

THE

# FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN · · EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G. W. FOOTE

VOL. LI.—No. 15

SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 1931

PRICE THREEPENCE

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## Views and Opinions.

### Atheism.

No one would be more interested than myself to discover a genuinely strong argument against Atheism. But I have never come across one. The Atheism that is discussed is nearly always something in which no intelligent Atheist believes. Or when a genuine Atheism is the subject of discussion the reply of the Theist is so manifestly inadequate that Counsel for the defence need hardly bother to reply. Of the first class we will only cite such instances as Huxley and Spencer, who both justified their rejection of Atheism by mis-stating it, and then adopted under another name the thing they had thrown on one side. Of the second class named, one may cite such an instance as that of Ralph Cudworth's *True Intellectual System of the Universe*, probably one of the most scholarly works dealing with Atheism ever issued. Cudworth lived in the seventeenth century and was a minister of the Church of England. But he took care to understand Atheism, and set down what was said in its favour with fairness. The consequence was that when he came to write his reply—or as much of it as was published—this was so clearly inadequate that the author was accused of being a Christian in the pulpit and an Atheist in his book. Dryden said that the author "has raised such strong objections against the being of a God and Providence that many think he has not answered them." The Earl of Shaftesbury, author of the famous *Characteristics*, put the position still more plainly in saying that Cudworth "was accused of giving the upper hand to the Atheists for having only stated their reasons and those of their adversaries fairly together." The only really adequate reply to the Atheist is to prevent him either speaking or writing.

### Coleridge and Atheism.

At any rate it will never do for Christians to admit that Atheism may arise as a characteristic of a normal, educated mind. When it is not due to vice or ignorance or misunderstanding, it must be presented as a mere passing phase symptomatic of immaturity. This is frequently done, as in this sentence, which I take from Canon Ainger's life of Charles Lamb—the reference is to Samuel Taylor Coleridge:—

He went through a phase of Atheism probably out of sheer curiosity.

Lamb once described Coleridge's fondness for German metaphysics as due to his irrepressible sense of humour, and if one did not know otherwise one might attribute the Canon's remark to a fondness for jokes. But he is quite serious on the matter. Coleridge went through a phase of Atheism, and he explains it as due to sheer curiosity.

Personally, I have my doubts whether Coleridge was ever an Atheist—in any genuine sense of the term. He does refer to his own "infidelity," but it is highly probable that his "infidelity" never went beyond what would now be called Theism. He rejected the Bible stories, and it is likely he was influenced by the better class of the Deistic writers. He had, it is true, been called an Atheist by Christians, but Christians generally love the most abusive of terms when dealing with an opponent. Speaking of his own position he says:—

For telling unwelcome truths I have been called an Atheist. It is for these opinions that William Smith assured the Archbishop of Canterbury that I was (what half the clergy are in their lives) an Atheist. Little do these men know what Atheism is. Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart enough to be an Atheist. I repeat. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist. And were I not a Christian, and that only in the sense in which I am a Christian, I would be an Atheist with Spinoza.

I am not now concerned with Coleridge's opinions about religion, but only with the opinion of Canon Ainger concerning Atheism.

\* \* \*

### Sheer Cackle.

Atheism, it is assumed, is a phase of mind that may easily be passed through, or it may be deliberately adopted much as one might select a motor-car, afterwards changing it for some more desirable type. Some people, disgusted with religion try Atheism "out of sheer curiosity," or they pass through it, much as though Atheism were a sort of intellectual complaint to which bright intellects are susceptible. I say "bright intellects," because in these cited cases it is never the fools who catch the complaint. They are quite safe. The true anti-toxin against Atheism is



stupidity. For the fool does not "say in his heart there is no God." The fool never ceases to proclaim God, and then goes on his knees and thanks God for his stupidity.

Now anyone who can write as does Canon Ainger, is veritably writing like a fool. No matter how he may write with regard to other subjects, in this respect he is simply ignorant. He does not know what Atheism is, and he ignores easily verifiable laws of mental life. How does one adopt a frame of mind out of mere curiosity? One may examine anything out of curiosity; one may even study from mere curiosity the twists and turns of one's mental life. But how can one adopt a mental state merely to see what it is like? Mental states are not adopted, they are not consciously selected. They arise; they are an aspect of growth; they express what we are at a particular moment. Their causes and their consequences are matters of history.

\* \* \*

#### The Certainty of Atheism.

The idea of anyone becoming an Atheist from mere curiosity is delicious. Curious about what? About the reasons that lead one to profess Atheism? They are to be studied by anyone who cares to read Atheistic arguments. Is it to find out what Atheism is? Well, Atheists are not formed into a secret society. Any Atheist will oblige with the desired information. Is it curiosity to find out what an Atheist looks like, and what are his feelings? Judging by appearances the Atheist is not greatly unlike other people. He looks the same as others, and in the ordinary affairs of life he acts much the same as others. If one wishes to realize the mental state of an Atheist, he can only completely do this by developing into an Atheist. And once a man has developed that far, short of some pathological catastrophe, he does not tread the backward path.

Naturally, the believer—particularly the clerical believer—likes to assume that Atheism is a transient frame of mind, something that may happen to anyone, but from which most recover. But genuine Atheists never do "recover." No man who becomes an Atheist is ever reconverted—so long as he remains mentally healthy. The change is all on one side, and in the one direction. It is equally false to assume that some people "adopt" Atheism because they have false views of the Bible, or from contact with undesirable Christians. The truth is that Atheism is never due to these things, although they may easily direct attention to certain aspects of religion. They give weight to one doctrine against another, or to one church against another, and that is all. But if every believer was a wholly admirable person, if every Church was an admirable institution, if all Christians were agreed about the Bible, it would not affect the growth of Atheism in the least. That rests upon causes that are inherent in the growth of civilization.

\* \* \*

#### Atheism Inevitable.

Look at the matter historically. Quite apart from the question of whether Atheism is desirable or undesirable, the world's growth is in its direction. Bacon's oft quoted saying that a little philosophy leads to Atheism, but greater depth in philosophy brings man back to God is very superficial, and is obviously wrong. It is a little philosophy that breeds religion, and greater depth that carries one on to Atheism. Religion is not the final philosophy of nature, it is the earliest. It is quite true that religion is the product of reason, but it is reason in its least informed state. Had man been incapable of reason the gods would never have existed;

and provided man keeps on reasoning the gods will one day cease to exist. All history and all experience proves this. The very universality of religion proves it. For religion is universal only in the sense that every tribe of human beings develops some kind of superstition. And, then, exactly in proportion as their culture advances we find religion losing their hold upon them. All savages are religious. Atheism is a feature of every phase of civilized life.

The essential fact about Atheism is that it represents growth—a development in the individual that is built upon development in the race. That is why a man cannot become an Atheist and then revert to religion. One may exist without knowledge or perception of certain truths, but once this knowledge is ours it is impossible for one to divest oneself of it. A man may remain a believer in God, the majority do so remain, but once a man really understands the god-idea, and knows its origin and appreciates its history, how is he ever going to get back to his previous mental condition? You can no more uneducate yourself than you can unpull your own nose. It is this feature of Atheism that the Theist will not recognise—perhaps he dare not recognize it. For its recognition involves the admission that the belief in God is only a passing phase in the mental history of man, quite analogous to the belief in fairies in the history of the individual. It is in the infancy of the race that the god-idea is born, it is to the infancy of the race that the gods properly belong. That is a truth which is not at all affected by the fact that in many instances the period of infancy is so disastrously prolonged.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### A Prince of Propagandists.

"Hail to the courage which gave  
Voice to its creed, ere the creed  
Won consecration from time."

Matthew Arnold.

"Liberty, a word beside which all other words are  
vain."—Ingersoll.

"Truth is not to be dallied with."—Goethe.

At the time when the British Secularists had started their modest task of converting the English-speaking world to Freethought, a kindly, handsome Englishman conceived the idea of devoting himself to Rationalistic propaganda among what has been called facetiously, "the hupper suckles" of society. This man was Thomas Scott, of Mount Pleasant, Ramsgate. He had personality, he had that chivalry for principle which represents the highest manhood, and he did his work joyously. His memory is kept green for what he was; his memory is treasured for what he did, and the record of his life's work lifts the mind like the sound of stirring martial music.

Thomas Scott had an adventurous career. Born in 1808, he was, in his youth, a page to King Charles X. of France. A great traveller, he journeyed to all parts of the globe. Well educated, he knew the world of books, and he knew also the book of the world. In the later years of his life he devoted his leisure, money, and abilities to the furtherance of Freethought, and proved himself a prince among propagandists.

During the years 1862 to 1877 he issued from his pleasant seaside home a very large number of booklets and pamphlets, printed and distributed at his own expense, the total collection making twenty stout volumes. The writers he gathered about him were men of real ability, and among them were Moncure Conway, Addington Symonds, the historian of



the Renaissance, Sir R. O. Hanson, Judge Strange, Dr. Zerffi, Bishop Hinds, and Sir G. W. Cox. Annie Besant wrote an essay on *The Deity of Jesus of Nazareth*, "by the wife of a beneficed clergyman." This particular pamphlet had momentous results, for the Rev. Mr. Besant insisted on his young wife taking his church's communion, or leaving, and, brave woman that she was, she chose the better course. Afterwards she wrote many more tracts for Thomas Scott, since reprinted in *My Path to Atheism*, thus paving the way to her fifteen years' championship of Freethought during the stormy period when heterodoxy was a serious bar to the citizen, and ecclesiastical authority was strong in the land.

