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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Jesus on the Stage

THE lady who writes over the pen-name of "Dorothy Sayers" has won a deserved reputation as a writer of detective stories. Speaking for myself only, I believe that she deserves the reputation she has gained. But to me she is not a very economic writer. I like a good detective story, and the work of most writers of this kind of "yarn" I can read at brief intervals over and over again. They amuse in the reading, and having an economical mind which enables me to forget rubbish—of a certain kind—soon after I have read it, I can read the same detective story over and over again. Like Jesus, these authors rise from the dead, they remain alive for an hour in my mind, and then fade away—to be resurrected again after a given interval.

But the stories of Miss Sayers are not of that kind. They earn recollection on their merits. They are good enough to be remembered, with the result that I find her rather expensive. If she would only write with the entertaining emptiness of Edgar Wallace I should be thankful. But she puts such good stuff into her stories that she becomes a strain on one's pocket. I wish her stories were more improbable and not so well written. They would cost me less.

I understand that "Dorothy Sayers" is a pen name. But I use it in these notes for a very special reason. Very much depends upon that pen-name. I must also assume that Miss Sayers is genuinely religious, and that she is a sincere Christian. Moreover, she has the good- or bad-fortune to live in an age when the Christian Churches, being quite unable to command attention by the reasonableness of their doctrines or by the commanding intellectuality of their principal and ordained advocates, jump eagerly at anyone with a sure public, who will openly assert the superiority of the Christian faith over every other creed. Miss Sayers has written several religious plays and also some articles, and one or two essays in defence of Christianity. I have seen one of her plays. It was very good, save for the ending which reminded one of a Christmas party with some figures of Santa Claus coming to life before the curtain dropped. I have also read her religious essays in press and book-form. These proved to me very clearly that she had no greater authority to lecture to the world on religion than she has to set up as an expositor of a just discovered dead language.

No, that is not a good illustration. For if a writing was obviously a language of some sort but which no one understood, then Miss Sayers might well set up as an interpreter. No one could contradict her. Next best to speaking on a subject that one knows from A to Z, is to enlarge on a matter of which one is completely ignorant. One can say what one pleases on either occasion. But Miss Sayers does not appear to have any qualifications to act as a teacher of religion. She is not an anthropologist, she knows nothing of the evolution of religion, she, apparently, is not aware that every one of the Christian doctrines are pre-Christian in their origin. She can say nothing about Christianity that has not been said before, often said better, by *dead* preachers. And her value to the Churches cannot consist in her captivating non-Christians. Much of what she says is sadly out of date. Her importance to the churches, lies not in getting outsiders to come in, so much as to prevent insiders going out. These latter may argue to themselves that if Miss Sayers can write a good detective story, she may be able to give us something authoritative concerning Christianity. If she can solve the mystery of a strange murder or a great burglary, may she not be able to explain to the world the mystery of the virgin birth, the episode of the loaves and the fishes and the resurrection? We live in an advertising age, and to the churches Miss Sayers is a good catch.

The reader will now perceive why she is valuable to the churches. What would not a soap-maker give if the Queen would say that she always used his soap every morning before breakfast! The reader will also realise why I use the lady's pen-name. She would be of small value to the churches without it.

The Voice of a God

Miss Sayers has written a radio version of the life of Jesus. Jesus was not to appear on the stage in person, but his voice was to be heard "off stage." It might have been given on the stage by a gramophone with a number of the actors kneeling round it, but that would not have encouraged a religious feeling—particularly if the machine squeaked in the middle of the speech. The religious committee of the B.B.C., which is democratic enough to permit any opinion to be heard, provided it is something with which it does not seriously disagree, saw a chance of plumping another chunk of religion on the people, and it agreed to present the play in twelve monthly performances. I think it a great mistake that the voice of Jesus, which will be *heard*, was not given, floating about the stage, or even round the building, and if the co-operation of Disney had been invited, he could have given us some excellent interludes such as Jesus raising men from the dead, or getting enough food out of a single biscuit-tin (marked with a cross) to feed a multitude of people, and then throwing some five hundred cakes to the audience. But the voice is only to be heard! I feel certain that some in the audience will recognise that voice as genuine. After all, there were scores of people who saw the angels fighting for our troops in the last war.

But the B.B.C. has awakened an enemy. The Lord's Day Observance Society, which holds that it is a Christian duty to be miserable one day each week,

spent a large sum of money on special announcements in the press, and the usual batch of telegrams were sent from all parts of the country, protesting against what it considered a disgrace to this country. Shades of John Reith!

The L.D. etcetra raised a strong objection to the "impersonation of the Son of God." They said it was "bordering on blasphemy." It was also a violation of the third commandment. The voice of the Lord was a greater blasphemy still; to permit the Jesus behind the scene to talk in modern English, even slang English, was to spoil the beautiful phrasing of the Bible as given "by inspiration of the Holy Spirit." As Ben Lyon says in "Hi Gang," "I don't get it." If Jesus spoke anywhere, at any time, he must have had a voice. And as his voice will have been like that of some other fellow, there could be no harm at imitating him. Judging from the New Testament, none of the people expressed surprise at his voice. "I don't get it."

Letting Out the Cat

A cat may look at a king, a fool may occasionally say something that at least leads to commonsense in others, and even so completely foolish a movement as the Lord's Day Observance Society—although it had our present Lord Chancellor as its president—may give rise to an interesting inquiry.

What lies at the root of this objection to having Jesus represented on the stage by a man? If Jesus ever lived—and setting aside any doubt that may exist on the paternal side, the certainty is that he was born as every other baby is born—he probably had the same teething troubles and he must have had the same boyhood as did other boys. He displayed the usual stock of mere human characteristics. He could get into a rage and call certain people by some very objectionable names, he could get annoyed and curse a fruit tree because it did not carry fruit out of season, he could weep and scold, and he fell into line with many other boys in being occasionally rude to his mother. And he certainly had a voice. Finally, there are pictures of Jesus, his mother and his mother's husband who is often depicted gazing at the baby with "I wonder where you came from" kind of a look on his face. Why, then, object to a stage representation of Jesus? King George VI. has been half a God since his coronation ceremony, but no one suggests that he must not be paraded before the public.

If Jesus did come on the stage in the person of an actor there would be nothing in it that is new. Those who are acquainted with the old miracle plays will recall how often, not merely Jesus, but God himself, was seen. So were Joseph and Mary, and in one of these old plays the theme is Joseph and Mary on their travels. Mary, who is expecting her baby, is tired, and seeing a cherry-tree laden with fruit asks Joseph to get her some. Joseph—still in some doubt about the angelic visit to Mary—replies: "Lete hy' pluk yew cherries, who be gatt yew with ehilde," but when the tree bows before Mary, Joseph plucks the cherries that belonged to someone else. Why, then, object to the voice? All over the country thousands of clergymen have been telling us about the life of Jesus, what he did and why he did it, and they have done so with the particularity with which a modern newspaper describes a royal procession. If Jesus could appear in Judea nearly two thousand years ago and could look like a man, speak like a man, and behave like a man, why is a representation of him by a man counted as blasphemy?

Those who really understand religion will be quite aware of the reason for it. I have already pointed out the realistic manner in which the Christian story was

presented when people believed the Christian myth. They saw nothing wrong or irreligious in Joseph questioning the parentage of Jesus, they could see nothing laughable in God—represented by an elderly man with a long beard walking about with a lantern before he made the sun. There was nothing blasphemous in seeing Adam and Eve in a state of nudity adjusting the fig-leaves. Why this row over presenting the voice of Jesus on the stage? Why is taking the New Testament as literally true from beginning to end evidence of religious fervour, but offering the same stories on the stage as actual happenings rank blasphemy?

Our Father the Savage

I think the answer to that is simple, but complete. Religion, all religion, belongs to primitive times and so long as it exists it must, so far as it is possible, re-create the conditions that gave it birth. We see this running through the whole of religion. It is in the dress of the medicine man, whether in the feathers and paint of the savage, or in the special dress of the modern priest. It is there in the curious and meaningless parsonic drone, and in every ceremony. Let the priest dress in the way that ordinary men dress, let him use the same modes of talking and live in the same way as do other men, and he loses his sacred character. Let a man pray in every-day language and the grotesque character of prayer becomes plain.

