

The Freethinker

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Editor: F. A. RIDLEY

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THE most momentous ecclesiastical Council of modern times was, probably, the Council of the Vatican in 1869-70, which, *inter alia*, proclaimed the Personal Infallibility of the Pope. This "General Council" of the Roman Catholic Church was, indeed, one of the most important assemblies in the entire history of Christianity. For its effects were, by no means, confined to the domain of Catholic Theology, to which it added in both the spheres of Dogmatic Theology and of Catholic apologetics, but, equally extended to the spheres of politics and sociology. For it is from this Council that we may date the astonishing "come-back" of the Catholic Church, which is to-day, one of the most serious menaces to the present progress of civilisation, besides being the only serious contemporary menace to the progress of Freethought.

A Contemporary Account

We recently acquired an old copy of an anonymous contemporary account of the famous Council by, it would seem, an eye-witness and an actual participant in the Vatican Assembly *Eight Months at Rome during the Vatican Council* by "Pomponio Leto." The author's name is an obvious pseudonym, dating from the era of the Italian Renaissance, during which epoch of the revival of classical scholarship, a group of Humanist scholars, of whom Pomponio Leto was one of the most famous, attempted a reform of Catholicism from within, and a "Modernist" criticism of the mediæval theology of the Church. The modern "Pomponio Leto's" account of the Vatican Council appeared in 1872, and was translated into English in the following year. Its contents were, evidently, not pleasing to the Vatican, for the book was formally placed on "The Index of prohibited books" on June 19, 1876, in the reign, that is, of the same Pope who had presided over the Vatican Council in 1870. It appears evident from the contents of the book itself that "Pomponio Leto" was an eye-witness and participant of, and in, the events which he describes in such minute and penetrating detail. According to that—also infallible!—repository of learning, the catalogue of the Library of the British Museum, the actual author was the Marquis Francesco Nobili-Vittileschi, a famous Italian Bishop, and one of the leaders of the Opposition to Papal Infallibility, an ascription which is certified by the learned Protestant historian of the Modern Papacy, Dr. F. K. Nielson.

An Outspoken Critic

The anonymous account is extremely detailed, and the author's running commentary, that of an eye-witness perfectly familiar with the personalities and problems concerned and discussed, is absorbingly interesting and the author's comments, both on the tactics of the Pope and his supporters and, more generally, on the contemporary state of Catholicism and of Catholic countries under the influence of the Church, is extremely revealing and, assuming the author to have been an ecclesiastic, often surprisingly

frank! At times, one is reminded of the famous remark attributed to the Turkish convert in the Rome of the Borgias that only a Divine institution could survive such people as the Pope and his entourage!

A Suicidal Council!

The Council of the Vatican was the first "General Council" of the Catholic Church to have been called for three centuries since the 16th century Council of Trent, which met to deal with the problems so urgently raised by the Reformation. As, already, "Pomponio Leto" predicted in 1872, it will probably be the last "General Council"

to be called by, and at, Rome. For the Vatican Council, in proclaiming the Personal Infallibility of the Pope, has really signed the death warrant of all future "General Councils," which are now really quite superfluous. For, prior to 1870, Catholic orthodoxy held that a representative "General Council" of the Church was the only body which, collectively possessed Infallibility and, as such, could alone proclaim new dogmas. However, ever since the Reformation which, as we have expressed it elsewhere, created "a state of siege" within the Catholic Church, a Movement had been growing which proposed to substitute the Personal Infallibility of the Pope for the collective infallibility of the Bishops assembled in a "General Council." It was this tendency which finally prevailed in 1870 at the Vatican Council when, with only two dissentients, the Council finally made itself unnecessary by proclaiming the Personal Infallibility of the Pope in "Faith and Morals," on July 18, 1870.

Rival Parties at the Council

The theological and political revolution implied by the Decree of Infallibility did not go through without a sharp struggle. A vigorous opposition amongst the prelates assembled at Rome kept the Council sitting from December, 1869, to July, 1870, when the assembly officially "adjourned," and has never since been recalled. The parties and personalities at the Council are intimately, and with many, sometimes caustic, comments, described by the anonymous author. In general, as might be expected, it was the more cultured and technically advanced lands whose representatives opposed the Decree of Papal Infallibility; the French, Germans and Americans, who opposed the Decree, were, however, swamped by the majority from more backward lands, including the large Italian contingent supplied by the Court of Rome—then still the capital of the independent "Papal States"—itself. There were, however, some striking exceptions to this general rule; for example, the Portuguese Bishops voted, with the anti-infallible minority, "Our Lady of Fatima" had not yet arrived! Whilst, contrarily, the English bishops were amongst the most ardent partisans of Infallibility. Next to the Pope himself, who intervened actively in the affairs of the Council, the outstanding personality at the Council was the English Archbishop of Westminster,

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

The Vatican Council (1869-70)

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

Henry Edward Manning, who was described by the Opposition as "The Devil of the Council." The Jesuits, however, appear to have been the real victors in the struggle for Papal Infallibility, to which the famous "Company" has been devoted since its foundation in the 16th century.

Christ at the Vatican!