It is difficult to imagine now the flutter caused in sheltered homes and country vicarages by Thomas Scott's persistent propaganda. In the "sixties" and "seventies" of the last century, Freethought ideas had an air of novelty, and the clergy had not then realized that discretion was the better part of valour in their particular case. For Scott levelled some of his artillery at the clergy, and bombarded them through the post with pamphlets and tracts. One of them was entitled *213 Questions*, to which answers were asked respectfully, and each one was well calculated to turn a clergyman's hair white, and curl it afterwards. Most of them remain unanswered to this day.

The most ambitious work Scott issued was the outspoken *English Life of Jesus*, which was designed to do for British readers what Renan had done for France, and Strauss for Germany. It was "a thunderous engine of revolt," and was written in conjunction with Sir George Cox, who, being a Bishop of the Established Church, was unwilling to put his name to the volume.

In laying down his life-work, Scott said: "The only true orthodoxy is loyalty to reason." He died at Norwood in 1878, and deserves a niche in the Freethought Valhalla, because in his day he did valiant work for the emancipation of his fellows. Animated throughout by high ideals, and supported by strong character, he had the true courage which sweeps away selfishness, weakness and fears in discharging what he felt were moral obligations.

This work, done by Thomas Scott and his small circle of friends is an important contribution to the history of the popularizing of Freethought. During the half century which has elapsed since Scott's death great and far-reaching changes have taken place. The most important are the safeguarding of bequests to Freethought; the right of Freethinkers to sit in Parliament without taking an oath, the right of affirmation, and the co-operation of women in general of propaganda. In the days of Holyoake, Southwell, and Bradlaugh the audiences at Freethought meetings were almost entirely composed of men, whereas to-day the position is very different. Under Mr. Cohen's able administration the Freethought Party is increasing in numbers and influence. Owing to his leadership, too, in a most difficult period of the country's history, it is still in the vanguard of progress, sheltering behind it all the weaker heterodox people, who otherwise had been crushed out of existence by the weight of orthodoxy.

Secularists have a right to be proud of their history. As the little "Revenge" earned an undying name by hurling herself against the great battleships of the Spaniards, so the Freethinkers have displayed extraordinary courage in attacking the heart of the more formidable Armada of Superstition. The greater the perils the greater the victory, and in the ripe years to come recognition must be given to the superb courage, which, disregarding any reward,

was satisfied with the knowledge that their action would diffuse the blessings of Liberty. When great questions have to be answered, may we deal with them with the same fervour as our predecessors:—

"Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider."

MIMNERMUS.

## Brain and Mind.

THE brain is the organ of the mind, say the text books of physiology; and that teaching has become so familiar to us that we almost take it for granted. Yet the history of science shows that such a notion was by no means obvious, and that indeed the conception of the function of the brain, as it is now understood, is quite modern among scientific men; and with them, I think I shall be able to show, there still persist many crude and false notions as to how the brain subserves thought. When, apart from the actual intellectual effort, we consider emotions, and if, in accordance with the usage from of old, we speak of the soul, we find that the soul has been lodged by various thinkers in strange quarters. Some of the Greek philosophers thought that the seat of the soul was the tonsils. Horace bids a fair lady-love inflame a suitable liver; admirers of more robust heroism seek for muscle rather than a gland for the soul's habitation, and so the heart has been accorded special honour; some South African tribes, no less reliant on muscle, assign the calf of the leg as the soul's habitat.

Descartes, who gave up his beloved mathematics for the sake of searching enquiries into the structure of the brain, decided at length on various grounds, but principally on that of symmetry, that the soul sat on the pineal gland as on a throne, and from that point of vantage directed those subtle essences, the thoughts, one way or another. In the course of the development of the science of physiology various curious conceptions were held with regard to the functions of the principal organs of the body in turn, and it may be noted as showing how extraordinarily modern are parts of our knowledge of which we are proud, that the separation and true definition of the nerves as sensory and motor, is due to Bell, that same diligent student and thinker whose work on *The Hand* gave the silly Paley the clue to his famous elucidations.

All this is said to remind us that in these matters we should take nothing for granted, but patiently seek out our routes on the lines laid down by Nature herself. We are every day making experiments to this effect. When we open the eyes we have sensations of things which immediately before had not been apparent to us, and when we close our eyes the immediate impression disappears. Examining into the essentials of this experiment, and, as we should always do, endeavouring to express what we observe in general terms, we find that we have interposed a veil between some external objects and the eye. After repeating this simple experiment on several occasions we are justified in assuming that something which produces stimulus proceeds from a visible object to the eye on all such occasions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For the sake of brevity I am assuming an objective world in the terms of the Common Sense philosophers. I am not a follower of Reid, however, nor of Berkeley on the other hand; I have shown in fact in my *Principles of Psychology* that Reid was deficient in analysis, and that Berkeley was inconsistent in the interpretation of his own idealism; and that finally a true conception of idealism, carried through with the most determined consistency, will give a clearer meaning to objectivity than that of Reid.



What becomes of this something after reaching the eye? We find an opening in the eye partly filled up with a coloured and beautifully formed elastic curtain, the iris, and about the centre of the iris there is a circular orifice through which passes this something which we are investigating. It would be interesting here to detail the whole structure of the eye, but I may say that there is perhaps no part of the body which has been subjected to such minute investigation by the aid of the most delicate instruments and the most powerful microscopes. Yet after all this research by investigators who have displayed admirable talent in their work, we are still left undecided as to the veritable function of some of the parts.

The theories of vision put forward by men of brilliant intellectual power, such as Thomas Young and subsequently Helmholtz, are really not, properly understood, theories of vision at all, but of the objective mixing of colours. These theories are taught in a routine style in most of the medical schools and universities of the world. In some they have been superseded by other theories, also merely tentative and unconvincing, principally elaborated by the German physiologists. Then at length we get the theories of Edridge Green, who has done some admirable experimental work and, incidentally, shown that all the preceding theories are baseless. It would be out of place, and would take too long to dwell upon this matter; I have mentioned it here in order to show, in this one instance out of dozens in our knowledge, that the mere study of physiology, however minutely carried out, is not sufficient, without the illumination of psychology, to explain certain of the results of physiology itself.

Again, I must haste with long steps, assuming many things which, however, are demonstrable. We now know, and in this we are much in advance of the ancients, that from luminous objects there proceed waves of the ether, or as Newton would have it, and some of the Relativitists reaffirm, corpuscles of matter carried from the object to the eye. Speaking in terms of the wave-theory these undulations are carried through various parts of the eye until they reach the retina. On reaching the retina the undulations stimulate certain delicate organs in the retina, and, according to the wave-length, the stimulation varies in a manner which ultimately produces qualitative effects; in other words a certain wave-length corresponds to a sensation of red, and other wave-lengths to other colours along the spectrum till we reach the violet end.

Of all the perturbations of ether that fall on the eye, only a very small proportion give rise to effects within the perception of our senses. What precisely takes place when the undulations reach the retina we do not know with any certainty. Edridge Green maintains that the rods only are concerned in distinguishing colours, and that the cones have as principal function that of supplying a liquid, the visual purple, which is analagous to the sensitising part of the ordinary photographic plate.<sup>2</sup>

Hitherto we have been dealing with purely mechanical effects. The whole physical process is carried along by virtue of processes which fall within the scope of the actions and reactions of physics and

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that Edridge Green had extraordinary difficulty in obtaining a fair examination of his results, even those directly capable of proof by experiment. There is amongst scientific men, as amongst the religious sectarians, a tendency towards an official orthodoxy; and so it has happened that any theory which breaks off from the conventional teaching, at a low level meets with opposition, as invincible as it is stupid, from scientific authorities. I have shown this, with almost disconcerting abundance of examples, in *Science: Leading and Misleading*.

chemistry. We now come to a part where the explanations seem to become less clear. It is indubitable that certain effects of the stimulation are carried along the strands of nervous tissue to the brain. At this point the opponents of Materialism, as they designate it, become extraordinarily interested, and they display a great aversion to the further tracing out of these natural processes.

That supplies us with a curious psychological problem: Why do they not resent these explanations from the beginning? Why do they remain complacent when someone remarks, I opened my eye and saw a bird? The eyelid is a more obvious piece of materialism than the delicate structure of the nerve. The explanation really is that it would be absurd to protest against these facts at the level of the eyelid, for the action there is patent to all. The structure of the brain is, however, only known to those who have made some express study of the organ, and, as the people in question, are in search of some point of defence against what they conceive to be an attack on their sacred, though vague, conceptions, they take cover under the darkness of ignorance, and dig themselves into their metaphysical trenches. However, here we are not concerned, as Kant was, in defending any chosen dogma, but simply in investigating the conditions as they are. In familiar terms we want to get "the hang of the school house," and so we will proceed calmly.