This is also the key to understanding why the clergy make such a fight to regain control over the schools. They know that if in a modern environment children are permitted to develop without religion, the odds are, given a fair education, a thousand to one against them bothering with religion when they have reached maturity. A prayer is a request, but a request is not a prayer. If rain is wanted, or victory is desired, it would never do to put these needs to God in plain, simple every-day language. There would be no magic in "Lord, we are in need of rain, we also wish to defeat our enemy, kindly help us in both directions as soon as possible." There must be assurances to God that we are humble in spirit, that we recognise what poor, helpless things we are—even though before and after the prayer we boast that we are a great, powerful, resourceful and unconquerable people. That is the difference between a request and a prayer.

Can anyone imagine people praying to God: "Oh God, you know we are fighting for our very lives. You know we have the toughest job we ever undertook, and that we badly need all the help you can give us. We know you can give us splendid help, if you will. But if we do not get your help soon we may suffer defeat. Will you by some means blast to destruction a couple of million of German soldiers, so that their wives are husbandless and their children fatherless? We are doing this as well as we can, but we want you to help us to do it more rapidly. There is no time to wait, we want all the help from you that you can give, and we want it now." That simple, straightforward address would be dismissed as sheer blasphemy. It would be equal to entering a Church, telling a humorous story to a companion and then both walking up the Church laughing loudly.

The significance of this is simple and clear. Ideas, beliefs, attitudes, etc., are as surely born of particular situations, as forms of animal life are developed by the persistence of a certain environment. Let the environment change and the forms of life must change accordingly or perish. If we would keep alive specimens of a kind that are out of harmony with the natural environment we must provide an artificial one. That is clear, simple and indisputable.

Consider this principle and we have an explanation why we must, when we are indulging in religious

ceremonies or petitions, have special attitudes, special forms of language and special buildings. Everything must be "sacred," and sacred means something devoted to the gods. It explains why the clergy are clamouring, not merely for religious instruction for children, but for a religious atmosphere throughout school life. The artificial environment must be created, we must get back to the primitive, we must put ourselves in the place of the savage, if we are to continue to believe.

It would be quite possible to repeat all the miracles of the New Testament—the rising of Jesus from the dead, the shrivelling of the fig tree at the curse of Jesus, the walking on water, the contest with the devil, the causing of the blind to see, and so forth. These are well within the range of our film experts. But it would be fatal to religious belief. If miracles are to survive they must not become common. If men and women are invited to *see* on the stage exactly what it is they are supposed to accept as literal fact, there is no religion that will not wither in the fact of exposure. I think that the Lord's Day Observance Society is on religiously strong grounds. Miss Sayers is treading a very slippery path. The savage may be very evident in fundamental Christian beliefs, but he must wear at least a loin cloth. He must not come before the public naked and unashamed. To tell Christians what they *ought* to believe is one thing. To ask them to *see* what they *must* believe is a very different proposition. There is not a religion in the world that could stand the strain.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

CHURCH AND STATE IN TSARIST TIMES

CHRISTIANITY was officially adopted in the land of Rus in the 10th century, and the form of faith was that of the Greek Communion. According to accepted tradition, Prince Vladimir despatched emissaries abroad to ascertain the modes of belief customary among Moslems, Romanists, Jews and Greeks. Those who visited Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium, reported so favourably of the cult in fashion there that the old chronicler declares that Vladimir concluded that its merits far transcended those of the other religions investigated by his agents.

While the Roman Pontiffs claimed the right to "depose kings and emperors and absolve subjects from their oath of allegiance to unworthy sovereigns," the Greek Patriarch was distinctly subordinate to the Crown. That the Papal pronouncement was no idle threat is evident from the imperious attitude of Gregory VII. towards the secular rulers of several European States, and especially so when he brought the Holy Roman Emperor, the doughty Henry IV. himself, to Canossa.

Clerical subjection in Byzantium was initiated by Constantine, who both convoked and presided over the Council of Nicea. He also ordered the arrest of Arius and his most prominent supporters; while at a later period he showed his supremacy by reinstating Arius and degrading several of his bitter adversaries. Again, in A.D. 381 the Emperor Theodosius personally summoned an Ecumenical Council and utilised it for the purpose of deposing clerical malcontents from their benefices. Also, Justinian displayed his dictatorial character not only by closing the surviving schools of Greek philosophy, but by making himself the master of the Church. Golubinski, the Russian historian, tells us that "Justinian not only made it his aim to keep in his hands the government of the clergy, and to preside over their destinies (not excepting their most eminent representatives), but

also considered it his right to rule their life, to name men at will to the most eminent posts in the hierarchy, to impose himself as mediator and as judge in ecclesiastical debates." Moreover, he made every effort to establish unanimity of opinion in matters of faith and never hesitated to pronounce an irrevocable judgment on all points of theological dogma.

This system of secular control was introduced into Russia when Christianity was adopted as the State cult. The worship of Perun, the native thunder god, was suppressed and driven underground, where its devotees celebrated their rites in secret. Nor was the conversion to Christ accomplished without bloodshed.

But Russia was so poor a power compared with the magnificence of Byzantium that for a time the Russian Church was subservient to the Patriarch of Constantinople. J. S. Curtiss, in his authoritative volume, "Church and State in Russia" (Columbia University Press, New York, 1940, 26s. 6d.), notes that "The service books, the rules of canon law, and all the other elements of the newly adopted faith were imported from the Greeks, probably by way of their converts, the Bulgarians; so that when the Prince felt the need for a head for his church he was ready to accept a Greek Metropolitan appointed by the Patriarch."

In the 13th century, the Tartar invasion of Russia was calamitous. The condition of the country became chaotic and the clergy utilised the occasion to augment their power. Their services as mediators between the invaders and the native population were beneficial. But the distracted conditions resulting from the Mongol incursion caused the collapse of the civil government and the Church remained the only organised institution in the land. On the whole, however, the authority of the Russian clergy seems to have sufficed to induce the Mongol Khans to restrain the ferocity of their followers.

As the Byzantine State became enfeebled and was assaulted both by the Latins and Turks, with the culminating disaster of Constantinople's capture by the Moslems in 1453, the Russian authorities were enabled to restore order in their troubled dominions. The Mongol Tartars had either been absorbed or had returned to Asia, and the increased influence of the Muscovite princes restored their power over the truculent clericals who challenged their authority. The father of Ivan IV.—the Terrible—proposed the confiscation of the wealthy monastic estates; but even if this proved impossible in face of determined clerical resistance, Prince Vasili easily overcame all other ecclesiastical opposition. An archbishop who displeased him was summarily deposed and banished, and then the clergy submitted in silence.

Vasili's son, Ivan IV., soon summoned a Council at which he proclaimed his sole authority as guardian of the faith and morals of the Church. Yet, when he attempted to deal with the very extensive monastic properties he was constrained to compromise. Even he did no more than forbid future bequests or conveyance of lands to the monks save under Imperial authority. As in Western Europe, the monastic orders had become plutocratic and the clergy tenaciously clung to their possessions.

In the early 17th century there was dire distress in Russia. Several pretenders struggled for the throne and during the civil commotions thus occasioned the Catholic Poles invaded the land. The Russian Church therefore strove to reunite the people against their Roman Catholic enemies.

Meanwhile, the influence of the revived secular spirit in Western Europe slowly spread beyond the frontiers of the Russian State; and this tendency was materially strengthened when Peter the Great ascended the throne. Still, the reforming ruler

temporised before undertaking any decisive action, although the Patriarch Adrian proved a die-hard reactionary who claimed authority transcending that of the Tsar in the spiritual domain.

Adrian died in 1700 while Peter was at warfare with the Swedes, and the menace of clerical domination perforce lay in abeyance. Later, a Monastery Office was established to administer monastic estates. This department soon diverted part of the monastic revenues to State needs. Peter and his advisers further antagonised the orthodox by conceding a slight toleration to the heterodox Old Believers. Increased measures to remedy clerical abuses were sullenly resented by the Exarch Iavorski, and Curtiss opines that this "had the effect of making Peter lose patience with the clergy as a group, for he decided to institute a 'Religious College' to administer the Church."

This institution was termed the "Most Holy Synod," but, although it consisted of bishops, abbots and other clericals, its members were appointed by the Tsar and might be dismissed at his pleasure. Moreover, to make matters complete, Peter instructed the Senate to secure the services of a military commander "who will have boldness and will know the administration of the Synod and can be Over Procurator."

Several reasons were assigned for the creation of the Synod, but the crucial one was the possible presence of a Patriarch—whose office was hereby abolished—whose pretensions might conceivably foster popular discontent in the event of the civil power ever coming into conflict with the clericals. Efforts were also made to induce the clergy to "promote education, morality and benevolent works," but with very scanty success.