In the actual debates, it appears to have been a case of quality versus quantity; the intellectual honours lay with the opposition, headed by the famous French Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans, who, earlier on in his career had the probably unappreciated honour of having been the teacher in Theology of Ernest Renan, the most famous anti-Christian writer of the 19th century! The Papal majority, however, made up by their proficiency in intrigue, what they lacked in eloquence and in learning. Manning and the Jesuits, as described by "Pomponio Leto," could give points to any wire-pulling intriguer ever turned out by Tammany Hall. On perusing the intimate reminiscences of the author, one is forced to conclude that the Holy Spirit makes use of some peculiar instruments. On occasions the language used about the Pope would, in England, have qualified for prosecution under the "Blasphemy Act"! One bishop actually declared that Jesus Christ, in person, was present in the Vatican; which geographical "howler" was neatly countered by an opposition Bishop who, thereupon, inquired of the preacher, "In which storey of the Vatican does Jesus Christ reside?" Unfortunately, history has not preserved the precise number for the edification of posterity.

"I am Tradition"

The then Pope, Pius IX (1846-78), a former epileptic, as frightened of (what was then called) "Liberalism," as his present namesake and successor is now scared of "Communism," assisted vigorously in his own approaching apotheosis. When an Opposition speaker appealed to the

"Tradition" of the Church as being against his Infallibility, the Pope interrupted to exclaim: "I am Tradition." The combination of numbers and Papal prestige was eventually too much for the critical minority. In July, the Opposition either left Rome or threw up the sponge in despair. Only two bishops, an American and an Italian, eventually plucked up courage to vote against the otherwise unanimous Decree of Papal Infallibility on July 18, 1870, a red-letter day in the annals of the Vatican. On the same day the Jesuits presented Manning with the portrait of the famous Jesuit theologian, since then proclaimed a Saint, Cardinal Bellarmine. Manning had earned his subsequent Cardinal's hat! No doubt, had he been born an Italian he would have been the next Pope.

Ecclesiastical Fascism

Looking back on, and to, the Vatican Council, it is now clear that whatever theological weaknesses might underlie the proclamation of Papal Infallibility, yet it was a most astute *political* move. On July 18, 1870, the first Totalitarian Dictatorship of modern times was created: ecclesiastical Fascism, the prototype of the Secular (20th century) type, was born. Freed from the "dead hand" of ecclesiastical Councils, only called at intervals of centuries, the modern Church can react to modern changes quickly and sharply under the personal dictatorship of the Pope. In 1870, the Church of Rome appeared headed for extinction, whilst to-day it is one of the two most powerful ideologies in the world. These facts were not obvious to its contemporary critics in 1870, and they indicate, yet again, that Rome, a *religion* in name, is *political* in substance. In 1970, if the present state of things continues, the Vatican can look back with satisfaction on the first centenary of its officially-acknowledged Infallibility. Whether it will actually do so is a question intimately bound up with the maintenance, or even with the survival, of our present Secular civilisation.

Chapman Cohen

By Dr. C. H. ROSS CARMICHAEL

SOME people measure a great man by the size of the splash he makes. Chapman Cohen never made a splash and never wished to. If it had been fame he was diving for he could have gone into politics or law and gone any length he chose. No, it was not the size of the splash that made him great but the size of the man. He was endowed with genius, if by this word we understand that super-excellence of mind and force of character that are innate and that are never overshadowed in any company, however illustrious.

When his contribution to his fellow men comes to be fairly reckoned, I think it may work out at what he himself told me was his chief aim as a lecturer and writer: he taught people how to think. Not a few eminent men, better known to the public than he was himself, have from time to time acknowledged this service with gratitude in private correspondence with him, and no tribute ever gave him greater pleasure. Britain's leading freethinker was a real freethinker and not just another doctrinaire. He believed that if you taught a man how to think you could pretty well leave him to it; and as a sheer thinker I never knew his better.

I remember once his chuckling with amusement over a remark made by an acquaintance. The man had said to him, "I am going out for a couple of hours to have a think." The idea tickled Chapman Cohen immensely. "Can you imagine anyone having a think?" he laughed. "I only think when I'm talking. Perhaps that's why I'm always talking." Of course this was a playful exaggeration,

but it contained enough truth to throw light on this powerful and interesting mind. He was not one of those people who have to translate thoughts into words. Thought and word were in him welded together into one piece. Anyone reading, or re-reading, his many works will, I believe, find an added pleasure in realising how this simple fact explains his fluent and beautifully coherent style. If ever there was anyone who illustrated the familiar caption that style is the man, it was Chapman Cohen.

Philosophy was as natural to him as breathing. In his youth, he told me, it took him some time to feel sure that he was not overlooking something in the writings of prominent thinkers. The truth was that he was diving to the heart of the matter at one thrust while others were making heavy going of it. They were his seniors and he could not at first believe that they were making such an intellectual fuss over things that seemed to him so simple and clear. But as he matured it was borne in on him that, even among the illustrious, there clung an obstinate notion that philosophy was something there had to be a great to-do about. His own notion, increasing with the years, was that all this hullabaloo was merely the mistaking of sound for sense, and he set his teeth against it. His ability to see the core of a problem and to reach it by the shortest route gave his writings their characteristic pithy quality, but no one knew better than he did that he could have obtained a wider public by pandering to the popular conception of philosophy and stuffing his books with the padding that passes for erudition. He refused to do that.

with the result that his works look so simple and at times so lean that many would be deceived into thinking they had not gone deep enough. In point of fact they are fundamental.