There are various ways of tracing the nerve strands from their extremities to where they either end or change their form. The most obvious of these is to prepare, by the microtome, a complete series of sections of extreme thinness in planes at right angles to the course of the nerve. This was not possible, of course, until the science of histology, aided by delicate instruments, had reached a certain degree of development. The first to carry this out was a German neurologist, Schiff, whose systematic work threw great light on the subject. Many other means of tracing the course of the nerves have been, and are, available. For instance—and here of course not confining ourselves to nerves concerned in vision—we can actually dissect out nerve strands, as for instance those subserving touch, from their endings and thence continuously to the brain. At that point we may have recourse again to methods, such as those of Schiff; but it sometimes happens, that a mechanical injury, or certain affections of the nerves may cause a progressive degeneration, and this better enables us to trace out, though in a somewhat coarse manner, the route of the nerve strands. The signs and symptoms displayed by the patient when studied in connexion with these observations also enable us to obtain some determinations as to the function of the nerves in question. Some further knowledge may be obtained by stimulation of the nerves, the conditions being varied at times as for instance by artificial ligatures which prevent the transmission of the stimulus beyond certain points. Elaborate methods founded on these simple suggestions have also been employed to trace out the course of motor nerves by stimulations of various parts of the cortex of the brain, combined with observation of the effects. We are helped also to gain a clear idea of the structure of the brain by studies in development. A great number of workers all over the world have carried out these studies with elaborate care so that, within its scope, that branch of science has reached a high degree of perfection.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> So much brilliant work has been done in this subject that it is almost invidious to mention anyone in particular. Many countries of Europe have contributed their quota. Sir William Gowers did good work on the clinical side, and at a later period the researches of Head were illuminative.



Studies in comparative anatomy have served to amplify our knowledge in this fascinating domain of science. Here I may recall that, in a previous article, I remarked that, except for a safeguard against gross errors of judgment, physiology and biology were but crude and insufficient aids towards a clear comprehension of psychological problems. What I have just said is not inconsistent with that expression; on the contrary, we will see later that it serves to explain and justify it.

Continuing our researches we will find that each strand of nerves reaches a terminus—I say this rather than use the word “terminates”—in the brain. To avoid elaborate explanations which may be found in text books, it may be said roughly that the analogy of a junction of railway lines is more appropriate than that of a terminus, for by means of a sort of organic switch—in other words a ganglion—the current whatever that may be, carried on by the nerve is associated with strands leading elsewhere. When we gain a fuller view of the structure of the brain, we find a series of controlled stations which receive the messages transmitted by the ganglia, and above these again are further controls associating the first controls. Dr. Ferrier, to describe this network, made use of the representation of an elaborate telegraphic system, by which messages might be sent within local areas, so that by the linking together of sub-stations, and by the progressive development of this method, we finally reach a final controlling station. The image is not quite correct but it may serve as a fair indication.

We have spoken of currents, messages and so forth carried by the nerve, but there are a great difference of opinion as to the veritable character of what we call the current, and also as to the mode of its transmission. Certain facts seem to be ascertained. It is not electrical, and the mode of its transmission is not merely mechanical, as in the sending of an electrical current through conductors; it is of such a kind as to use up something of the living material through which it passes, though, after suitable rest, some form of growth restores the tissue. Also in the functioning of all classes of nerves a certain amount of initial stimulus is required; that is to say there is a “threshold,” as it is technically called, above which the stimulus must rise before it becomes operative in producing a current. We see here some analogy with the quantum theory in physics, and while in both cases the study of these matters is of great interest, it seems to me that amongst the innumerable researches some of the most famous, such as those of Fechner, which will be considered later, have achieved their fame owing to a certain paradoxical character contained in their solemnly scientific presentation. The public loves the inscrutable, and well meaning men have a penchant for nonsense; the scientists follow in the wake. This will be touched on subsequently.

We find as we proceed that the brain, which at first sight had appeared of a fairly homogenous, compact, and simple formation, seems continually to grow in complexity and to extend in its diversity like a continent. There are not only the nerve fibres, the

Golgi is perhaps the best known of the Italians, and Ramón y Cajal's researches have made even the name of Spanish science illustrious, while Manakow of Hungary, Flechsig of Germany, Flourens of France, Ranvier of France, Retzius, the Swedish physiologist, all did great work. In regard to the subject of development there are few studies in the whole range of science so interesting; but the names to be cited are too numerous. A fair account in a short space will be found in Quain's *Anatomy*. I cannot refrain, however, from mentioning here the names of certain biologists, Loeb, Delage, and one who is doing fine experimental work in Brussels, A. Brachet.

ganglia, dendrons, and synapses, but various other structures and tissues to be considered. The blood supply is of great importance in regard to the final result, as in perception, of these activities. But within the brain also are contained structures which are not essentially parts of the brain considered as a central nervous system. The pituitary body, for instance, is a glandular organ, the posterior part of which influences the growth of the body. The pineal gland, which Descartes supposed to be the throne of the soul, is neither a gland or a part of the brain tissue. It is part of the degenerated representative of a rudimentary third eye, which still appears in a genus of serpents, the hatteras.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

(To be concluded.)

## Church, Chapel and Chin-Wag.

IN England, Episcopalian meeting houses are called churches—those of other sects chapels. But in Scotland the meeting houses of all sects other than those of Episcopalians are called churches, while the Episcopalian meeting house is invariably called the chapel or “the Chaipel.” The Government religion of England is Episcopalian, while the Government religion of Scotland is Presbyterian. When the King is in residence in Scotland he is driven to the Presbyterian Church—while in England he is driven to the Episcopalian Church.

Nowadays the clerical careerist who makes a change from Presbyterianism to Episcopalianism is not regarded by the Presbyterian community as a disloyalist. His keenness to “get on” in his profession is more applauded as a proof of laudable ambition—and this is a striking proof of the tendency towards rapprochement between the two denominations which, not so long ago, used to be at one another's throats on the slightest provocation. The present Archbishop of Canterbury, like some of his predecessors came out of the Presbyterian fold; and is sure of welcome as an honoured guest when he happens to revisit his calf country.

It has come to this: that there is as much rivalry, competition, elbowing and emulation among the members of the clerical profession as is possible among members of any secular profession. It reminds one of the story of the clergyman who had received a “call” to another charge with a bigger stipend. A friend happening to meet the clergyman's youthful son on the highway, asked him if his father had decided to accept the call. “Well,” answered the boy, “just now father is in his study praying for guidance; but mother is packing the boxes.”

There are exactly the same social distinctions inside the Church as there are outside it. Theoretically we are asked to believe that all without distinction of class, nationality or colour are on a level in the house of God. But it is all theory. The practice is entirely different. The theory contains as much truth as the slogans of “salvation without money and without price!” and “Christ and the abundant life!” Superficially and nominally the average business man identifies himself with some ecclesiastical organization, attends its services and reverentially observes its ritual. But to ask him to surrender a large proportion of his wealth or power for humanitarian projects is a very different proposition. The modern “rich young man” who comes to Christ is not required to comply with any very exacting demands, which involve self denial. And indeed



and in fact many professional and business men use the churches and chapels for the purpose of material benefit. The widened social circle they enter by a church connection very often increases the numbers of their clients and customers. I have personally met such men who were very frank about their indifference to, and even actual disbelief in religion, and who stated that they were only attending church or chapel for business reasons. And the successful business man is the parson's pet.

The real Christian God of the time is the Golden Calf. When we get down to brass tacks, this is the incontrovertible truth. It may be concealed under a mass of pietistic verbiage and altruistic sentimentality, and it is exceedingly amusing to read occasional protests against the acceptance for the support of churches of money obtained by "questionable" methods. Intelligent outsiders know this is all "chin-wag." Lately a Fife Presbytery meeting passed a solemn resolution against lotteries and raffles at Church Bazaars. The Presbytery was also invited to damn whist drives; but on this point unanimity could not be secured. But in the name of common sense, why don't these people carry the matter to its logical conclusion? If lotteries and raffles are to be disallowed, the origin of every penny tendered for the support of churches ought to be traced. The late "General" William Booth, of course, had no such scruples about the acceptance of "outside" or "tainted" money. And despite these heart-searching, sporadic, local outbursts on the part of sensitive consciences there is no doubt that the churches generally have followed the example of Mr. Booth; and have thrown overboard all scruples about "tainted" money—if scruples of the kind had ever any great hold of them at all. Part of the profits from trading in drink, from shady night clubs, shebeens, brothels, slum property and thimble-rigging may go into the Lord's Treasury along with the contributions of the faithful, whose life is beyond reproach, and who earn their wages by the sweat of the brow.

It is well known that some of the most munificent contributors to the coffers of the Churches have been and are Distillers and Brewers and Whisky and Wine Merchants. Now the vast majority of the ministers of the Church of Scotland, for instance, have declared themselves as believers in prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. They denounce the Liquor Traffic and Gambling as two of the most potent agencies of the Devil. But the liquor makers and liquor sellers do not leave the church pews. They know that the occasional bombast from the pulpit against their trade is mere sound and fury signifying—nothing. That sort of "chin-way" only tickles them! If anything is needed to convict the Scottish Presbyterian pulpit of hypocrisy, insincerity and cant, it is its attitude of public hostility and private friendship towards the representatives of the Liquor Trade!