Under Peter's immediate successors few changes occurred, but when Catherine became Empress in 1762 she was fulsomely welcomed by the clergy as a saintly devotee. The astute Catherine gained the confidence of the Churchmen by the attachment she displayed to her new faith. We are reminded that in the opening years of her reign "She was highly respectful to the clergy, fasted regularly, took communion once a year, listened attentively to sermons, and was liberal in rewards to Churchmen."

The land problem that had vexed so many of her predecessors Catherine nevertheless solved in a manner highly unsatisfactory to the sacerdotal order. According to Zharinov, an authority cited by Curtiss, "Vast areas, with their serf populations, were taken over by the State—in all, 991,761 'souls' (males) and approximately the same number of females, or 13.8 per cent. of all the peasants of Great Russia and Siberia." This secularisation furnished the State a rich revenue, for nearly all the most fertile soil had been appropriated by the Crown. Naturally, this sweeping measure greatly impoverished the clergy and made many of them practically dependent on the sums granted by the Treasury as compensation for their lost estates.

Towards Dissenters from the orthodox creed the Empress manifested marked sympathy and the laws imposing civil disabilities on the Old Believers were repealed. In her, and succeeding reigns, the Church was subjected to greater subordination than ever. Nearly all the bishops and the bulk of the lower clergy continued quite reactionary in attitude. Truly enough, they were encouraged and almost commanded to preach doctrines of passive obedience to a divinely anointed Tsar. In later reigns, leading representatives of the Church zealously opposed a very restricted right of publication of unorthodox opinions. Even the tardy liberation of the serfs from feudal bondage in 1861 was frowned upon by prominent ecclesiastics.

In that year, Metropolitan Filaret was encouraged by a powerful State Minister to protest against the abrogation of the custom of flogging peasants who failed in their payments to the officials. In his announcement of the Church's attitude to the suggested reform, the Metropolitan asserted that "the question of the use or the abandonment of flogging in the State does not involve Christianity . . . there is no basis for saying that 'flogging has a harmful effect upon the moral character of the people.' It is impossible to think that the Lord God would have legalised the bodily punishment of an offender if this had had a harmful effect upon the moral character of the Hebrew people." This seems a striking commentary upon the ethical effects of a holy alliance between the altar and the throne.

T. F. PALMER.

CONCERNING "INTERNATIONALISM"

(Continued from page 591)

A NATION, State or Kingdom may arise through several converging factors, or may grow by expansion of related elements out of a defined ethnical centre. Illustrations from the vast ethnographical phenomena of Asia are apposite. . . . The Kingdom of Persia (Iran) has traditions going back to primal civilisation in the Middle East. It figures throughout the main recorded period of Western contacts from about the 6th century B.C.; alike as a conquering power, and as receding with varying fortunes before forceful rivals. Originally its main ethnical content pertains to the Caucasic family, and has upheld an independent existence within the regional borders much as they obtain at the present day. It has experienced singular vicissitudes, inroads of foreign tribes, rise and fall of dynasties and, in a measure, conquest by the protagonists of an alien faith as with Islam. Since then this has been the chief cult of the country; though prior thereto there arose the influential heresy of Manichæism. Under some form of autocratic rule it has survived as a political entity through the centuries. In recent years from an impulsion given by a new ruler and dictator, there is a measure of national renaissance again going forward; now brought into the vortex of the war.

Quite otherwise comes the Far Eastern domain of China. Established for several millenniums in the region known as the Middle Kingdom; a branch of the Mongoloid family, expanding into some hundreds of millions, this exhibits physical traits and adaptability as almost to form a separate race. At the height of its power in the past its influence and authority extended far into outer Asia. In this self-contained country was developed an indigenous culture and quasi-civilisation, a monosyllabic tongue, a national cult of ancestry-worship, discoveries and attainments in certain of the arts of life; until brought into inimical contact with movements and forces at work in the modern world, outside its charmed circle, its leading classes were convinced of the entire superiority of things Chinese to all "foreign barbarian" usage.

Western nations, having emerged from migrations and conflicts which preceded and followed the fall of Rome, this movement continued into the Middle Ages, evoking transitory principalities and powers until a measure of equilibrium was reached. Thus a Turanian people, pressing into the West from Asia about the 10th century A.D., settled in the Danube plain, established a kingdom with varying fortunes and became the ancestors of the Hungarians of to-day. Other tribal inroads into the provinces of the Eastern Roman Empire, surviving its decline, are represented by Serbs and Bulgarians—with their age-long antipathies.

England and France, so closely inter-related for several centuries, present a contrast in creative evolution. In England the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, from separate kingdoms, had been brought under a central rule some time prior to the "Norman Conquest." A dubious connection obtained with their brethren beyond the Tweed. But as the northern country became distinguished as Scotland, its components made up of Gaels, Saxons, immigrant Irish in the West and Norse settlers along the outer islands were deter-

mined to resist absorption by their powerful southern neighbour. In stubborn conflicts they maintained independence until the free union of Great Britain in 1707. Wales had been incorporated earlier, and since the English occupation Ireland continued a troubled partner of the United Kingdom up to recent changes of venue.

National cohesion is not dependent on any particular form of Government or polity, but is an organic internal growth.* In Britain it happens to be associated with the course of parliamentary rule. Each of her peoples has contributed in degree to the general deed of freedom, culture, science, invention, civilisation and the development of a noble language that constitutes her native title in outstanding achievement.† Whence springs a deep individual consciousness and pride, rarely expressed, revealed in the hour of trial and menace by steadfast courage of the citizen—heroic resolution of the Services. . . . This feeling is the root of national honour and patriotism—a point to which we shall return.

When the Karolingian Empire divided in the 9th century A.D. into East and West Franks, with the East capital at Laon, the West Franks elected Odo, Count of Paris, as their Duke. This Duchy was the most powerful province north of the Loire, with rivals in Normandy and Flanders. Beyond the Loire were other separate Duchies where the governors of provinces had set up on their own; the Dukes of Aquitaine and Gascony, the Counts of Toulouse and Barcelona with the loose boundaries of that time. On the death of the last Karolingian King at Laon, Hugh Capet, son of the Duke of the French, was chosen King with the capital at Paris. This was the beginning of the Kingdom of France, and as the Kings of the French secured control over the lands of their vassals and neighbours, the name of France gradually extended over the greater part of Gaul, within territorial frontiers much as they stood until yesterday.

So the Romance nations and languages came into being. The Goths and other Teutons who settled in Italy, Spain, Gaul were, in the main, no mere destroyers. They treated with tolerance the Roman laws and language, and in Spain and Gaul those nations like the Goths and Burgundians, which had been converted by Arian Bishops, gradually came to embrace the Catholic faith. . . . "The Romans had all the (existing) learning and civilisation on their side, the clergy were for a long time almost always Romans, and they kept the property and influence which they had before. Thus the two nations were gradually mixed together, and the conquerors, as being the smaller in number, came to adopt a great deal of the laws and manners, and especially the language, of the conquered. . . ."

Of such is the genesis of Spain, Italy, France, if derived from different ethnical strains. A form of Latin was the common speech of these countries at that time, though hardly the classic Latin of Roman authors. This speech

* The influence of "Religion" on national characteristics varies with circumstance and is a wide issue. In Spain the contest of Catholic with Muslim until the triumph of the first accentuated Catholic zeal and cohesion. In England, particularly since the divorce from Rome, beyond the growth of dissident sects, mundane factors have had great play. Sport and pastimes, the drama, secular literature, the expansion of art, the service rendered to knowledge by societies and associations for promoting all branches of research from the Royal Society onwards, supported mainly by private effort. All which has reacted on popular culture and amelioration.