This simplicity and purity of thought sometimes deceived even his own followers, and there were some who believed that he had not caught up with the conceptions of modern physics. But these conceptions only upset a crude materialism never held by Chapman Cohen and successfully exploded in his "Materialism Restated." As a philosopher he grasped the full meaning of human experience, with its simple yet universal implications, and no tour de force among the atoms could blind him to the elemental truth that lay always beneath. When he used to say, "My world is a world of experience," he was not speaking of life's daily round in a superficial sense, but of that irreducible foundation which separates awareness from a void and upon which all thinking, and therefore all philosophy, must rest.

If I were seeking a random example of Chapman Cohen's quality of mind, with its combination of the simple and the profound and its power to extract the pith of a matter in a single sentence, I should recall a reply he gave to Canon Storr on the debating platform. They were discussing fundamentals and Storr, himself a very able man, had unwarily taken a too superficial view of his opponent's inner meaning. Storr knew the category of spirit and imagined that Chapman Cohen did not. He put what he thought was a poser (I am quoting from the memory of a long time ago): "Mr. Cohen talks of atoms. Let me ask him this: Would he be willing to marry so many atoms of Carbon, so many of Hydrogen, so many of Oxygen, so many of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Sulphur, Iron and what not, as the case may be?" Chapman Cohen's reply was unhesitating: "Yes, I would—always provided (and here he smiled) that they were combined in the right proportions." In this short exchange was pin-pointed the whole philosophy of emergence.

Chapman Cohen was too deep a thinker to dogmatise about ultimates, but too clear a thinker to be merely nebulous. I remember one evening, when I tackled him on this subject, how he expressed himself with characteristic clarity. He said, "The great amount of talk that perpetually goes on about origins and ultimates is due to the fact that very few people are sufficiently disciplined mentally to stop thinking when there is nothing thinkable left to them." He knew that a question is something more than a mere question mark, and of certain meaningless questions which other people were compelled to keep on asking themselves, as if by an obsession, he could say, with sincere equanimity, "You will be able to answer that on the day when you can pick yourself up by the seat of the pants and carry yourself round the room." His atheism was neither a cocky denial (he would have held that to be as ignorant as an assertion) nor yet a merely supine and negative state of mind. It was the clear-headed and positive discipline of knowing when words were meaningless and of behaving firmly in the light of this knowledge. When people used to tackle him by saying that this was really agnosticism, he would reply, "No. In agnosticism you imply that there is something to be agnostic about."

It might be thought that a man so steeped in philosophy would be somewhat withdrawn from the run of ordinary life. Not so with Chapman Cohen. In his reading alone he lived in all possible worlds (I have never met anyone with a bigger or more varied appetite for books), and when it came to the enjoyment of the world and of his fellow men he had the zest of a youth. I remember once, when my wife and I were much younger, how he took us round London with the enthusiasm of a connoisseur,

showing the most astonishing knowledge, both historical and topical, of places of interest and beauty everywhere, and how, after an evening at a film of his own choosing, we finished up at an arcade where he introduced us to some games of chance with balls and slots, which he played with the gaiety and excitement of a schoolboy.

His humour was irrepressible and was always bubbling up on the platform. It put a sparkle into his lectures and a punch into his debates. It was never bitter and usually disarmed his critic, as when a man at the Picton Hall, Liverpool, rose hotly one evening and shouted, "The speaker has said that religion is on the decline. Is he aware that recent statistics have shown a very marked increase in the number of Non-conformist burial services?" Chapman Cohen smiled at him and said, "I hope so." No one could be angry.

It would be difficult even in a biography to do justice to this man of many parts—justice to his intellect, his prodigious memory (how tragic that this should have failed him in the evening of his life!), his ever-ready and penetrating wit, his punching power as a controversialist and debater, the singleness of purpose and the moral and intellectual integrity that made him respected as much as he was feared, his vivacity and warmth as an acquaintance and his fidelity as a friend. All that was of Chapman Cohen the man is perhaps more fitting matter for biography than for this too simple appreciation of the lamented leader of British Freethought. But it is impossible, remembering him as I do, not to speak just once of the greatest of all his private treasures—his wife.

If Chapman Cohen himself had been asked to tell us something of the inner light which, all his life, illumined his spirit and nourished his gargantuan energies, he would, had he been disposed to let us into the secret, have turned his eyes towards his wife and indicated by his silence that, for the first time, he needed an eloquence beyond the power of words.

More Tributes

News of the death of the movement's Great Leader, Chapman Cohen, has been conveyed to the members of the South London and Lewisham Branch N.S.S., and all wish to express the deepest regret, not only to the immediate relatives of Mr. Cohen but to the Society itself for sustaining such a tragic loss.

E. W. SHAW.

I was very distressed to read in *The Freethinker* of the death of that great man, Chapman Cohen. May I convey to the Freethought Movement my sincere condolences in its great loss? Please apply £1 of the enclosed cheque to *The Freethinker* Fund in memory of my splendid teacher.

MAURICE BRYN.

Members of the Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. are deeply grieved to receive the sad news of the death of Chapman Cohen. I wish to express on their behalf the deepest sympathy to Mrs. Cohen and family in their bereavement.

W. CRONAN.

Will you please accept my very deep sympathy on the death of Mr. Chapman Cohen? He was a valuable worker for free thought and liberty, and will be sorely missed.