The official organ of the Church of Scotland for January, contains a lengthy disquisition and diatribe by one of its leading elders—Lord Maclay—on the evil of gambling. Unfortunately his Lordship does not furnish a precise definition of gambling. One eloquent preacher declared that Christianity itself was the greatest gamble. But, of course, the person whom Lord Maclay's article is intended chiefly to get at is the workman who once or twice a week has his hob or tanner on a horse or a greyhound. It would seem that there is a sanctified and exclusive kind of gambling on the Stock Exchange available only to a sacred and charmed circle, of which—financially—the workmen is precluded from qualifying for membership!

IGNOTUS.

## Human Evolution in Eastern Mythology.

"The pioneers of embryology began in the hope of discovering the stages in the evolution of human body, by accurate study of its development," says Sir Arthur Keith. This has been proved according to expectation. The ovum as it passes through the embryo stage and changes into a foetus, recapitulates the history of man's evolution. It is true that the parasitic life of the embryo is very much modified in the mother's womb.

Some of these stages, through which the embryo passes, in its development, to the full human form, are found in a regular series in the ten incarnations of ancient Aryans of India. In fact, the history of these incarnations seems to be nothing else but the story of the evolution of man.

Life in its very simple form first appeared on earth in water, and developed by degrees and assumed the form of vertebrates, that is into animals having a spinal column such as the fish.

The first incarnation of the Hindus is "macha," or fish. The embryo passes through this stage in the fourth week. The evidence of body segmentation, and later the appearance of gills which sink in the neck of the embryo in the sixth week are sufficient to prove that the embryo is in the fish stage.

In the evolutionary history when animal life first came out of water to live on land, the necessary transitional stage was a particular form of cold-blooded animals called the amphibians with peculiar modifications in the anatomy of their body to suit the new conditions of their existence. This type is represented in the second incarnation "Katch," or tortoise, which is an amphibian.

Animals which had thus come to live on land, specialized themselves in different ways in the course of ages. Some learnt rapidity of movement though still bound to the earth as the reptilia, while others, like the birds took to air. But all these animals were cold-blooded and laid eggs. The embryo got sufficient food stored in the egg to nourish it to full development, and was independent of the parent.

The next important change was the advent of the mammal, that is, the type of vertebrate animal, which is warm-blooded, and is capable of bearing its embryo to its full development, in the uterus, where it leads a parasitic life, drawing nourishment from its mother. The third incarnation Vrah, or boar indicates this important stage in the evolution.

As ages passed, when all the types of the mammalia were busy specializing, some becoming fleet of foot as the deer, some cruel and cunning as the carnivora, and others burrowing in the earth like the rodents, certain lowly mammals which had retained their extreme primitive character, took to arboreal life. Thus becoming free from earth, they gained the more definite binocular vision, and increased skill in movement, on account of their peculiar environments. This particular type ultimately became apes. The last is the recent discovery of the ape-man, pithecanthropus in Java. Of these the ancient Aryans knew nothing, but they knew that there must be a transitional form between man and beast, and this they defined by the incarnation Narasimha, the lion-man, that is the being with the head of the lion and the body of the man. The next incarnation is that of Vaman, the mannikin or the primitive man.

After this, the remaining incarnations indicate stages in the life of man himself. According to the ancient Aryan system, man's life was divided into four stages, a period of twenty years being allotted to each stage. The first was that of the student, the bachelor-man who spent this period of life in acquiring knowledge and learning the art of war. The second was that of the family man with his duties and responsibilities. The third was that of the philosophic man of advanced years who lived a life of detachment. The final stage was that of the man in old age, when he, in the evening of his life renounced the world and lived a retired life of enlightenment. The incarnations representing these stages are of Parsuram, the student warrior, of Rama, the householder king living the life of perfect duty, of Krishna the philosopher, living a life of the world and



yet unaffected by it and of Buddha the sage. The tenth incarnation which has yet to come is Kalki or fish, which again signifies the beginning of the next cycle of life after resurrection.

It is curious that of all these incarnations, Hindus worship only two, Rama and Krishna. There is no temple dedicated to the rest, and there is no devotee who carries an offering to any of them. This is simply because man can love and understand man alone, and he worships even his God in that form. The lower forms have no use for him, and the ideal of Buddha is too high. The latter is only venerated.

However crudely the stages in human evolution may have been represented in the ancient Aryan mythology, it is interesting to note the ideas they had of the origin of man.

B. M. LAL.

### Nativity.

On April fifteenth, Eighteen-fifty-five :  
 For good or ill, with no consent of mine ;  
 No question of desire or permission,  
 But, unceremoniously hustled  
 Out of eternal karma, into this  
 Inexplicable labyrinth of time !  
 By Nature's hand toss'd into Fortune's lap,  
 With not a tooth, and naked as a die :  
 Barring the tell-tale soft dark hair, bequeath'd  
 By ancient and forgotten ancestry ;  
 Whom, our conceited superciliousness  
 And moping hypocrisy, would fain deny !  
 A product of the universal law !  
 Thrown like a cork upon the billow'd wave ;  
 Or like the die cast on a world of chance :  
 No seeming end or aim, all hap-hazard,  
 Fortuitous contingency of time  
 And more precarious parental charge !  
 Though helpless even as the die or cork,  
 With no volition, will, or inclination ;  
 Inheriting advantage over both :  
 Heir to the acquired attributes of man !  
 Five senses sort him from the world of things  
 Inanimate, serve him in self-defence  
 Against the harrows of environment,  
 Physical, and human force and frailty !  
 Instinct to grasp at opportunity ;  
 Cope with the complex inscrutability  
 Of Nature : which resolves the universe,  
 And entails the law of evolution.  
 Free and untrammelled agents in so far,  
 WE MUST do as we do, be what we are.

B. L. BOWERS.

### Acid Drops.

Lady Cynthia Moseley makes the following confession :—  
 My twenty months in Parliament have been the most humiliating, the most bitter, and most disillusioning period in my life.  
 Perhaps she has been witnessing some members of the Labour Party at grips with the Catholic vote.

We are pleased to see the *Protestant Times* reprinting a list of the priestly parentage of twenty-six Popes. But it is too much to expect a very Protestant paper to be honest enough to disclose the source of its information. We wonder whether there is any other creed in the world that does so much to blind a man to the common decencies of life ?

Speaking of film censorship in Britain, a writer in *Film Weekly* remarks :—  
 Our own censor is particularly careful that nothing shall offend even the most delicate religious susceptibilities of anyone. For this reason scenes depicting divinity or life after death are forbidden . . . There is even an excellent clause forbidding the Salvation Army from being shown in an unfavourable light.

There is, however, rather more behind the question of film censorship of things religious than this anxiety to avoid offending religious feelings. Whereas every matter outside religion is robust enough to encounter adverse criticism in any shape or form, religion, the Churches, and the Salvation Army are much too delicate. As they cannot stand exposure to the blast of keen analysis and comment, they demand special protection in the form of censorship. The demand is understandable; the weaker a thing is, the greater its necessity for special privileges and protection. And, we may add, the tacit admission by the Churches that such special consideration is a necessity, in no way inspires respect for religion and the Churches among thinking men and women.

"Some of us," says a reader of a daily paper, "are not wicked, even though we do not agree with the Lord's Day Observance Society. Mr. Martin will have a difficult job to convince most of us that every member of a Sunday cinema queue is destined for hell-fire." Now this puts a finger on the cause of all the trouble over this Sunday question. Large numbers of the people have discarded the artificial "sense of sin," so carefully cultivated in them from the cradle upwards by the parsons. With this gone, they not only fail to appreciate but resent the Sunday prohibitions, taboos, and artificial crimes invented by the religious bigot to compel other people to conform to his peculiar notions. That this resentment is widespread and growing in strength is clearly apparent. Stupid restrictions imposed by obsolete Sunday laws on the nation's liberty are out of place in a twentieth century civilization, and should be repealed.

In the *Daily Mirror*, a reader points out that thousands of British citizens in every large town desire facilities for Sunday recreation and refreshment. Also, that the reasonableness of their claim is amply demonstrated by the public patronage of such facilities wherever these exist. Our legislators, however, weighing up in their minds whether anything should be done as regards the Sabbath laws, are well aware of this. What they are really concerned about is whether it will pay them better to give the impious citizen what he wants, or whether the better policy is to avoid antagonizing the church and chapel voter. The question of votes is regarded as of greater importance than the desire of British citizens for more freedom on Sunday.

Mr. Maurice Whitlow, writing against Sunday entertainments, says :—

Press influence is steadily at work in favour of what is called a "brighter Sunday." It is almost impossible to get arguments against Sunday opening inserted in many papers.

The reply to that is that in both the London and the Provincial newspapers there have appeared hundreds of letters stating the Sabbatarian arguments. Apparently, what the bigots resent is that many newspapers have written—some rather timidly, it is true—in favour of a more rational Sunday.