† In its basic Anglo-Saxon, *onomatopœic*, that is, formation of names or words from sounds which resemble those associated with the object or action to be named, or that seem naturally suggestive of its qualities; as *rush*, *roar*. Then the sentence follows the natural sequence of thought, subject, predicate, object. I saw it. . . . After the "Conquest" English became modified in Court and Legal circles by foreign elements from the Continent; but persisted as the speech of the Commonalty. With its revival from several causes about the time of Chaucer, his works and Caxton's Press gave it defined literary form. Since when it has been expanded from numerous sources which make up an unparalleled richness and variety.

had to be acquired by the invaders for a common understanding:—

"As the Germans (Teutons) learned to speak Latin, the language became still more corrupted and a good many German words crept into it. Thus the common language of Italy, Gaul and Spain became a kind of corrupt Latin, which men used in common speech; in writing they used fairly good Latin for centuries after. No one thought of writing in this speech, which began to be called *Roman* in distinction from the Latin which men wrote."‡

This speech expanded in each case into a distinctive lingual instrument, and during the latter medieval period into a medium of literary expression. From the end of the English connection, under able statesmen and rulers, France emerges as a unified whole; through trials, internal conflict, political change developing a native cultural character and presentation. Contributing in her intellectual life to illumination and mundane wisdom; her peculiar social code and usage, art, cuisine; the arbiter of "fashion." Then—overtaken by a malign fatality and lost sense of honour—she ceases to be. . . . Finis is written to a millennium of creative action.

AUSTEN VERNEY.

(To be concluded)

‡ Freeman.

ACID DROPS

TWO women went to a fortune-teller at Tottenham. They each paid the fortune-teller 10s. 6d. and one of them was informed that she would live in a castle and have plenty of money. She would be happy with her husband, but he would drink. The visitors were policewomen on a rather mean excursion, and the fortune-teller was fined £20. The fortune-teller was a very foolish woman who might with better wit have raked in money quite comfortably and even gained honour in the making. All she had to do was to found a new religious body, inform her followers that God would bless them on this or that adventure in this world, and in any case would be sure of getting all they wished for in the next, including reunion with all belonging to the dead, etc., etc., and she would not only have been unmolested, she would have received the protection of the law in her game. Really, there are so many ways of swindling the public—within the sanction of the law and the approval of "Society," that we have little patience with those who indulge in fortune-telling and "sich."

By the way. How did the magistrate or the police know that the enquirer would not marry someone with money, that she would not live in a castle and that her husband would drink? Such things have happened. The magistrate should have adjourned the case and waited to see what happened. But we suspect that, as is so often the case, what the police say the magistrate stands by. Many of them do feel that it is their duty to support the police.

Here is an example, not so much of Christian falsity as of downright religious impudence. Shotton, Cheshire, has decided on the daredevil step of having Sunday cinemas. This may have been, on the part of some of the members, to show that they were *real* democrats—at least "for the duration"—and so fall into line with such full-blooded democrats as Lord Halifax, Lord Simon, "Sam" Hoare and others. At any rate, one of the members of the Council announced his agreement to the proposal if it could be shown that the opening "would not interfere with people going to church or chapel." Give us liberty (of a kind) or give us death!

Of course the cinemas will interfere with people going to church. People "queue up" for cinemas; how many do the same for church? People pay to go into a cinema. They pay to come out of a church—at least, the collection comes at the end, and we are quite certain that many pay with a sigh of relief. It is the moment of liberation. If a vote were taken among the people, say from 13 years of age to 50, on "to the cinema or church on Sunday," what sort of a show would the churchgoers make? Entrance to the church is free. One must pay to get into a cinema. Crowds

wait to get into a cinema; people trickle into church and kind of ooze out on the slightest opportunity. There is often a smile on the faces of those leaving a cinema. The prevailing look on the faces of people leaving church is, "Thank God that's over."

But the cinema is not the only thing that makes for the weakening of *genuine* Christianity. We emphasise "genuine" because a kind of substitute Christianity will persist for some time after the real thing is virtually dead, and so long as individuals in public life lack the courage to speak out plainly. But real Christianity suffers from every cultural change for the better and by every change in the general environment. Here, for example, is Father Lord (Society of Jesuits), who laments that "Here in America the Irish are a dying race." He complains that the Poles, the Czechs and the Italians are "sweeping ahead (of the Irish) at a tremendous speed." We take any statement from Roman Catholic leaders with a pinch of salt, and when it suits, Roman Catholics boast of the tremendous influence of their followers in the U.S.A.

The trouble, we take it, is due to the fact that the Roman Catholics who reach America—mainly because of the poor conditions in their native lands—are gradually absorbed by the Americans. They tend to become American citizens, instead of remaining several communities within the American community. And, as is noted in other countries, the better the social conditions the greater the tendency to smaller families. Both of these things cut at the policy of the Roman Church, for until that Church can become a dominating influence in the State, self-preservation forces the Church to create, so far as it can, a separate, a detached body of people, which will look to Rome for its marching orders. The wisest and best of Americans wish its emigrants to become identified with the American people. The Roman Church, above all things, wishes it to remain subservient to a substantially foreign priesthood, and ready to place the interests of the Vatican before everything. In other words, the Church wishes to plant as many Quislings as may be in the countries which its followers favour with their presence.

The 7-55 a.m. B.B.C. terror continues its way. Perhaps if the German rulers listen, it may give them some hope of ultimate victory, for they may well argue that a people which can advertise such unadulterated foolishness must break sooner or later. All the same, we wish the B.B.C. would print these outbreaks of cerebral anemia. They are really valuable psychological studies, properly read and interpreted. To the future they would be more valuable than records of normal men and women.

For example, the 7-55 outbreak took for his subject the story of Joseph and Mary and her baby. The speaker played about with it much in the way that Mark Twain might have dealt with it, if he had been less brainy and less of a Freethinker than he was. Joseph, he said, knew what God was like, what he could do, and so believed what the angel told him of the parentage of Mary's child. That part of it was well done. It sounded sufficiently serious to lead one to believe that the speaker believed what he said. Joseph, he said, was like a soldier who trusts his general and believes what he is told. With excellent sarcasm he finished by saying: "There are many to-day like Joseph." We half expected him to add, "there are many Marys also." But he probably felt he could leave that comment to the listener.

It is stated that in the Isle of Ely the Education Committee refuse to give to Roman Catholic children the free grant of milk that is given to other children, and that while non-Catholics get a dinner for 3d. and dental attention free, Roman Catholics are charged 6d. Such petty persecution as between Christian bodies is not unknown, but we should think such miserable display of religious narrow-mindedness would, in this country, stop short at children. "Suffer little children to come unto me," says the New Testament, and the Isle of Ely Education authority adds, "And we will sort them out."

But here is a chance for a real Roman Catholic miracle. Let some of the saints take the matter in hand, and when

the Catholic child pays 6d., cause his or her food to grow to twice as much as that on the Protestant plate. Some of the saints appear to be missing an opportunity.

In spite of the desperate efforts being made by the clergy of all brands to impress upon us that this is God's war as well as ours, the miracle business is falling flat. Our own Government emphasises the lesson that only when we get superiority in all sorts of arms and ships and men shall we be able to crush the German forces. And in the "Evening News" for December 31, Mr. W. Denny concludes a lengthy article by saying, "Let us see to it there are no more 'miracles of Dunkirk.' Let us see that as the result of our efforts no more miracles are necessary." But that will leave God with nothing to do—except to perpetuate that stupidity upon which the belief in God's miracles lives. Still, the "miracles" of this war have been very costly.

For sheer duplicity—if not for deliberate falsification—commend us to one who is defending religion, and for a complete example of the same to an advocate of Christianity. Here, for example, is a writer in the "Belfast Telegraph," who writes concerning religious instruction in schools. He says that an excellent "syllabus in universal use in Scotland was composed by twelve members nominated by a non-religious body, the Educational Institute of Scotland, and twelve by the Church of Scotland." That is a fair example of "Christian truth" on the higher scale. What it is on the lower one we leave to the reader's imagination.

Consider that this committee is put forward as representing the Christian and *other* sections of the community. Well, twelve are avowed representatives of an established Church. How many of the other twelve were non-Christian? We should be very much surprised if there was a single *known* unbeliever among them. Bigotry is bad enough, religious bigotry is very bad, and the worst bigotry of all is that which comes to us wearing a Christian cloak. On how many occasions have Christians considered they were worthy of praise because they did cut each other's throat!

Canon Jackson (R.C.) says teaching religion like any other subject at school is a great mistake. We presume that what the Canon means is that religion cannot be taught in the same way that other subjects are taught. We agree; it has been part of our case for many years. Religion must be taught as a dogma, as something settled beyond question; something that suggests wrong even to doubt. In school, any subject that is taught to a pupil may be demonstrated, and in cases where they cannot understand, the subject can wait. But religion is taught as something that is not to be questioned, and a pupil that happened to put awkward questions to a teacher would not be treated as would be one who asked for an explanation of some non-religious problem. It is a case of dogma and doctrine versus statement and explanation. But no Church in the world has ever been able to build on that basis. But perhaps, after all, what Canon Jackson meant to say was that religion cannot be understood as are other questions. In that case, we are in full agreement so far as the professional teachers of religion are concerned.