R. S. W. POLLARD.

The wonderful work of dear Mr. Chapman Cohen, the fruits of which will never die, made me regard him as my hero. I admired him for both his intellect and his love of children. I am so glad I sent him a card on his last birthday.

ELLEN M. SANDYS.

This Believing World

On the occasion of his last broadcast talk to children about science and philosophy, Prof. Coulson, after an excellent resumé of Evolution as applied to Man—and in which he thoroughly believes—told his hearers that science was not enough, and that therefore Man must be “a Child of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.” Our very religious professor did not, of course, try to explain what this rigmarole meant. Why should he? Besides he doesn't know himself, and it is always best to skip unpleasant explanations. He probably left it to the harassed teacher to expound Man, God, and Jesus Christ, in simple language. God 'elp us!

It is good to learn from a Catholic journal that our TV authorities are considering “some excellent short films” boosting up Roman Catholicism for future viewing. This should please our ultra-Protestant friends who have, in the past, always violently objected to even the mildest hint that there was a Freethought case; though it had as much right to the radio as any other Movement. Now they are going to be regularly faced with “true” Christianity in the shape of Rome which has now a pretty tenacious hold on most things in this Protestant country.

The real antidote to Popery is Freethought, not Protestantism which is so divided that no one now knows what it really represents. Our religious authorities—and most of them are opposed to the Church of Rome—prefer even Popery to Freethought. They think they can tackle a Roman Catholic speaker; they know that they simply can't tackle a Freethinker. So hurrah for the Church of Rome!

We see that the Bishop of London wants people to read *The Man with a Message*, by J. R. W. Stott, so that they can be encouraged to read the Bible. Without plenty of Bible-reading and implicit faith in God's Precious Word—especially in the Authorised Version—how can parsons, priests, and bishops, survive? That all-believing Christian, Sir Richard Acland, M.P., in our pious contemporary the *Daily Herald*, is very disturbed, too, that so many people ask “critical questions” without “troubling to find out up-to-date intelligent answers.” The operative words are “intelligent” and “up-to-date”. About the Bible, too!

Sir Richard Acland feels deeply that “this approach isn't fair.” The Bible, he insists, is “an amazing record of God's manifestation of Himself to man”—which is about as big a piece of twaddle as we have read for many a long day. And we are not altogether surprised to learn that the very religious Sir Richard does not himself read the Bible every day. He wants you to. And if you want “divine” help, he is ready to answer your difficulties by post. We wonder whether he would answer some of the points raised in Foote's *Bible Handbook*?

A lady who committed suicide in 1050 A.D. has been having conversations, according to the *Cambridge Daily News*, with a Mr. Cornell (a member of the Society for Psychical Research) who is convinced that her skeleton is under the floor of an inn in Cambridge. Obviously, Mr. Cornell understood her—she must have spoken perfect modern English 900 years ago, and she has told him that she is “perfectly happy,” just loves to be buried underneath a pub, and doesn't want to be moved. We are happy to add that Mr. Cornell is going to record future conversations on a tape recorder and hopes to picture the ghost with

infra red photography. It will be a first-class scoop and should settle for ever the burning question of “survival”. Any spook who has happily survived living under a pub for 900 years deserves the George Medal and the Victoria Cross combined.

It is only fair to add, however, that in a later issue of the journal Mr. Cornell denied that he actually heard the spook talk. He “talked” to her through a planchette so naturally she wrote perfect modern English. In any case, Mr. Cornell is convinced that 90 per cent. of “reported phenomena are purely the product of imagination,” the other 10 per cent. being obviously such true cases as the one described above. People like Mr. Cornell are, we are afraid, not much good to Spiritualism. 90 per cent. fraud—what are we coming to?

Rise of Crimes in Religious U.S.A.— Faith and Cure

By WM. A. VAUGHAN

RECORDS from the Senate state that murders, robberies with violence, criminal sexual offences, etc., etc., cost each family in America £127 yearly; and, to stem these national crimes, a strong assembly of church leaders, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the Bishop of Chichester, will pray in New York while President Eisenhower makes a strong national call for FAITH, which he said publicly “is our surest strength and our greatest resource” to support the BACK TO GOD movement.

I have been reading the Rev. Robert Taylor's 14th letter, in Richard Carlile's publication, *The Lion*, page 622, where Taylor explains the definition of FAITH, given in Hebrews xi, as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”; which, if it hath any meaning at all, means a complete surrender of reason. “Having what you know, that you have not; and seeing what you know you don't see. The truth is, and 'tis a happy truth, that faith cannot entirely overcome reason,” writes Taylor in a couple of pages more of skilful argument, from Oakham Gaol, May 10, 1828.

The Back-to-Godites and Eisenhower should know Taylor's letter.

A CORRECTION

We are indebted to Mr. F. J. Corina, who has written pointing out that he took the funeral of the late Fred Haigh of Bradford, and that it was a purely secular one. We regret that in the Obituary contributed by “W.B.” it was erroneously stated that a religious ceremony was held. It appears that the Bradford Branch N.S.S. was never notified of the death of this member, and later a misleading report of what took place was accepted. To all concerned “W.B.” apologises for the error, while expressing gratification that the funeral was conducted with the respect and dignity due to the deceased.

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Chapman Cohen: A Tribute

By PETER COTES

To Correspondents

We regret that there may be some delay in publishing correspondence in view of the large number of tributes to the late Mr. Cohen which have reached this office.