The same Mr. Whitlow professes to be concerned about employees losing their rest day, if Sunday amusements are permitted. Well, we know that if such were allowed and the rights of employees amply safeguarded, Mr. Whitlow and his fellow bigots would be just as noisy in protest against Sunday entertainments. This proves how insincere is their professed concern about the employees. Still, such cant is typical of Christian bigotry. But it shows that they realize how unconvincing the purely religious argument will be to the public outside the churches.

If it is admitted that the Christian religion had a stronger hold on England in 1828, the verdicts recorded in some papers of that date will not need explaining :—

James Murray (twenty-six) pleaded guilty to an indictment charging him with having stolen a galloway . . . Judgment of death recorded.

Thomas Kennedy (nineteen) charged with having burglariously broken into the house of Joseph Haigh, of Gray's Walk, Leeds, and stolen therefrom a quantity of wearing apparel. Guilty. Judgment of death recorded.



In the savagery of Christian justice of 1828 may be glimpsed a true reflection of the quality of Christian mercy obtaining in England after at least a thousand years of Christian instruction.

Speaking about hare coursing, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool declares that "To my mind no form of sport is so degrading or abominable. It is horrible to see people stand and watch the hares being torn to pieces." It is up to our gallant stag-hunters to come to the rescue of their humbler brother "sportsmen." Their ingenious arguments in defence of cruelty to deer can surely be made to serve in defence of this humbler "sport"? Coursing, it might be argued, provides employment for trappers, and veterinary surgeons, and the dog-breeding industry; it also encourages the kindly trapping of hares instead of their being shot or cruelly caught by Poachers. How excellent a case can be made out for cruelty to hares!

A weekly contemporary informs a reader that, according to science, life on the earth began 36,000,000 years ago, and that the earth itself would have been formed 36,000,000 years earlier. Whereupon one infers that the Creator of the earth must be very, very ancient, and that possibly he invented the Christian religion so that his old age might be cheered by listening to millions of human animals chanting his glory and praising his name. So far as one can see, there is no other justification for the existence of Christianity. But those with acute spiritual insight will appreciate that no other is really necessary.

It was the late Theodore Parker, the famous preacher, who told Sarah Bernhardt that she must respect one in the same profession. A column in the *Observer* announces the revival of "St. Joan," and in the course of an interview with Miss Sybil Thorndyke, the famous actress, stated that she had a maid extraordinarily like Joan in appearance. Miss Thorndyke's maid helped her to get a word or a phrase right when the actress was in difficulties, and this is put down by her as the Hand of God. This is fairly good religious reasoning as distinct from correct reasoning. And we trust that God is well pleased at the sight of his work being carried out on the stage, which to anyone with a speaking acquaintance, is a colossal illusion from start to finish. About the only real thing on the stage is the carpenter's beer—but of course, only a Freethinker would say that.

It is difficult to place that famous saying of "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," with regard to harvests in the State of San Paulo. There is so much coffee that some of it will have to be destroyed; perhaps one of the high priests of Finance will oblige us with an explanation.

Instead of turning the other cheek to a night-dancing Bar at Bratislava, the monks of an adjoining monastery have persuaded the Vatican to purchase the offending place. Singing and dancing are much too human pastimes for the "no-sayers" of life.

There is a great deal of what would once have been called blasphemy in the modern novel. For example, in a novel entitled *Juan in America* (Cape, 7s. 6d.) by Eric Linklater, who presents the thought as follows:—

"God is merely the expression of man's incurable narcissism."

Red-eye stared blankly. "Are you saying something against religion?" he asked.

"Religion is only a social anæsthetic," Lalage declared.

"D'you mean it's a bum show? Say I've just given a hundred thousand bucks to the church of St. Mark in Chicago, and d'you think I'd pay a hundred grand for protection if it wasn't worth it? Not on your life. If you had the responsibilities I have you wouldn't sneer at religion in that ignorant way."

We are informed that about £90,000 is available for cultural and welfare purposes out of the receipts from the Oberammergan Passion Play. Sale of tickets brought in £250,000, and that of pictures and books £25,000. Great things from little causes spring; Julius started the business with thirty pieces of silver.

It is good exercise to read books with which one does not agree. In the *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Vol. I. (John Murray, 1930) an extract from an entry dated July 26, 1889, page 517, is interesting in its example of showing some of the foundations of the edifice called "divinity of Kings": "Lord Randolph showed great ability and great powers of sarcasm in dealing with Mr. Bradlaugh's historical and 'pedagogic' speech. He ridiculed his arguments that the Crown Lands were virtually the property of the people, and said that the assertion that the savings on the Civil List were not properly transferred to the Privy Purse was tantamount to a charge of embezzlement, and that every Minister since 1837, who had sanctioned the transfer was by implication liable to impeachment." Perhaps Bradlaugh made his allegations for fun, and perhaps he did not.

A Kentish vicar remarks that, "if there is one thing more than another, which distinguishes the Christian religion from other religions, it is the fact that it is a religion of Hope." Yes, but what a hope! Each believer hopes that he will spend eternity in a place where, according to the Bible, there is nothing but ineffable boredom for the intelligent.

The sum of £10,000 is needed for building a "children's church" in Liverpool. The money should be speedily forthcoming, now that there is no longer a housing problem to be solved, and no more slums to be re-built; either in Liverpool or elsewhere.

Easter has come and gone. The Church has trotted out once more her stale Easter egg. But a larger number than ever of the British people decided that the best place to rejoice was as far from a church as possible. So few seemed to realize this solemn fact—that Christ died and rose again in order that parsons might benefit by Easter offerings!

An international football match was recently played in Paris between France and Germany, and a large number of Germans journeyed to that city to see the game. Commenting on this, a Wesleyan paper remarks: "The development of 'sportsmanship' raises a barrier to war." On the other hand, we may add, it is an indisputable fact that religion has done nothing to prevent war between nations. Indeed, it has, more often than not, fanned the flame of national hatreds to greater heat. The moral surely is: Let us encourage international games and the sportsmanship promoted thereby, but let us discourage religion.

Apropos of emotionalism in evangelical campaigns, the Rev. Mr. Rees says:—

We may guard against undue emotionalism, but all true religion is based not in thought but in feeling. What we want is more fervour. We know as much as our fathers did; some think a great deal more, but may be mistaken. Do we feel as they did?

There is no doubt at all about true religion not being based in thought. In acquiring true religion of the fervent type, one has simply to allow the intellect to be submerged in the uprust from the subconscious of primitive emotion and fear. For our part, we are glad present-day religionists do not "feel" religion as their forebears did. Their fervour led to rather too much blood-shed for one to desire it to be imitated by their descendants. Social life to-day is far more tolerable since the feeling and fervour of Christians has become watered down.



## Our Jubilee.

The Jubilee issue of the *Freethinker* will be published on May 10. That issue will consist of thirty-two pages, instead of the usual sixteen, which will include a reprint of the first number, and an account of the history of the paper. No extra charge will be made for this double number, but we are suggesting that readers should order at least two copies, using the extra ones for distribution. They will be thus helping to defray the increased cost of production, and also help to make the paper better known, and so secure new subscribers.

It is important that those intending to take extra copies should give their orders well in advance, as newsagents have to order of their wholesalers some-where about ten or twelve days prior to the date of publication. By giving in their orders for extra copies by, say, the end of April, we shall thus have a guide as to what number we are justified in printing of this special issue.

In celebrating fifty years of existence the *Freethinker* is setting up a record not previously achieved by any Freethought paper in the whole of Europe. We want our readers to make it an occasion worth remembering.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. JACKSON.—Thanks for cutting. There is very little good is being "restrained" where the ever sure Christian is concerned. The right rule is to make one's position quite plain and clear. To state it apologetically is to convince the Christian of the importance of his own beliefs. The Christian sham is to-day largely perpetuated by the timidity of those who do not believe in it.

J. A. REID.—Thanks. Will return when used. We are holding over till next week.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks. Have heard from the quarter named. The notes on the Easter Myth may be reprinted as a leaflet for free distribution.

J. CLAYTON.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Cohen's lectures gave such general satisfaction. Hope they will lead to a wider interest in the movement. Other matter is not forgotten.

A. HANSCARE.—Received and shall appear soon.

C. S. FRASER.—Shall look out for your letter.

C. MARTIN.—The religious note in politics is becoming a positive danger. To-day there is a greater need than ever for plain, straightforward speech.

The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.

The Secular Society, Limited office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The National Secular Society's Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

Letters for the Editor of the "*Freethinker*" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

## Sugar Plums.

We hope to meet London and Provincial Freethinkers at the N.S.S. Social at Caxton Hall on Saturday, April 18. There will be dancing, musical items, opportunities for conversation, and of course a few words from the President. The Hall is conveniently situated just off Victoria Street, Westminster, and about two minutes walk from St. James' Park Station (Underground). Tickets, including refreshments, 2s. 6d. each, may be obtained from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, or the offices of the N.S.S., 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. As the number of tickets are limited early application is advisable.

With regard to our Jubilee Number. The only two contributors to the *Freethinker* in its very early days that we are able to trace are Mr. W. Heaford and Mr. A. B. Moss. The first is living in retirement at Worthing, and the pen of the latter is often seen in these columns. Both will contribute to the Jubilee Number. We have not been able to trace any other of the early contributors who are still with us, but if any survive we should be pleased to hear from them. We have also with us some who have taken in the paper from the first issue. It would be interesting to hear from such as have taken the paper from the commencement or from the first two or three years of its existence.

