.” They implied that the occupation troops were unable to protect the country people and maintain order without the assistance of the Germans themselves; they objected particularly to “denazification” resulting in the wholesale dismissal of trusted and “indispensable specialists!” “Nowhere in the Fulda letter did the Bishops call for democratisation, for peace and for co-operation with the occupation. It had probably been too much to expect that bishops who had supported the Hitler dictatorship (except when it attacked the Churches directly), prayed for Nazi victory and tolerated Nazi oppression and terrorism, should suddenly have become apostles of peace and democracy just because the German armies had suffered a total defeat” (p. 76).

And yet, many M.G. men did not want any information about the political unreliability of the Churches. “The ‘bolshhevik bogaboo’ among our officials, of course, was no small factor in fostering this dubious collaboration” (p. 79).

One of the few anti-Nazi priests in Munich assured the author that Cardinal Faulhaber’s fame for his struggle against Hitler for the retention of church schools and ecclesiastical prerogatives, was highly exaggerated. The Cardinal himself had appealed to Cardinal Hayes of New York and Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago, to stop press attacks against Nazi Germany, whilst he did not

mention the Nazi persecution of the Jews. The military defeat of the Nazis had not changed Faulhaber’s authoritarian sympathies, his ultranationalism, his friendship for the local Junkers, the industrial sharks, and his opposition to democrats. The Cardinal himself was granting special letters of Church protection to individual Nazis and his priests were continuously petitioning for the exoneration or rehabilitation of the Party members, attesting that they had been regular churchgoers, had contributed to the collections for the rebuilding of destroyed churches and could not, therefore, have been real Nazis.

Adenauer’s C.D.U. (Christian Democratic Union) soon became a “haven for Nazis seeking protection against denazification, for authoritarians, nationalists and militarists—all of whom hastened to adopt ‘Christianity’ and ‘democracy,’ the best insurance in Germany.” In the premature elections thrown on a people unwont of democratic rights, the hierarchy won its triumph. The priests urged their congregation—frequently whilst visiting each peasant home individually—to vote for the “candidates of God” against the “Eastern heathens,” i.e., the Socialists who believed in the separation of church and state.

The hierarchy declared that “In the Name of Christ” the treatment of known Nazis was to be governed by the precept: “Love thine enemy,” whilst at the same time, their utterances against Communists were less governed by the “Prince of Peace.”

The author† concludes: “On our M.G. people, however, rests the responsibility for the premature elections which entrenched these dangerous forces, for the failure to sponsor the trustworthy and aggressive anti-Nazi elements and for assuming an economic policy in Germany which forces us to seek allies among such dangerous, belligerent pro-Nazis.”

It throws a peculiar light on the model “land of freedom” that the pages of this book—with no publisher stated—had to be printed in—Poland.

TOM HILL.

† He assisted Albert E. Kahn in the latter’s sensational book “High Treason” (The Hour Publishers, New York, \$1), which makes appalling reading.

## DESPERATE REMEDY

Things are as bad as bad can be,  
Trouble afoot, on land and sea,  
(Not forgetting what’s in the Air),  
“Let’s have a National Day of Prayer.”

The Lord’s Hand’s heavy on all mankind,  
Governments deaf and Bureaucrats blind;  
Nothing like it in earlier days—  
“Let’s have a National Day of Praise.”

Business bad and the pound is dropping,  
Strikes and lock-outs never stopping;  
Everyone asking the Yanks for alms  
“Let’s have a National Day of Psalms.”

There may be a cure for all these ills,  
But the very idea gives men cold chills;  
Belief’s no good, there’s no use blinking—  
“Let’s have a National Day of Thinking!”

—ARTHUR E. CARPENTER

\* The book is obtainable from: Suite 707, 114 East 32nd Street, New York, 16.