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

Lecture Notices should reach the Secretary of the N.S.S. at this 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.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.: FRANK ROTHWELL.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Bomb Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK and BARNES. Every Sunday, 3 p.m., at Platt Fields: a Lecture.

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

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Satis Café, 40, Cannon St., off New St.).—Sunday, February 28, 7 p.m.: E. TAYLOR (Vice-President, Cosmo Debating Society (Notts), "The Legacy of Egypt."

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, February 28, 6-45 p.m.: J. T. BRIGITON (Vice-President, N.S.S.), A Lecture.

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1).—Tuesday, March 2, 7 p.m.: J. GRAY, "Can the Population Problem be Solved?"

Leicester Secular Society (Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, February 28, 6-30 p.m.: LISA BYRAN (S.P.G.B.), "The Socialist Solution to Social Problems."

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare St.).—Sunday, February 28, 2-30 p.m.: ELDER J. P. CREER, "Mormonism, the last Dispensation."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1).—Sunday, February 28, 11 a.m.: J. McCABE, "The Character of Popular Revolutions."

West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road).—Sunday, February 28, 7-15 p.m.: COLIN McCALL (N.S.S., Manchester), "Intellectual Irrationality."

More Tributes

When I explained once to Mr. Cohen, how I had felt at the death of Foote, he said: "Your world had gone." May I extend my sympathies to those who feel with the death of Chapman Cohen that "Their world has gone"—a world well worth having lived in?
MAY RUPP.

As a contemporary of the late Chapman Cohen (he was one year older than me), allow me to put on record my appreciation of him as a grand Secularist, of whose death I am truly sorry to learn.
ERNEST SMEDLEY.

I was sorry to hear of Mr. Cohen's death. I always held him in regard as one of my "intellectual fathers," and, although these breaks are inevitable in the continuity of any cause, we naturally feel them.
F. J. CORINA.

LET us praise a Great Man. And at the same time bear in mind how much abused the word "great" is. The label is affixed to all sorts of people, from soccer stars to TV "personalities," and modern usage has done much to cheapen the word. Not that it is ever simple for the mere mortal to praise the genius, especially as in this case the "great" had none of that smooth, superficial and glossy talent that passes for greatness in the estimation of so many readers of our popular press. However, it would be a strange lapse indeed upon the part of at least one of your readers if he failed to use the word in its correct sense when referring to the late editor of *The Freethinker* a man of most splendid merit, whose life was rich in unselfish service and who was easily the foremost man in the Free-thought movement throughout the world during the 20's and 30's.

Chapman Cohen taught so many of us, with varying degrees of success, how to think, to "be voices and not echoes," that it would be an impertinence now to regret his absence from our midst. It would also be hypocrisy. And no man detested humbug more than Cohen. The fine human being; the brilliant writer, powerful orator, lucid and skilful debater and wise philosopher and guide, died quite a while before February the fourth last, leaving those who had crossed his path the richer for the unique experience. The man who removed the "blinkers" from the eyes of so many during his lifetime, refused to regard his work in opposing superstition, witchcraft and oppression, as anything more than "a labour of love." His candour and humanity were beyond question and by his natural modesty and great personal charm he encouraged confidence and received it. The rapier-like wit, trenchant pamphleteer; scornful public debater and good-hater of ignorance and other primitive survivals in modern thought, was a gentle, kindly and quietly emotional man; a devoted wife to whom he was in turn devoted, has been left the legacy of knowing, among many other fragrant memories, that for so long in a splendid life her husband was the happiest of men.

I was privileged to know Chapman Cohen for just on twenty-five years. He taught a gauche, shy and not over-bright youth to try to think for himself. The teacher never preached nor patronised, but showed astonishing understanding of the adolescent mind and exhibited a degree of patience with immature and rash reasoning that in retrospect appears to be quite remarkable; the more so since a great deal of the knowledge imparted must have fallen on "stony ground" and the pupil could scarcely have been a credit to the teacher. However, that pupil, like countless others throughout the world, would be the poorer to-day if he had never known Chapman Cohen. What started as a teacher-pupil relationship of acquaintances developed into a warm and enduring friendship, beside which the shadows of the last few tragic months pale into insignificance.

To the very gracious lady, so tenderly referred to in Cohen's life story, *Almost an Autobiography*, who was the recipient of his most intense loyalty, marked respect and greatest affection for nearly sixty years, may we be allowed to express our deep appreciation. Without "Ciss" Cohen's presence by his side, her careful nursing in sickness and *camaraderie* in battle, the Chapman Cohen who carried on for so long might well have been a less great man than the one who, in the years to come, must, through his life's work, exercise a considerable influence upon modern thought.

Much could be written in appreciation. A vast amount

will doubtless appear in the pages of *The Freethinker*. In many homes throughout the land they will be remembering the man, recollecting this or that feature of his character, measuring this aspect of his work against another, comparing notes about speaking engagements or when the first occasion occurred for this remarkable man to enter their lives. Perhaps it was a book? Or an odd copy of *The Freethinker*? Maybe a lecture in Glasgow, Bradford, Leicester or Manchester on a cold winter evening? For Cohen was an energetic speaker on behalf of Freethought up and down the country, and never spared himself if there was a date to keep and an audience waiting. A great deal was dealt with in Mr. Morris's moving address at the Cremation and doubtless very much more will appear in the future, when his work for Enlightenment and Humanity (in George Meredith's words: "The Best of all Causes") will be more generally recognised and widely acknowledged. Until then, let the following quotation from his writings published over thirty years ago, serve as an epitaph for the man himself. It is apt.