We have dwelt so strongly on the shortcomings of Sir James Jeans in the sphere of philosophy that we the more readily commend to all interested his latest work *The Stars in their Courses*. (Cambridge Press, 5s.) The work consists of the wireless talks given by Sir James, expanded to about twice their original length. This shows the author at his best and in his proper sphere, that of an expositor. It is a good workmanlike production, and gives the reader not versed in scientific matters a good comprehensive view of the present state of scientific knowledge, with just enough of speculation to make the book completely interesting. It is clearly written and just as simply as the subject admits. There is far more in the stars than our earlier scientists thought, which is only another way of saying that there is more in an atom than earlier scientists believed. For the problems of nature gain nothing in puzzlement on the score of size. In nature, size and number are interesting, but only in rare cases do they add anything to the essential problem. *The Stars in their Courses* contains a series of very fine plates that adds to the attractive character of the work.

We are asked to announce that the Moncure Conway Memorial lecture this year will be delivered at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on Wednesday, April 15, on "Race as a Political Factor." Admission will be free. The lecture is timed to commence at 7 o'clock.

We are now within sight of the National Secular Society's Conference, which will take place on Whit-Sunday, May 24. Liverpool, Birmingham, and Chester-le-Street have applied for the Conference, and we hope to announce the result of the voting after the Executive meets on April 17. Meanwhile individual members and Branches who desire to have resolutions placed on the Agenda should send them on at once. We hope to see a record assembly of visitors and delegates from all over the country.



## The Present Conflict in Psychology.

If psychology be taken to date from Aristotle it started as a "science of the soul." Passing through its course of development it became the "study of the mind." Before the advent of the present century it had become "the classification and analysis of mental phenomena and conscious states," and it is now interested in the behaviour of living things. It has ceased to talk of an underlying metaphysical something of which the various mental states are "acts" or "manifestations." It deals with a world of mental facts, and does not ask what is mind "in itself." That has been handed over to philosophy, and it is now not psychologists but metaphysicians, who speak of an independent "ego." System-building philosophers of the Idealist order can no more do without the Ego than theologians can do without God. Someone has said that when their system (lecture-notes) becomes sufficiently out of date they are made professors. For psychologists, however, mind is nothing but a collective name for mental facts like ideas, feelings, habits and so on.

Wrapt up with the notion of the Ego is that of Indeterminacy, which has just had a little flutter in Physics, being placed in a very poor light by its own half-hearted advocates. It is quite unpopular in psychology. It belongs to that order of Ethics wherein "free will" is the life-blood of morality. It has no part to play in positive science. It is quite at home in pulpits, literary and "philosophical" societies, and other metaphysical "talking-shops." Its conception ranks equally with that of a child without forbears.

Who is the psychologist to-day who is most strenuously fighting Materialism? Undoubtedly, William McDougal. Hear him then in *Hornic Psychology*: "Science must hold fast to causation."

There is no room for argument here, then. The conflict in psychology has moved to another quarter. Determinism is to the psychologist what bricks are to the bricklayer<sup>1</sup>. He may, of course, like James or Stout, allow the case for free will outside psychology, or like Höfding pander to an Idealism, or with Maudesley stand firm for naturalism. But within his own sphere he can do nothing with the concept of an unconditioned action.

The main bone of contention in psychology to-day, which is splitting it up into the various schools, is not Indeterminacy; nor is it the Ego. It is the alleged fundamental distinction between two types of causation, mechanical and teleological. This issues in a dualism which brings always a rift. "Man has grown a soul," and, having come, it is playing a unique part in the evolutionary process. It is introducing a fundamentally new type of causal law (so the argument runs), establishing itself as an independent factor capable of freeing itself from the world of matter. Drawn to its located goal, which acts like a magnet, it operates prospectively, rather than retrospectively. It is pulled from in front, not pushed from behind. The mark of its behaviour, says McDougal, is striving and purpose.

This issues in a Realist philosophy which may take several forms. For example (a) Mind may have been struggling for expression from the very beginning of time as an independent substance, and evolution is the story of its progressive achievement. Bergson and Hobhouse may be mentioned in con-

<sup>1</sup> "Life does not break any of the laws of physics and chemistry; it uses them. But it supplements them." (Lodge: *Outline of Science*.)

nexion with this theory. The former regards the élan vital as accumulating like a snowball on its journey, and for the latter the generic function of Mind is the correlation of experience. Creative plastic mind moves towards valuable ends, and gets a better view of them as it advances, and "the purposive process is different from the mechanical in that every phase is determined by the whole system" (*Development and Purpose*; cf. also *Mind in Evolution*).

(b) Or Mind may be taken to emerge during the play of events, when it proceeds to break connexion with them as an independent unity, introducing its own type of causation (Lloyd Morgan and Alexander). In Lloyd Morgan it is "divine guidance" which is behind it all; in Alexander it is simply the natural creativity of primary substance (space-time). The first-named conceives it as standing at the crossways of mechanical and teleological causation (*Mind at the Crossways*). At a certain point ("cross-over") mind takes the lead through prospective reference.

(c) Or it may be a piece of the Universal Mind (Lodge) or Life Force (Joad) dipping itself into matter in order to achieve certain ends. It has to wait for matter to reach a definite stage of complexity before it can lay hold of it. In Lodge, mind acts on matter from its vantage-ground in the ether; in Joad, it is a temporary escape from the mainstream. In either case it uses the ordinary laws of science and also exercises its own special mode<sup>2</sup> of operation which is not so readily amenable to scientific treatment. In Lodge the spirit immersed in matter becomes entirely divorced at death, and retains its individuality (grown in and through matter) in the spirit world. In Joad it is submerged again like a river into the ocean.

All this may be pretty mythology, but it is poor science. Its mainspring is egotism; so much is strongly suggested by the fact that each philosopher who utilizes it develops a different philosophy. That is quite natural. No one would expect two poets to write the same poetry, or two individuals to indulge in exactly the same flights of fancy. Sir O. Lodge's philosophy is an expression of his own private personality; it has nothing to do with his laws of physics, which are shared in common and which possess the scientific merit of publicity.

A false egotism is at the root of the matter. It is causing psychologists to place their finger abruptly at a certain point on the pyramid of natural laws. Below—this point, they say, cause is calculable; above it, cause beats us. This is the point at which I come in. I have inoculated the world with a new force; I am a unique causal agent; I defy analysis, and so forth.

What is required to-day is a depersonalized philosophy for social use.

G. H. TAYLOR.

Home is where the virtues grow. I would like to see the law so that every home to a small amount should be free not only from sale for debts, but should be absolutely free from taxation, so that every man could have a home.—*Ingersoll*.

The King ruled by force, the priest by fear and both by both.—*Ingersoll*.

<sup>2</sup> "Psychology, like every other science, must be deterministic; i.e., it must start from the assumption that the causal law holds good in the life of the will, just as this law is assumed to be valid for the remaining conscious life." "Indeterminacy, which teaches the existence of causeless acts of will, absolutely destroys the inner continuity of the conscious life." (*Psychology*, Harold Ingersoll).



## "Modern Physics" in "Deep Waters."

It is a regrettable fact that the modern Freethinker finds so much justification for his own existence, as such, in the writings of contemporary scientists. It means that the activities of the *Freethinker* have to be directed not only against the Churches, but also against many writers who ought long ago to have left the teachings of the theologian behind. The fight is consequently twofold. It has to be waged against the arch-enemy of intellectual freedom, the collective churches and religious institutions, and against those scientists who persist in bringing the methods of the theologian into the camp of those who should be the greatest liberators of thought; the scientists.

If such men as Sir James Jeans would but stand at one side, where religion is concerned, when they are unable to do more than falsify scientific reasoning in the interest of religious emotionalism, the issue would be much more straight forward. It is when men like Sir James use the weight of their standing in the world of science to bolster up religion, that the situation becomes misrepresented before the general public. The impression given is that modern science supports a religious interpretation of the universe. This is not true. Science never has supported religion, and never will; it is a different, and an opposite interpretation, and the idea of a reconciliation between the two being reached is the outcome of misunderstanding. The religionist who has such an idea fails to understand science, while the scientist with the same idea misunderstands religion.

No objection can be taken to a scientist who is otherwise of religious inclinations making a declaration of his faith, in private or in public, but if he wishes to enlist science in support of his religious beliefs he should try to do so without contradicting the plain implications of science. Apart from this he should declare his faith, as such, and stand aside while the controversy goes on between the advocates of religion and the Freethinkers.

To use vague phrases, and sometimes very definite phrases, which give the impression that the implications of science are all in the direction of religion is damnable. Especially when the scientist himself, when speaking in terms of his science, frequently negates what the religionist most desires.

The attempt of Sir James Jeans to present us with an indeterminate universe has been dealt with in these pages, but the following deterministic statement is too good to be overlooked; "now all these effects can be calculated in detail, so that we know exactly what to expect if the stars have really lived the terrifically long lives of millions of years we are provisionally allotting to them. And everything we look for we find. All the anticipated effects are there, and so far as we can tell, their magnitudes indicate that the stars have lived for millions of millions of years." (*The Mysterious Universe*, p 60.)