The "Catholic Times" announces, per an Australian Catholic paper, that Australia has lost nine divisions of soldiers through birth control. That establishes just one more link between Roman Catholicism and Hitlerism. Long ago the German leaders laid it down that it was the duty of every German woman to produce as many children as possible. The idea was to provide soldiers, and there were large bodies of people in this country who held that if the prime purpose of giving birth to children was to turn them into cannon-fodder, the sooner our women became barren the better. The Roman Church has always taken much the same line—substituting "children of the Church" for soldiers. We wonder how many Australian women regret they have not borne children so that they might have become cannon-fodder? The Roman Catholic priest sees but one purpose—that of increasing the power and prestige of the Church. Everything is subsidiary to that.

"THE FREETHINKER"

2 and 3, Furnival Street, Holborn,
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TO CORRESPONDENTS

Will the writer of an article on "Freud and Religion" be good enough to send us his name and address—not necessarily for publication.

L. LAWRENCE.—We hope to reprint most of the books and pamphlets destroyed in the fire of last May. The difficulty is getting the paper. But our first job is to make and keep "The Freethinker" secure. We are conceited enough to believe that the preservation of the journal is of first importance to the militant Freethought movement in this country.

T. W. (Bedford).—The first edition of "Hereditary Genius," by Francis Galton, was published in 1869. It was a pioneer work. The book you probably have in mind is his "Inquiry Into Human Faculty." This has been reprinted—after the author's death, but with characteristic British Christian dishonesty, a chapter containing a deadly criticism of prayer was omitted.

S. H.—Sorry your proof was received too late for this issue.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2-3, Furnival Street, London, W.C.4, and not to the Editor.

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

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

Lecture notices must reach 2 and 3, Furnival Street, Holborn, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Monday, or they will not be inserted.

SUGAR PLUMS

HERE is a rather significant thing. The "Catholic Herald" announced the opening of the war in the Pacific with a displayed heading: "Thirty to forty million more Catholics involved in new wars." Actually the new war involves nearly 300 millions. But the Catholic leaders will consider only those it claims as fellow believers. But quite unconsciously the headline expresses the attitude of the Roman Church. The only rule is the interest of the Church. There are nearly 300,000,000 involved in the extension, but as the vast majority are not Roman Catholics they must take a secondary place. Everything must give way to the interests of the Church. Not a very good outlook for a world peace when this war ceases.

Census statistics where religion is concerned are not very reliable, particularly where confessions of "no religion" are concerned. But the following from the "Cape Argus" for November 17 is interesting:—

"Heathens" have increased in South Africa at a far greater rate than any other religion, according to analyses made by the Department of Census and Statistics from the data supplied by the last census.

"These analyses, which were issued in a Blue Book to-day, show that only 36 Europeans refused to answer the order in the census form, 'State the religion, denomination or sect.'

"Of the Europeans, 69 put themselves down as 'heathens,' as against ten at the previous census—an increase of 590 per cent., a rise which no other religion or sect equalled.

"'No religion' was the return given by 6,231 people, as against 4,916 previously."

In reading returns of this kind one must remember that for business, family and other reasons, large numbers of people are very shy of confessing their hostility to religion. What, for example, would happen to an employee of the B.B.C. who took an active part in the propaganda of Freethought, or if he ventured to offer a hostile criticism?

The following from an article in "The Times" by Professor Julian Huxley is worth noting:—

"The insistence on religious observances in schools when religious influence is declining in the world outside will recoil on the heads of its proponents. Children are infallible detectors of unreality. As with culture, they will feel the contrast between the artificial religious atmosphere inside the school and the irreligious or indifferent atmosphere outside. This will in the long run promote in most of them an even more suspicious or even hostile attitude to orthodox religion than they would otherwise have acquired. But the mischief does not end here. A sense of unreality attaching to one portion of formal education tends inevitably to spread to the remainder. The introduction of more religious teaching and observance into the schools at this particular juncture will seriously hinder the development of an educational system which shall be an effective and organic function of our general social life.

"The remedy again lies outside the schools. The religious impulse is a strong and persistent force in human life. But it is a complex impulse, differing radically in emphasis and aim from age to age as well as between one type of individual and another; and the doctrinal ritual and institutional forms in which it expresses itself are even more protean. We have witnessed the rise of two movements to which we must give at least the title of pseudo-religions—the Nazi and the Communist systems. It would appear of real importance that the existing democratic countries should evolve their own characteristic and powerful brand of religious impulse and means for its expression. This will not be achieved by a return to the traditional past. The Christian ethic and Christian Doctrine, though they have left an indelible mark on our Western civilisation in their insistence on the overriding value of the individual personality, on the necessity for sacrifice, and in many other ways, are no longer either a primary or an essential part of its framework. New attitudes, new values, new needs have come into being."

The only comment that need be made on this is, first, the misleading phrase "religious impulse." Actually there is no such thing. There are impulses that may be expressed in terms of religion, or in terms of self-preservation, fear and so forth. The correct phrasing here should be, "there are impulses that may be expressed in terms of religious belief, or in other forms." In early social forms, and in the survival of primitive frames of mind current among "civilised" people religious forms are common. But these tend to wither and die in face of scientific development.

Second, there is no need for democratic, or any other form of civilised society to "express their characteristics in terms of religious impulse." There is every need for men and women to understand the nature and origin of those impulses that determine action, and to set aside all misunderstanding of the kind that goes to make up what Professor Huxley misleadingly calls the religious impulse. From the point of view of strict science, what constitutes religion is the mistaken interpretation of phenomena which are to-day accounted for in a non-religious manner.

Leicester Freethinkers are reminded that Sunday afternoon lectures are held by the Leicester Secular Society in the Secular Hall, 75, Humberstone Gate, at 3 p.m. The General Secretary of the N.S.S., Mr. R. H. Rosetti, will be the speaker to-day and the subject, "What we Pay for the Religion We Get," raises a question of importance to all citizens and will no doubt be used by the local saints as an inducement for orthodox friends to attend.

The South London Branch N.S.S. commences its 1942 syllabus in the Labour Party Hall, 95, Grove Vale, East Dulwich, at 3 p.m. to-day (January 11), when Mr. L. Ebury will be the speaker. We understand the hall is warm and comfortable, and the local branch has lost no time in getting to work; full support from all local friends of the movement should be the token of appreciation.

One of our readers—one of the many new ones made since the war began—asks if we think Roosevelt and Churchill really believe in the help of God being given to the Allies. Candidly, we do not. But both of them have

to deal with a people with whom superstition is still widespread, and to leave God out would weaken the response of the war effort. It is certain that if the appeal was being made to the Chinese, the inhabitants of India or of Burma to help, the Christian God would not be invoked. If "God" is called upon, it would be done in such a way that different peoples would understand that their gods were being invoked, or the word "God" would be used in such a way that believers in all kinds of gods would take it as applying to their own particular deity. Finally, the casual manner in which God is invoked, with the firm and constant insistence that the war will be won in the workshops, and by the courage of our soldiers and sailors and airmen, irrespective of their creed, is alone enough to indicate in which direction the hopes of both the leaders named are centred.

We are late, but not too late, in calling attention to the wartime issue of the "Rationalist Annual" (Watts and Co., 1s. 6d.) for 1942. The issue is well up to standard. Among the articles may be noted the opening one by Sir Arthur Keith, narrating his own mental development towards Free-thought, which reached the present point attained as late as 1928. Eden Philpotts gives readers an interesting satire on the gods under the title of "Flutter in the Dovecote." There is a lively, informative article by Rear-Admiral Beadnell on "Old Man River," Chalmers Mitchell writes on "Conscience," endorsing an opinion expressed by William James many years ago and often endorsed in these columns, that it would be a good thing if "Conscience" was put on the shelf, at least for a time. At present the word makes for misunderstanding. Articles by Mr. Howell Smith, Gowans Whyte, Professor Haldane, Archibald Robertson, John Rowland and others make up an issue that is both interesting and instructive.

At the United Artists' Exhibition, now being held at the Royal Academy in aid of the Red Cross Funds, we are glad to note two etchings by Mr. H. Cutner. Some of our readers may care to look them out if they are visiting the exhibition.