"An idea having entered the head of a genius does become the property of more average minds. It took a genius to express the law of gravitation, but that once done, a very ordinary mind may claim it as part of its intellectual wealth. And it is precisely because genius can impart some of its greatness to others that it is of such value to all. Were it otherwise the race would be doomed to remain intellectual paupers, forever dependent upon the scraps thrown by a few favoured individuals, but without the capacity to move onward. The world would indeed be in a sad way did it not possess the power to annex the inspiration of some of its choicest minds."—(*The Other Side of Death*. Published by Pioneer Press, 1922.)

Chapman Cohen had a very choice mind indeed. The world of the future will be the better for its inspiration.

The Future of Islam

[We have much pleasure in introducing to the readers of "The Freethinker" the following article by the eminent French anti-Clerical publicist and social historian, Robert Louzon.—EDITOR.]

SOME time ago, we drew attention to the Pan-Islamic Congress, which was held a few years ago in Karachi, the capital of Pakistan, at which two rival tendencies disputed vigorously for mastery.

Of these, one was that of those who are Muslims first, last, and all the time; like their critics, they think it essential first and foremost, to get rid of Christian and European domination. But they regard the elimination of the domination of the Christian West as merely the necessary preface to the re-establishment of the ancient traditions of Islam; their ultimate aim is to revive the mediæval Khalifat, which will institute throughout the entire Muslim universe the totalitarian authority of the Koran in every department of the religious, political, cultural, and in even economic and legal domains.

The opposing tendency was that of the Modernists, whose desire to free their countrymen from the yoke of the West is not primarily motivated by the desire for the universal restoration of Muslim ascendancy, but rather for the purpose of creating modern states, erected on European models, which will be able to give to their citizens not only a tranquil political and economic existence but, equally, will provide for their material and intellectual progress.

Whilst these two tendencies agree in their desire to get rid of alien rule, in every other respect they are sharply opposed. From which fact, we can foresee that, as soon as they have succeeded in their common purpose of getting

rid of foreign rule, they will inevitably clash over their fundamental aims.

This last state of things has already transpired in Iran, where the expulsion of the British and the nationalisation of the oil industry was only brought about by a close alliance between the "popular front" regime of Dr. Mossadeq with the powerful following of the religious leader, Kashani—the first of which represented the radical and modernising element in the state, whilst the second stood for the absolutely unconditioned ascendancy of the Islamic "church." But the English Ambassador had hardly gone, when a bitter conflict broke out between Mossadeq and Kashani, and the rupture of this victorious alliance led to its at least temporary defeat by giving the Shah the opportunity which otherwise he would not have dared even to attempt, to stage his successful *coup d'état*, the way for whose successful outcome was effectually prepared by the bitter struggle which had broken out between the temporal and spiritual powers.

To-day, we note the beginning of an exactly similar process in Egypt. The *coup d'état* which got rid of Farouk and of his English backers only succeeded because of the close alliance between the radical army leadership which stood for a modern secular state, and the "Muslim Brotherhood," who aim openly at the establishment in Egypt of a Muslim theocratic state. But this alliance proved no more lasting than did that of Mossadeq and Kashani. The final rupture, which came to a head the other day, proved even more violent than in Iran, since it ended with the forcible disruption of the "Brotherhood" and the arrest of its leaders, a feat which even Mossadeq dared not emulate.

The situation, at present occupied by General Neguib is so much stronger than that formerly occupied by Dr. Mossadeq as a result of the support of the army, upon which Dr. Mossadeq was unable to depend, that one may reasonably hope that this rupture will not have the disastrous effect in promoting feudal reaction in Egypt, that such a breach had previously effected in Iran.

However that may turn out, such an eventual rupture is inevitable ultimately. The Arab nations can only assure their social progress by liberating themselves from the yoke of the Koran simultaneously with their acquisition of freedom from the alien domination of the Christian West.

In the East as formerly in the West, the secular civilisation of modern times can only come into existence by first subjugating Clericalism to the ascendancy of reason. There is nothing peculiar to Christianity in the conflict between Church and State; it is inevitable in any society where a Church, of whatever persuasion, blocks its aspirations to create a genuine secular state.

One can see this very clearly if one looks back a generation at what occurred in Turkey. The late Kemal Pasha could only create modern Turkey by embarking on an open conflict with Muslim clericalism compared with which the "Kulturkampf"—that is, conflicts between Church and State—of Bismarck and Combes were mere child's play. He had to close the mosques, dissolve the religious brotherhoods, and confiscate their goods and break the power of Islam by state measures of an unparalleled ruthlessness, which, if they had been aimed at Christianity, would have aroused all Europe with a howl of horror against "religious persecution," against the measures which Atatürk was compelled to undertake to modernise the Turks—and, in particular, the Turkish women.

To-day, the Near East is in a state of revolutionary ferment. Newly emancipated from Christian domination, it now finds its secular progress menaced by the mediæval traditions of Islam. The struggle will be fierce, but the difficulty of an undertaking enhances the value of the ultimate victory.