If effects can be calculated; if we can know exactly what to expect; and if everything we look for in the universe is to be found according to our anticipations based upon certain calculations, there is little room for indeterminism, or pure thought as the fundamental reality of the universe; or anything else that is worthy more of the theology than of science.

Into questions of physics, such as radiation and relativity, with their complicated mathematics, I cannot enter. Nor is it necessary to do so for the purpose of rebutting the attempts of the physicist and mathematician to upset the teaching of determinism and lead us into the deep waters of a thought-world.

The theory that the mathematicians and physicists are sure to prove to be the most competent of reasoners, has often been put forward; but the pages of Sir James Jeans suggest that there is no proof of such a theory. Indeed, there is much in *The Mysterious Universe* to provoke the remark that workers in the sphere of physics and mathematics have need to take greater care of their phraseology and reasoning if they would formulate a lasting, or even tentatively helpful, philosophy of the universe.

What exactly is the value of the following passage to the scientist it would be difficult to say. In it, the philosophical reader finds little more than a collection of jargon that appears likely to do very little in the way of clarifying the minds of even trained physicists and astronomers.

"As we shall see in the next chapter, this theory tells us that space itself is curved, much in the same way in which the surface of the earth is curved. The curvature of space is responsible for the curving of rays of light which is observed at a solar eclipse, and for the curvature in the paths of planets and comets, which we used to attribute to a 'force' of gravitation. On this theory the presence of matter does not produce 'force,' which is an illusion, but a curving of space. The more matter there is in the universe, the more curved space is, the more rapidly it bends back on itself, and as a consequence the smaller the size of the universe—just as a circle which curves rapidly is smaller than one which curves more gradually." p. 60.

Here the reader is treated to a picture of Sir James Jeans' indeterminate universe with the curvature of space which is *responsible* not only for the curvature of rays of light, but also for that of the paths of planets and comets. While the presence of matter *produces* the curvature of space itself. In what relationship to the "universe" of Sir James "space" and "matter" exist we are not told; but somehow or other the more matter there is in the universe the more curved we find space, and on the other hand if the matter becomes less, then there is a decrease in the curving of space; that is it curves less rapidly. Now if the curvature of space is very rapid owing to the large amount of matter, the universe is relatively small; but if the curvature of space is not rapid owing to the small quantity of matter, then there is a relatively large universe. Whether matter is inside "space" or outside of it, making its curvature more or less, as the case may be, we are not told. Although the idea of space, as such, being able to exist in an empty universe, whatever that may be, is put forward in the following: "An empty universe, totally devoid of matter, would have its space entirely uncurved, because there would be no matter to curve it, and so would be of infinite size." p. 61.

There are times when it is permissible to use the term "space" in a figurative manner, such as when in ordinary conversation we speak of the stars moving in space, but surely it should not be difficult for a scientist to realize that the word "space" stands for something conceptual, and not for something in which the universe exists. Just as "time" is a conceptual measurement in terms of duration so is "space" such a measurement in terms of extension in any and every direction.

To speak of space as if it exists as an entity by itself, or could exist as such, leads only to confusion. Its conceptual nature should always be kept in mind.

That the work of the modern scientist should include the task of rectifying and clarifying our scientific terminology will be admitted by all serious readers to be a just proposition. Yet there seems to be little clarification going on when we are told that, "the presence of matter does not produce 'force,' which is



an illusion, but a curving of space." The word "force," in this case, is used in connexion with gravitation, and Sir James would have been doing a service to many readers had he pointed out, as Karl Pearson did in the *Grammar of Science*, that there is no such *entity* as a "force of gravitation" existing in the universe for the purpose of "pulling" bodies together, but that the term "force" should only be used in reference to the rate of motion of those bodies. Instead of doing this, Sir James plunges into rejecting "force" as an illusion, when as a matter of fact conceived of as "a measure of motion," or as indicating the degree of impact of two colliding bodies, it stands for something that can be experienced either directly or indirectly by the human organism. Later on in the book some measure of rectification on the score of gravitation does come, when Sir James says: "What we call the 'law of gravitation' is, strictly speaking, nothing more than a mathematical formula giving the acceleration of a moving body—the rate at which it changes its speed of motion." p. III. Even then, the object seems to be mainly that of discrediting the "mechanical interpretation" of the universe, and the age of "mechanical science," as if *this* science involved the idea of the universe as a machine in the sense in which we think of man-made machinery.

In what sense the "curving of space" is more substantial than "force," is not explained. That it is not an illusion when rightly conceived is quite true, and when applied to parts of the universe it was no doubt highly useful; but, if a layman may make a suggestion to the expert mathematician, its application to the universe as a whole is likely to lead to confusion. It is possible to imagine all sorts of universes being built up by different mathematicians from different lengths of curvature, and perhaps this explains why Sir James Jeans and others have been led into conceiving a concertina-orange type of universe that can be bigger than or less than itself at various times.

It is regrettable that the terminology of a leading scientist like Sir James Jeans has to be discussed in this way, but it is the more necessary because of the use to which so much of the loose phraseology has been put by the press and the parson.

A good deal of use has been made of the idea that matter can be "annihilated" in the sense of being destroyed out of existence; and while a little more careful reading should have dissipated such an idea, there is no doubt that a little more careful use of terms by Sir James would have left no excuse for misunderstanding.

Time cannot now be spent on the following passage, for the purpose of straightening it out, but it illustrates at once the careless use of terminology, and the fact that in some moods, at any rate, Sir James does not teach the complete annihilation of the universe.

"If we accept the astronomical evidence of the ages of the stars and the physical evidence of the highly-penetrating radiation adjointly establishing that of teh stars, and the physical evidence of the highly-penetrating radiation as jointly establishing that matter is really being annihilated, or rather transformed into radiation, then this transformation becomes one of the fundamental processes of the universe. The conservation of matter disappears entirely from science, while the conservation of mass and of energy become identical. Thus the three major conservation laws, those of the conservation of matter, mass and energy, reduce to one. One simple fundamental entity which may take many forms, matter and radiation in particular, is conserved through all changes; the sum total of this entity forms the whole activity of the universe, which does not change its

total quantity. But it continually changes its quality, and this change of quality appears to be the main operation going on in the universe which forms our material home. The whole of the available evidence seems to me to indicate that the change is, with possible insignificant exceptions, for ever in the same direction—for ever solid matter melts into insubstantial radiation: for ever the tangible changes into the intangible." pp. 73-74.

Except for remarking that the "for ever" involves the reverse process of the "insubstantial" changing back into the "substantial," and that much of the phrasing is very careless, this passage may be left with the comment that it grants all that the determinist and materialist fundamentally requires.

The question of "relativity" in the sphere of physics must be left to the physicists and mathematicians, but the following passage sounds very curious to many of us who have held the theory of relativity in philosophy for some years. "In 1905 Einstein propounded the supposed new law of nature in the form—'nature is such that it is impossible to determine absolute motion by any experiment whatever.' It was the first formulation of the principle of relativity." p. 89.

It may interest Sir James Jeans and other mathematicians to know that long before Einstein was heard of the concept of *absolute* motion or of *absolute* rest would have struck many a philosophical reader as preposterous. This is not said in order to belittle the work of Einstein or Sir James as far as the modern theory of relativity is concerned.

The remark is made as an offset to the idea, which seems to be spreading abroad, that only the physicist and mathematician can think in terms of relativity. Too much stress is laid by Sir James on the value of the mathematician as an interpreter of the universe. This is realized as we pass "Into the Deep Waters" of his book to find the following statement: "the essential fact is simply that *all* the pictures which science now draws of nature, and which alone seem capable of according with observational fact, are *mathematical* pictures." p. 127. In addition to this, the more we swim in the "Deep Waters," the more we find the scientist turning theologian. Surely we are being treated to the negation of scientific thinking when we read: "nature seems very conversant with the rules of pure mathematics, as our mathematicians have formulated them in their studies, out of their own inner consciousness and without drawing to any appreciable extent on their experience of the outer world." p. 130. Yet the "Deep Waters" deepen when we are told "that the universe appears to have been designed by a pure mathematician," p. 132, and again, "the Great Architect of the Universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician." p. 134. While the possibility of many of us being drowned in the "Deep Waters" to which Sir James has introduced us, looms before us in the following, but fortunately we have learned to swim. "To-day there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter—not of course our individual minds, but the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown exist as thoughts." p. 148.

Criticism of this must be restrained. It is pitiable to see science dragged so abjectly into the pulpit in a



work by one who should be capable of giving light and leading to his generation. Not until scientists have thrown off the shackles of theological thought will humanity reap the full harvest which science should yield.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Second Epistle of the Apostate to the Romans.

IMMORTALITY is a form of beggary; it is mendicity pure and simple. We have been born, so live, we will die. Birth and life—these are positive terms. But death is wholly negative. And so we combat with our reasons. We fight our reasons. We hurtle ourselves against it and attempt to smash it. It is one of our life's quests—to annihilate our reason. We pray for faith. Faith! And faith? What is this abstract term? It is a form of beggary also; it is mendicity. Faith is a belief in the inconceivable; it is a cowardice it is a shade—a shadow. But the shade and the shadow—they are artificial. They are results of the great war—the great war against reason. We put them there that we may escape from light, because in this case light is negative. The light of truth cries: you are just a physico-chemical phenomenon in a physico-chemical world! And the shade of darkness calls: come beneath my wing, and you will live for ever! The sun-followers hope for no reward; the ostriches are prayers; they are beggars.