TESTIMONY OF TACITUS CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

(Continued from page 597)

III. Paulus Orosius: This man was a native of Tarragona. He is remembered for his work written against the pagan* at the request of Augustinus, Bishop of Hippo, in North Africa, to whom it is dedicated and whose death took place A.D. 430. The occasion of the book was as follows. After the northern hordes of Alaric had in A.D. 410 sacked Rome with a ferocity truly Germanic, the Pagans attributed the disaster to the wrath of the ancient deities, because so many of the Romans had forsaken them to worship the Christian God. Orosius attacks this attribution by showing that similar disasters had occurred throughout human history, and by asserting that such as had happened since the beginning of the Christian Era were due to divine vengeance for the persecution of Christianity. The book has many faults, a prominent one being its hysterical rhetoric. According to the index of the present edition, Orosius names Tacitus nine, and Suetonius seven times, respectively; but never names Eusebius. He was, however, indubitably acquainted with both the *Chronicle* and the *History of Eusebius*, and probably he avoids naming him for his supposed heterodoxy. In the case under examination Tacitus and Suetonius are not named. Little, if anything, is derived from Tacitus, but much from Suetonius, whilst somewhat is also supplied by the likewise unnamed Eusebius. The account is as follows: After briefly describing the cruelty of Nero to the sufferers, Orosius proceeds to charge Nero with various murders, among them being those of his mother, brother, sister, wife and all his kinsfolk. Then he says that Nero added to these crimes the supreme one of being the first who at Rome persecuted the Christians, afflicting them with torments and death, pursuing them in like manner through all the provinces, "attempting to extirpate the name itself," and putting to death the apostles Peter and Paul. This part about Nero's

murders, his priority as imperial persecutor, and his execution of the two apostles, is obviously borrowed from the similar relation furnished by Eusebius. Thereupon, Orosius records, evidently as divine punishments, sundry disasters which "in the subsequent autumn" befell the Roman Empire. The first three of these calamities are related by Suetonius at the very beginning of the chapter after the one dealing with the fire, and ending with Nero's ill-treatment of the sufferers. But here they are introduced as "fortuitous" evils additional to those wrought by the Emperor. Besides, Suetonius does not use the phrase *subsequente autumnno*, "subsequent autumn," but describes the first of these calamities as "a pestilence of one autumn, *unius autumnni*." This plague Tacitus reports near the end of the period when Nerva Silianus and Vestinus Atticus were Consuls, which, according to Liebenham, was the year A.D. 65; but Tacitus omits a very impressive and lugubrious fact recorded by Suetonius and Orosius in connection with it. He, however, apparently thinking of Nero's multitudinous and abominable crimes, attributes the pestilence, and also a devastating tempest, which Suetonius and Orosius do not mention, to the anger of the gods. In any case, the pestilence, which Suetonius states to have occurred in "one autumn," and which Orosius affirms to have taken place in the autumn "subsequent" to the persecution, i.e. in the one of A.D. 64, Tacitus seems to place in the autumn of A.D. 165, and certainly refers it to some time or another of that year. The other two of the three calamities related by Suetonius and Orosius are the crushing defeats of the Roman army in Britain and in Armenia, events placed by Tacitus before, and not after, the persecution.† As regards Suetonius, this infraction of historical accuracy is merely an example of his preference for factual rather than chronological arrangement. As regards Orosius, who usually adopts the latter method, it was a very different thing for him to take the two events, which, as he must have well known from Tacitus, preceded the persecution, and make them out to be divine punishments for it. The culpability of Nero for the fire is by Tacitus left an open question, and by Suetonius affirmed to be a plain fact, but Orosius merely accuses him of gloating over the fire and does not mention his having been accused of causing it. The fact that unlike Tacitus, with whose works he was thoroughly familiar, Orosius does not attribute the persecution of the Christians to their having been charged with the fire, might be referred to one or another of the following reasons:—

(1) That Orosius did not find the accusation in the copy, or the copies, of Tacitus which he consulted. (2) That, although he knew Tacitus did report the accusation, yet he himself regarded the fact reported as uncertain or false, and therefore omitted it. (3) That, although knowing and believing what Tacitus had said about the matter, he suppressed this testimony, probably because, as I suggested in the case of Eusebius, he thought it might do harm to Christianity. There is no means of proving the first alternative, but perhaps the second is not devoid of supportive indications: The fact that when describing the fire and the conduct of Nero immediately after it, Orosius clearly prefers the narrative of Suetonius to the one of Tacitus might, if taken with the fact that Suetonius mentions the persecution without connecting it with the fire, suggest that in the latter, as well as in the former case, Orosius preferred to follow Suetonius rather than Tacitus. Certainly Suetonius mentions the persecution long before mentioning the fire, but as I already said, this is due to his method of factual arrangement. Orosius might agree with Suetonius about the separation of the two events, and yet differ from him on the point of priority, regarding it as preferable to follow Eusebius, by whom the persecution is dated some few years after the fire.

IV. Sulpicius Severus: Very little is known of this author except his long friendship with St. Paulinus of Nola, who died on July 22, 431, and who once described him as *actate florientiore*, "riper in age" than he himself was, both being still young at the time concerned (*Epis.* v. 5). Severus, like Paulinus, was a native of Aquitania. He embraced Christianity about A.D. 390, the period when his friend embraced it. According to the St. Augustinus before

* *Historiæ Adversum Paganos*. xx. C. Zangermeister. xxx. Lipsiæ. 1889.

† *Ann.* xiv. 31-33 (A.D. 61); xv. 9-10 (A.D. 62).

named, Severus was still alive at the death of St. Jerome, September 30, A.D. 420 (*Epis.* 205). He was a well educated man, who wrote Latin in a pure, lucid and graceful style. He had a great devotion to the Church, and his two works upon St. Martin of Tours, whom he knew personally, show that he was very unscrupulous in advancing his interest by relating things which he must have known to be false. The work of importance for the present inquiry is his "Chronicles" in two books, the second of which, in its 28th and 29th chapters, deals with Nero's life. Reference to the Editor's "Index of Words and Things," shows that Sulpicius, neither in this nor in any of his other works, names Tacitus, which is not remarkable since he habitually omits to name his authorities. The Editor, however, above his notes on the two chapters previously specified, twice gives Tacitus as a reference, citing Ann. xv. 37 and 40 seq.; but in his "Index-Scriptorum" he does not name Tacitus. In the first of those places, Sulpicius, after giving a general denunciation of Nero's bad character, gives as an illustration an instance of his abominable lubricity, which Tacitus, in a passage of unquestionable authenticity, also reports. The second place is the one wherein he refers to Christ and the Christians. In the case of each of these passages let us put the text of Tacitus on the left and that of Sulpicius on the right in parallel columns. Only the second passage need be translated:—

Sulpicii Severi Leberi Qui Superanut Recensuit Et Commentario Critico Instruxit Carolus Halm. Vindobonæ xxx., MDCCCLXVI.

Uni ex illo contaminatorum grege, cui nomen Pythagoræ fuit, in modum solennium conjugiorum denupsisset. Inditum imperatori flammeum; visi auspices, dos et genialis torus et faces nuptiales: cuncta denique spectata quæ etiam in femina non operit.

Pythagoræ cuidam in modum solennium conjugiorum denuberet; inditum imperatori flammeum; dos et genialis torus et faces nuptiales cuncta denique, quæ vel in feminis non sine verecundia conspiciuntur, spectata.

It is worth a passing remark that in this place, whereas Tacitus expresses only true moral sentiment, Sulpicius introduces at the end that false shame in relation to sex phenomena which is so disgracefully characteristic of Christianity. The dependence of Sulpicius upon Tacitus on the present occasion is indisputable. After portraying Nero, he proceeds to relate how Peter and Paul came to be in Rome, and to describe some of their doings in the city. Then he thus begins his 29th chapter:—

"Meanwhile the multitude of Christians abounding, it happened that Rome blazed with a fire, Nero being then at Antium; but the opinion of all retorted upon the Prince the odium of the fire, and the Emperor was believed to have sought the glory of renewing the city. Nor was Nero by anything able to effect that the fire should not be thought to have been ordered by him.

Therefore, he turned the odium upon the Christians."