Translated by F. A. R.

Review

An American Appreciation

By JACK BENJAMIN

"MAN AND HIS GODS." By Prof. Homer W. Smith. 501 pp. Little Brown and Co., Boston. Foreword by Albert Einstein. \$5.00.

Some 20 years ago, a book captioned *Kamongo* came off the press and became popular immediately. Prof. Homer W. Smith, its author, has let two decades go by and now we are treated to a veritable masterpiece of its kind in *Man and His Gods*, a scholarly, intensely learned and, to my mind, a very objective contribution to the history of religious development.

Those who have delved into the mists of time antedating by many centuries current religious beliefs and practices are, no doubt, acquainted with such works as Frazer's *Golden Bough*, the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Westermarck's *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* and other books, too numerous to mention in a brief review; and realise the necessity not alone of synthesis when it comes to the vast body of material available but the importance of critical analysis, also.

In *Man and His Gods* Prof. Smith has made an outstanding contribution to the subject. It is to be regretted that some of the book reviewers who have covered this work for the daily papers haven't shown a keener insight into the values brought forth, and their seeming temerity may be attributed to a fear of offending the status quo in theological belief, so far as the majority of people is concerned.

Students of religious development should be aware that there is an unbroken development of certain basic ideas from the beginning of historic time up to the very present. Those who fear the truth are usually afraid to investigate, and take refuge in uncritical acceptance rather than to be in possession of the facts necessary to substantiate their position. In regard to this phase of the question it would be pertinent to quote Prof. Smith:—

"All human history reveals that transcendental metaphysics is not only futile but dangerous. Those who have foisted, frequently by not too honest means, their unsupported speculations upon the naive and gullible as truth have served to retard man's self realisation more than any other misfortune that has befallen him."

Even reviewers who haven't shown any marked appreciation of *Man and His Gods* have had to admit that, "Reason and verifiable truth are Professor Smith's guiding stars." (Orville Prescott, *New York Times*, April 15, 1952.) Certainly, more cannot be asked as a basic criterion of any scholar. There is no other current work on this subject and few of past decades that the present reviewer knows which can equal this masterly work.

As an admirer for about four decades of that relatively unknown genius, John M. Robertson, I should like to express my heartfelt appreciation for the deserving tribute bestowed upon him by Prof. Smith, especially for his following lines:—

"I have drawn heavily, both in 'New Wine' and in subsequent chapters, on the writings of John Mackinnon Robertson, an outstanding exponent of rationalism and one of the foremost scholars produced in England in the last six decades. . . ."

"In all matters, it has been said of him that 'he loved reason as other men love physical health'—but not his reason alone for 'all he would have contended was that without a knowledge of all the available facts, and the disciplined action of reason upon them, there could not be even a temporary approximation to truth.' The research for truth was the dominant passion of his life. . . ."

"Despite a lifetime of scholarly work, Robertson is known to only a small circle in his native land, and he is almost unknown in America. It was in part because his determination to find 'tested truth' in whatever area he worked, his refusal to accept a substitute, that his life brought him only, in the main, frustration. . . ."

Prof. Homer W. Smith has found a good master in Robertson, and it is significant that Albert Einstein in his brief but succinct foreword makes this comment regarding his quality of mind:

"This is a biologist speaking, whose scientific training has disciplined him in a grim objectivity rarely found in the pure historian."

Homer W. Smith is a distinguished scientist and is a professor of physiology at the School of Medicine of New York University. He is also reputed to be an outstanding authority on the kidney. Those who relish and are able to appreciate truly great scholarship will, undoubtedly, consider Prof. Smith's *Man and His Gods* a major contribution to its subject.

The present reviewer should like, if he may, to extend his heartiest congratulations on this feat.

The "Myth" of Materialism Again

By H. CUTNER

IT has always seemed to me to be a sheer waste of time to discuss Materialism with an Idealist. One might just as well try to convert a Jehovah's Witness. The Idealist's chief card is to confuse—and, in my own experience, after the argument has gone on for a while, I am nearly always implored to prove my own existence. Get a good old-fashioned Idealist on the warpath, and he will fill his argument with big words—just as Mr. Douglas V. Morgan has done—words like Epiphenomenalism and Solipsism.

Now whether Epiphenomenalism does or does not "do away with 'mind,'" or whether the Materialist does "deny the Human Mind," as Mr. Morgan says in his trump card, it seems to me he would have done better if he had given us the definitions of "mind" by prominent Materialists and then answered them. He does not even deign to give us his own definition. Nor does he give us any authority for the silly statement—silly statements are a habit of so many Idealists—that "no doubt the Materialist thought he was the cleverest man on earth." Why do almost all opponents of Materialism descend to personalities instead of getting on with the argument?

What I want to ask Mr. Morgan to do first is to say whether he believes in Evolution? If he does not, then it is useless to hold any discussion with him whatever, for the simple reason that he is completely out of date. His best place is with the Salvation Army, or some other simple Christian sect, where he can worship his Saviour undisturbed by the heresies of modern science.