Prayer and praying? What are these things? What are their ways and wherefore? The answer is not difficult. It is sex again. And again, it is a perversion of sex. Prayer and praying? It is narcissism. It is the very essence of egoism. Than praying, there is nothing in the world more selfish, for let it become an accepted fact to-day that all or any forms of immortality be impossible, and within twenty-four hours there would not be a church, chapel, synagogue, mosque or temple, open anywhere! Yet still we pray. Perhaps we always will pray. And sometimes I even hope we will.

But immortality? What is this immortality? It is the ambition to be always ambitious. It is the desire to see no end to desire. It is the lust always to lust. It is the aspiration to aspire for ever.

It is an obsession, and in our empty moments, there is not one of us who can escape its clutches. Hugo knew it well. "To be ourselves," he said—"to be ourselves, we need either some great task, or some fine noble love." And Racine's conversion verifies this. He was an Atheist—scorned religion. But no sooner were the open arms of his mistress closed on him, than he threw himself into the ready opener arms of the "Sainte Eglise." Yes, it is because of our empty moments that we are reminded of the coming empty infinity. And we run away in fear . . . unless we pour a lie into the bowl, with the result?—a stolid belief in immortality.

But what is this lie? said Pascal: "Man is born for infinity." Non mon cher Pascal. No! There you are mistaken. Man is not born for infinity. It is infinity that is born for man.

Besides, who wants this life of infinity? I can think of nothing less attractive. Even if we were to grant the choir of angels plucking the celestial harps . . . no, no. That, infinitely, incessantly, without end—that is a contradiction. For they tell us that of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. But, in truth, would it not be nearer a conception of a most fearful hell?

Then how—how are we to spend those billion billion years of the after-life? Well, I for one, will certainly complain if there is no cinema. I know another who insists upon there being blue-eyed damozels in heaven. Yet a third wants midget-golf. And a fourth . . .

Do you not then understand? To imagine ourselves dead—it is to see ourselves alive! Yes, indeed, immortality is an obsession. There is nothing of reality about it unless that it be a real psychological phenomenon.

And how happy are those who here escaped this illusion. Such were Madame du Barry who, standing on

the scaffold before the block, looked up into her executioner's eyes and calmly pleaded: "*Un tout petit moment encore a vivre.*"

MARCEL D. RODITI.

Christianity and Youth.

THE other day a friend brought to my notice a little book\* written by an Army Chaplain. It was published as far back as 1918, and is addressed to church folk. It deals with the soldier's attitude towards religion, and the aversion of young people in general to the churches. Very firmly it insists that although Tommies may regard religion as a peculiar form of hypocrisy, yet, if only they are shown the true Jesus Christ they will eagerly rush to become privates in his army. And, as further it offers Christ as a pattern on which young men should mould their lives I think I have sufficient grounds for passing comment upon the work.

The writer opens with a eulogy of the soldier, or Tommy, as he prefers to style him: then, in his next chapter discusses the Church. It is only fair to mention that he is concerned with the Scotch Church, still, what he says, especially on pages ten and eleven is applicable to all. "Have we," it runs, "a clear and unmistakable witness of the great social injustice that is at present embedded in our national life? Have we ever spoken brave words of guidance about that poisonous thing called the social evil? Have we ever withstood the driving of the people off the land into the drink-sodden cities? Have the underpaid ever found in us any efficient help? Have we ever demanded the protection of child life? Have we ever stood for peace in any really whole-hearted and sincere way? Have we refused to compromise with Mammon, and Luxury? Notoriously and manifestly the answer to all these questions is 'No.'" One would take it for granted that the writer's following sentence would read: "Then let us scrap the churches!" but such is not the case. Indeed, Mr. Gray is sorely puzzled as to why it is that the majority of fine men he met in the army were either quite indifferent to or contemptuous about the church and religion.

He openly admits (p. 8), that despite all its ingenuity in devising schemes to lure the people the church has failed. He lived with a splendid body of men and was deeply grieved to make the discovery that the church played but a very small part in their lives. So he endeavours to supply the solution of this state of affairs; though why the passage I have quoted above does not furnish him with all he requires is not explicable.

The average man, we are assured, has an erroneous conception of religion (p. 17), and therefore thinks he does not believe in it. (p. 19). But, he does believe in honour, loyalty, good-comradeship, cheerfulness, courage, charity, hope and sincerity. His ideal man, we learn, is strong in body, reserved about his emotions, open-hearted to all comers, speaks the truth, holds to his word, and is brave without boasting. (pp. 19-20.)

No doubt this is true, but then comes the anticipated flaw in the ice. All these things "belong without question to the Christian ideal": Jesus Christ is the man who possesses all those fine qualities. (p. 20.)

Strange, is it not, that all the best that is in human nature is labelled Christian? Strange, also, that the greatest liars, hypocrites, thieves, scoundrels, and murderers to be met in the pages of history, and at the present time, are Christians.

Mr. Gray confesses that some of the men professing Christianity whom he met in the army were not of exemplary character (p. 14), but it never occurs to him that religion may largely be to blame for this. He ascribes the trouble to a "certain type of religious experience" and glides serenely on, leaving us groping in the dark.

After this he concerns himself with the indifferent young men, and arrives at his solution, which is, that the churches have experienced failure because they have not taught the real Jesus. (p. 21.)

Well, if after two thousand years or thereabouts the

\* As Tommy Sees Us, by Rev. A. Herbert Gray.



Church has not succeeded in revealing the "real Jesus," then I submit that it is high time they abandoned the attempt and turned their attention to something of more value to society.

But, anyway, how does the writer propose to win youth for Christ? As I intimated above he speaks of Jesus as a man, and on many pages describes him as strong, virile, and of generous heart. But he also wishes us to consider him as "the man of Galilee, who was also God." (p. 30.) Now he can't have it both ways. If Jesus was the Saviour it is obvious that he must have been superior to all men. If he was a man he could not possibly "save the world." Whatever his choice he will certainly fail in his object; for as a God Jesus gave a very feeble exhibition; while if Mr. Gray would rather that the young people thought of him as a noble specimen of manhood I feel confident that when they begin to reason things out it will dawn on them that the doctrine of the Fall of Man is absurd, and therefore Christianity is without a foundation.

The writer seems to be obsessed with Jesus Christ, and nearly half the pages of the book are devoted to singing his praises or assuring Tommy and young men in general that they can only lead artificial lives without him. We are told "they need Christ so." (p. 21.) "The right attitude to Christ is the attitude of hero-worship." (p. 30.) "There is in them an instinct for him (Christ) as yet unsatisfied." (p. 30.) "He would harness their high spirits to a cause worthy of their best." p. 49). "To live with him is to live in the exhilarating atmosphere of great and confident expectations." (p. 117.) All of which is sheer twaddle and nonsense. To anyone who reads the New Testament attentively it is patent that if Christ ever lived then he was a man whose mental powers were somewhat deficient.

Having dealt with the main thesis of the book, and not wishing to occupy too much valuable space, I take the liberty of just a brief survey of the remainder.

Apart from the gush about Jesus, the padre seems to be a fairly candid sort of person. He tells, for instance, of several unscrupulous Christian business men (pp. 50-54), though, naturally enough, doing his utmost to excuse the culprits. He describes war as "the most insane of all men's follies" (p. 88), yet, the curious fact that the leading participants were Christian nations does not hold any significance for him. He attacks the Church with not a little bitterness (pp. 105-110), but he clings to the notion that if she will only adopt his remedy, *i.e.*, preach the real Jesus, she can still redeem herself.

On the other hand, Mr. Gray appears to be rather innocent. He was amazed at being told that religion is a selfish thing and "simply threatens sinners with hell, and promises comforts to the good" (p. 43), and, in fact hotly disputed the statement. He declares: "Christian truth was first revealed into babes, and is always within the reach of those who are simple in mind and heart" (p. 57), yet all through the book he is wondering why intelligent people reject it, and doubtless if somebody had informed him that it is only the babes and the simple-minded who are not sceptical about Christianity, he would have been very much annoyed.

Just to show what a religious nation we are, he announces: "But not five men in a thousand have any real doubt about His (God's) existence." (p. 19.) I do not happen to know how he cooked these figures, but I feel certain had he said: "But not five men in a thousand have any real belief in God's (meaning the Bible deity, of course) existence," he would have been nearer the truth.

As a piece of advice to all who, like Mr. Gray, want to induce the young to attend church regularly, I offer this: Take away all your sacred pictures, symbols, and other paraphernalia; burn all your hymn books, prayer books, etc., then convert the church into say a hall where lectures can be delivered on scientific, political, and other subjects of a secular nature, or into a cinema which will only screen purely educational films. When either is done I am certain that not one of the churches, chapels, or cathedrals for that matter will be deserted by the younger generation.

TOM BLAKE.

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