The language and the contents of this paragraph much resemble what Tacitus has in his corresponding part (xv. 33-45). There he applies the description "multitudo" to the Christians, mentions Nero's being at Antium when Rome got on fire, declares that Nero "was appearing to seek the glory of founding a new city and of calling it by his own name." Also, there is a remarkable resemblance between the *quin jussum incendium crederetur* of Tacitus and the *quin ab eis jussum incendium putaretur* of Sulpicius, the *ab eis* looking very like a purposive emendation. After saying that Nero accused the Christians of the fire, Sulpicius goes on to say that Nero subjected them, though innocent, to inquisitorial tortures and new excogitated deaths. Then comes a sentence which I shall give in full using the same arrangement as in the former case:—

Ut ferarum tergis contacti liniatu canum interirent aut crucibus affixi, aut flammam, atque, ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur.

Ut ferarum tergis contacti liniatu canum interirent, multi crucibus affixi aut flamma usti, plerique in id reservate, ut cum defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur.

So that with the skins of wild beasts covered, by the worrying of dogs they died.

The same

"
"

Others were either to crosses affixed, or made fit to be inflamed, and then, when daylight should have ceased, for the use of a nocturnal light they would be burned.

Many to crosses were affixed, or with fire burned, most to this being reserved that when daylight should have ceased, for the use of a nocturnal light they would be burned.

Reference to Part I., Section IV. of this essay will show that Tacitus introduces his account of the above tortures by saying *perereuntibus addita ludibria* "to the perishing mockeries were added." Thus *perereuntibus* is the logical and grammatical antecedent to *ut . . . interirent*, "so that . . . they died," used with respect to those worried by the dogs. Sulpicius has no such connection. The verb *interirent*, "they died," is, as he uses it, without antecedent, for instead of *perereuntibus*, which relates to persons, he has *novæ mortes excogitata*, "new excogitated deaths," which relates to things. Here, as his inconsequence proves, Sulpicius has made a malconnected transfer, namely, the entire description of the cruel deaths; whilst the marked resemblance between that narrative and the parallel one in the present text of Tacitus proves it to have been thence derived. Moreover, certain textual variations in the two accounts would tend to confirm the dependence of Sulpicius if this were necessary.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be continued)

THE DEATH OF THEOLOGY

MODERN theology is in a fix. No longer able—as for example, in the Middle Ages it was able—to adapt itself to the current requirements of its contemporary criticism, it is increasingly forced to take up an avowedly irrational position in face of the fundamental criticisms of Rationalism. We have, in fact, reached the intellectual dog-days of theology. That phenomenon which a philosopher of the last generation described under the comprehensive heading of "pseudo-philosophy"—viz., the attempt to demonstrate by reason the futility of reason—has now reached a pitch where the term "theologian" represents the equivalent of "alchemist," the professor of an admitted pseudo-science long since relegated to the limbo of the intellectual underworld.

In the very able book to which we have just alluded, Mr. Hugh Mortimer Cecil, writing at the end of last century (1897), subjected to a brilliant and devastating criticism the writings of three contemporary "irrationalists"—as he correctly termed them—whose respective "reconciliations" of religion with scientific reasoning aroused the too facile enthusiasm of their contemporary theologically-minded public. With a relentless logic and a pungency of phrase now but too seldom encountered in our anæmic contemporary literature Mr. Cecil trounced, exposed and castigated, not only his immediate irrationalists, but also, and more fundamentally, the whole order of interested apologetics masquerading as thought for which the particular objects of his crushing rejoinder stood at the time of his polemic against them. (Cp. "Pseudo-Philosophy at the end of the Nineteenth Century," 1897, by Hugh Mortimer Cecil. It has been alleged that this is a pseudonym which covers the identity of an eminent musical critic still happily amongst us.)

The three theological apologists so effectually disposed of by Mr. Cecil need not now detain us. To be sure, Arthur James Balfour may still be remembered by the older generation as a none too scrupulous Tory politician of reactionary views and a certain verbal facility, whilst the name of Benjamin Kidd may still stand in the memory of a few students of the evolution of sociology as an obscure (English) forerunner of Adolf Hitler's theory of the "Master Race," the "Herrenvolk." As for Henry Drummond, the only professional religionist of the three, who to-day recalls even the name of the once renowned author of "Natural Law and the Spiritual World," "The Ascent of Man," etc., etc.? "*Nomen et protereya nihil!*"

The polemics of all three writers—all alike mainly distinguished by a too fluent verbosity—have long since joined the "snows of yester-year," or, in this instance, the second-hand bookstalls in Farringdon Road: second-hand arguments disposed of, appropriately enough, at second-hand!

Whilst, however, the pseudo-apologetics of the nineteenth century have passed beyond our ken along with the century that begat them, yet the "science" of apologetics is far from being extinct. Indeed, it advances—retrogressively—from the inane to the more inane, from logical absurdity even to downright mental idiocy. The older generation of Christian theologians were rather deficient than utterly contemptible. Cardinal Newman, whose "illative sense" gave the clue to the whole succeeding tribe (cp. "Grammar of Assent"), was at least a subtle, if hardly a profound or consistent thinker, and his *literary* talents were undeniable and conspicuous: whilst such divines as Bishop Gore and Dr. Martineau must be given credit for sincere if limited scholarship. Even Dean Inge—the last of the "Victorians" in the theological arena—is capable of humour himself, besides so frequently becoming the cause of humour in others! But the Christian apologists of to-day—their very names seemed destined for obscurity and the very titles of their books seem to foretell their coming oblivion!

One cannot indeed either adjudge them more accurately or damn them more effectually than by stating that, compared with this "monstrous regiment," this heroic rear-guard of God's retreating army, even Mr. Cecil's *bêtes noires*, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Kidd, were intellectual giants, whilst Drummond—yes, even Drummond!—towers over the Dean Matthews and the Leslie Weatherheads (et al) like a great rock in a thirsty land—or, to employ a more accurate analogy—like a little hill promoted, to all appearance, into a seemingly great mountain by the arid flatness of the encircling plain!

We repeat: these are the dog-days of theology. Time was when it held up its head—*urbi et orbi*—before the admiring Universe. Then, it was the "Queen of the Sciences." It bandied argument for argument with confidence in its intellectual tools. (True, even in its golden age, it prudently kept the stake in reserve for its intellectual conquerors, but it did not then regard this as its first, as well as its last argument.) The great theologians of the Middle Ages claimed to be both Rationalists and scientists; to be, indeed, "universal doctors," masters of all knowledge, human and divine.

But this is all ancient history. The blight of apologetics—that sure sign of declining Faith—has palsied the former mental confidence of the champions of the Faith. The good old days are long past when that great humorist, George III., could solemnly assure Bishop Watson—Thomas Paine's least contemptible antagonist—that he "did not really think that the Bible needed apologising for." (Watson had written "An Apology for the Bible"—a "refutation" of "The Age of Reason.") To-day, Christians spend their whole time "apologising" for Christ: they cannot even now safely assume his existence. The famous "proofs" of God's existence have themselves been disproved so often that even theologians rarely now refer to them. Indeed, we should doubt their very existence is even known to the average Christian "Evidence" lecturer. As for the now fashionable argument, "from religious experience," this is subjective, not objective, and is properly a branch, not of theology, but of psychology—or should it be pathology? Anyhow, it reveals essentially not the reason why there is a God, but why there are still God-fearing people. The Bible? The only thing definitely authentic about it is that it is not authentic! The Creeds? The only true statement that they contain is that they are veritably "incomprehensible"! The "Thirty-nine Articles"? Are there 39 clergymen extant who agree with them—or even agree as to what they really do mean?

Theology is then, not dying: like the "old soldier" of the old song, it is simply "fading away"! More and more, God conforms to that forceful simile of his most truthful apologist: of St. Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 200), who bade his pupils concentrate their minds on a pin-point to the exclusion of all else—and then to withdraw the pin! The result equals God: omnipresent Nothing!

We are sorry for the theologians. And since the thesis necessarily conditions the antithesis, we are sorry for our-

selves also! Like Alexander, we have no worlds left to conquer.

Our more fortunate predecessors had to deal with a robust and forthright Deity, who could reply to their arguments with—at least—thunderbolts, if not with valid counter-arguments. But we, miserable sinners that we are, have not even a shadow of a shade to clutch at. Vainly we plunge our hands into the infinite inane. There is no God, and soon there will be no Christ. Theology is in articulo mortis. Thou hast vanished, O Galilean!

F. A. RIDLEY.

EARTH AND MAN

Dust of my dust—last and supremest race

Of races lifting on from age to age—

This conscious creature's awful pilgrimage
Maddens the eyes of space.

Oh build upon his bones a better thing;

And yet a link to life's eternal chain;

Depose humanity, or once again

Thy primal silence fling.