If, however, he believes in Evolution, then he must believe that at one time this earth of ours was a gaseous globe *without* any "life" as we understand the term; for the very simple reason that life could not exist upon it. If that is true—and it is true—then "matter" must have existed before "mind." For "mind" emerges from matter under certain known conditions. Without those conditions, there could be no mind as we understand the word. Under certain conditions, "wetness" emerges from a combination of two gases, hydrogen and oxygen, and under certain conditions water becomes "hot" or "cold." Idealists like Mr. Morgan look upon "mind" as a separate or distinct "entity." Materialists like myself claim that "mind" is not an entity at all, but something which has evolved with "matter"—whatever matter really is, or whatever name we give to matter. That is, no "matter," no "mind." And we claim that it is purely "mechanical."

There is no "directing" Mind (with a capital M) ordering "matter" what to do, or forcing on to Man, "Laws of Nature."

If Mr. Morgan had studied Hume and his criticism of Berkeley, he would understand what that great philosopher thought of "mind." And he would not have written the silly nonsense, "you say that the Human Mind does not exist."

But as I said at the beginning—it is a waste of time to answer Mr. Morgan. All I need do is to point out that Materialism is still very much alive, and is more than ever making converts. Is Idealism?

An Esperantist Replies

By B. J. EDGECOMBE

IN recent numbers of *The Freethinker* a good deal of space has, quite rightly, been devoted to the question of the need for and choice of an international language. Opinions have been expressed for and against Esperanto and presented in such a way as to reflect very creditably on the Editorial impartiality of our journal.

I should like now, if I may, to comment on the article "Why Esperanto?" by Mr. G. L. Dickenson.

Although this gentleman is himself an Esperantist—and by that I mean a person who is able to write and speak the language—he is apparently no longer a member of the organised Esperanto Movement. In fact, he chooses to criticise the structure of Esperanto and, in support of his contentions, is able to cite a few grammatical cases which, in his opinion, are unnecessary and ridiculous.

Let us, then, methodically examine his accusations in a manner befitting a "seeker after truth."

Firstly, in (a) and (b), he draws attention to the fact that in Esperanto all nouns end in -o and adjectives in -a. Also, every adjective must agree with its noun. "English has long since proved that such grammatical categories are unnecessary." I challenge this point. *How* has English proved them to be unnecessary? "Because English does not possess them," one may reply: but is English any easier for a foreigner to learn because they are omitted?—I think not. Personally, when I first began learning Esperanto I found these regularities very helpful in recognising new words.

(c) and (d). He does not like the accusative ending -n. Again because English does not possess it. But have the Germans any objection, or the Scandinavians, or the Slav peoples? Of course not.

(e). "It has been proved by other attempts at artificial language that affixes borrowed from national languages are to be preferred." Therefore these "other attempts" must be superior to Esperanto.

What are they, Mr. Dickenson? and where are they? Why, if they are so good have so few people outside of interlinguist circles ever heard of them? I suggest it is because these other projects have never advanced beyond the textbook and dictionary stage, if that.

Next your contributor goes on to put words into Esperantist mouths. We are supposed to say: "If the world will adopt our language as it is, with its defects, we are prepared to consider modifying it."

At this point I must indeed raise my own voice with all the force I can muster. To everyone who happens to be reading these words, Esperantists are *not*, repeat *not*, a kind of intellectual linguistic elite possessing a language and deigning to permit lesser mortals to use it. It is "our language" only inasmuch as we use it, but most emphati-

cally we do not "own" it. Let me say here and now that, if Mr. Dickenson but realised it, Esperanto already belongs to the world: for what is language, any language, but a social phenomena? There is no copyright on Esperanto.

We next learn that the English-speaking population is an "inert mass" which cannot be moved by argument or persuasion. Is, then, this "mass" any more likely to be moved by a yet-to-be-projected ideal language which is the brain-child of Mr. Dickenson? I should have thought that the mass would have preferred their ordinary English rather than the "improved" variety, so very much resembling English, which he mentions. Surely the failure of "Basic English" would have deterred any serious person from following that well-worn track?

Then follows a reference to circumflexed letters. Surprise, Mr. D.! I may even be willing to concede a point on this matter. At least, this is the only criticism worthy of any serious consideration.

Very possibly, if these were dispensed with, it would in some small way help in the spread of Esperanto. Although, need I remind our readers, Esperanto has achieved its present position in the world even *with* circumflexed characters. Certainly no printer worthy of the name is without them. In any case, would it not be more sensible for Mr. Dickenson, if he feels so strongly about the matter, to agitate for this reform to the language within the Esperanto Movement itself rather than beat the air outside it so uselessly as he is now doing? Surely a one-time Fellow of The British Esperanto Association would be able to obtain a respectful hearing? Just a suggestion, though.

Next point, the choice of the letter "j" to denote the plural. This letter is pronounced in the Teutonic fashion and corresponds to the English "y." Upon closer scrutiny the idea is found to be very sensible. Confusion is avoided with the verbal endings -is, -as, -os and -us and in actual speech the only difference existing is between the sounds "oy" and "os." A supreme example of hair-splitting!

Finally, we come to the opinion that Esperanto has a restricted vocabulary. Nothing could be further from the truth. Consider: the system of affixes *alone* allows for the formation of many words from one root word, sometimes even as many as thirty!

While Mr. Dickenson is waiting for a miracle language to appear, suitable to his own particular tastes, intelligent people throughout the world are learning and using Esperanto and militants in the Esperanto Movement are doing their best to persuade their thinking and progressive contemporaries that, whatever the demands which may be made upon it, Esperanto is *in fact* the International Language.

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