Heed my long agonies, and let them cease

Lighten the horror of my endless woe;

From off this bleeding bosom bid him go
And give thy planet peace.

But if thou shalt ordain we never part,

Then, Mother, pity me by pitying him;

Despatch thy swiftest, gold-winged seraphim
With Reason to his heart.

Send them and this thy gift; let Reason reign,

So that a reconciliation come

Between the children and their ancient home,
Ere darkness fall again.

—EDEN PHILLPOTTS, "Song of a Weary World."

WHENCE DISEASE?

"So careful of the type?" but no.

From scarped cliff, and quarried stone

She cries, "A thousand types are gone:

I care for nothing, all shall go."

WITH all due deference to the poet, Tennyson, nature may be supremely indifferent, but she has left sufficient evidence on scarped cliff and quarried stone to enable us to remodel the past.

Just as she has left representative men of every age, sometimes colonies of them—fully 90 per cent. of my neighbours in this Lancashire village belong to the Stone Age!

Our only hope of progress, says Emerson, lies in our ability to draw men from the crowd.

And what a queer crowd!—made up, says Jane Austen, of "Persons of strong, natural, sterling insignificance"!

Institutions linger because these types, making more or less use of them, abound.

Many of this crowd, otherwise well educated, intelligent men—lawyers, architects, doctors, accountants, etc.—acquaintances of the writer, like men of ancient days, think that we are surrounded by evil spirits.

Recently, I was astounded to hear an intelligent man, apologising for the growth of his whiskers, observe that he had discontinued shaving himself because of an evil spirit tempting him to cut his throat. This from a capable artist, with a well selected library of, say, 2,000 volumes. An omnivorous reader, but a poor thinker.

Amongst the poorer educated class, ghosts, demons, witchcraft, etc., still find believers.

Let us beware of overvaluing our social state. Mentally, we are but at cock-crow and the morning star!

The ancients believed that demons in their day were disease carriers—germs.

"The belief prevailing through the low culture," says Tylor, "that the diseases which vex mankind are brought by individual personal spirits, is one which has produced striking examples of mythic development."—"Primitive Culture," Vol. I, ch. 8.)

"Nearer Central Asia, in the north-east corner of India, among the Bodo and Dhimal, the professional exorcist has to find out what deity has entered into the patient's body

to punish him for some impiety by an attack of illness."—(Ibid., Vol. I., ch. 4.)

"Disease being accounted for by attack of spirits, it naturally follows that to get rid of these spirits is the proper means of cure."—(Ibid., Vol. II., ch. 14.)

The Hebrews imputed their diseases to evil spirits, or to the avenging hand of God.

But from whatever source disease came, it was always wisdom to apply firstly to God for a cure. Failure to do this met with severe punishment. (See 2 Chron. xvi. 12.)

The Hebrews, therefore, accepted a physician as a last resource. Pray unto the Lord and he will make thee whole. If he does not—then give peace to the physician, for the Lord created him, let him not go, for thou hast need of him. For they also pray. (Eccles. xxxviii. 1-15.)

Leprosies were diseases sent out by God under all sorts of pretexts, e.g.:—

Miriam for a displeasing discourse (Num. xii. 10), Gehazi for his avarice (2 Kings v. 27), and King Uzziah for his presumption (2 Chron. xxvi. 21).

In the New Testament the cause of many diseases are attributed to devils, no cure of these diseases being possible until the devils were cast out.

Paul ascribed his infirmities to an evil angel (2 Cor. xii. 7)—a thorn in the flesh—a messenger of Satan.

All Christian diseases were due to the vengeance of God, or demons.

Diseases, in short, were never attributed to natural causes until a few centuries ago.

The answer to our question, "Whence disease?" admits of many modern answers: They come direct from God; they are caused by demoniacal possession—are ancient ones but given in a more modern setting. A very interesting one is "that every physical disease has a mental counterpart, and that mental healing should be sought for, and not physical healing."

How little difference a few thousand years make in evolution!

The individual personal spirits, that brought diseases in the low culture, have now become the mental counterparts of physical disease!

Before the physical basis of mind is universally accepted, many moons must wax or wane!

But however slowly we move, it cannot be said 'tis because of obstacles in our path. Obstacles are blessings!

They reveal our hidden strength. Dictators and fanatics all have their uses and redeeming features. How they dovetail, fit into the scheme of things not always visible to their generation.

Many men who have made important contributions to progress are now never spoken of, e.g. Dr. Culpeper (1616-1654), a famous physician and astrologer. He was a great, but not bigoted, Herbalist. A man who had "learned all manner of learning at Cambridge University" and was enabled by it to assure us that:—

"An egg laid on a Thursday had more virtue in it than others had."

"That a piece of raw beef should be applied to the forehead of persons who have lost their voices."

"That the burial of elder leaves would send away warts."

"That short memories were to be lengthened by "anointing your temples where the arteries pass, once a month, with the gall of a partridge—it mightily strengthens the memory—or try rubbing the soles of your feet with mustard; this will help your memory and quicken your motion, too."

Culpeper, blind to his own faults, criticised what seemed to him the pretentious remedies of the general practitioner.

But whether right or wrong, one good thing he did was to write of all the ills that flesh is heir to in the vernacular. This was a fresh step to take and a most important, and this unveiling of mysteries brought down upon him the hostile criticism of the medical fraternity, whose professional dignity he had lessened considerably. He wrote of their "Errors in Chyrurgery"; confronted them with consultations with Dr. Reason and Dr. Experience, whereby people could judge for themselves of the causes and cures of their complaints, and be independent of the physicians' aid; forestalled them with Dr. Diet's directory, by which people could keep themselves in health. In short, he tried to show how every man could be his own doctor.

Dr. Providence, he thought, had placed in every country remedies for the diseases found in that country. It was ridiculous to think that the lives of Christians should hang upon the courtesy of the heathen.

Throughout his practice, planetary influence played a great part.

But withal he was a born Freethinker.

He died when 38 years of age. Had he lived longer, he gives one every reason to believe that he would have put his own house in order by ridding himself of Occult influences.

We make haste slowly!

While crowds were flocking to Spitalfields, seeking this strange man's advice, Pepys and Evelyn were busy writing their diaries, Sir Peter Lely was painting his wonderful portraits of Court ladies, Grinling Gibbons was teaching us to bow to his marvellous wood carvings, Inigo Jones was building Whitehall and Rubens was painting the ceiling of its banqueting hall.

But, living in a free atmosphere, unhampered by religion and superstition, the physician, like the above, would also have given a brilliant account of himself.

GEORGE WALLACE.

FAITH CREATES MIRACLES

Miracles come when they are needed. They come not of fraud, but they come of an impassioned credulity which creates what it is determined to find. Given an enthusiastic desire that God should miraculously manifest himself, the religious imagination is never at a loss for facts to prove that he has done so; and in proportion to the magnitude of the interests at stake is the scale of the miraculous interposition.—J. A. FROUDE.

OBITUARY

ERNEST WILLIAM HARRISON

With deep regret we announce the death of Ernest William Harrison, only son of Mr. R. B. Harrison, a well-known member of the N.S.S. and supporter of the movement over many years. A sufferer for a number of years, death took place on December 26 in his 48th year. He was a gifted musician, and his 'cello playing gave pleasure to many large audiences. Music was his life, and the quality of his playing was never affected by his ill-health. To his father, the surviving parent, and members of the family we extend sincere sympathy in their loss. The remains were cremated at Mortlake Crematorium on Wednesday, December 31, where, before relatives and friends, a Secular Service was conducted by R. H. Rosetti.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

Outdoor

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 12-0, Mr. L. EBBURY.

Indoor

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11-0, Rt. Hon. Lord SNELL, C.B.E., "The Outlook for the New Year."

West London Branch N.S.S. (57, Warrington Crescent, W.9—near Warwick Avenue Tube Station): 3-0 p.m., Miss E. MILLARD, "Educational Religion in Our Schools."

South London Branch N.S.S. (Labour Party Hall, 95, Grove Vale, East Dulwich—opposite Grove Vale L.C.C. School): 3-0 p.m., Mr. L. EBBURY, a Lecture.

COUNTRY

Indoor

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (P.P.U. Rooms, 112, Morley Street): 7-0, a Lecture.

Glasgow Branch N.S.S. (25, Hillfoot Street, off Duke Street): 3-0, Mr. T. L. SMITH, "The Story of Japan."

Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate): 3-0, Mr. R. H. ROSETTI, "What We Pay for the Religion We Get."

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