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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

(Continued from page 75.)

Woman and Christianity

IN attempting to understand what real Christianity is like we have reached a stage where a digression may be serviceable. We may admit that God's intentions were admirable. He had intended everything to run according to plan. But he overlooked two things—Satan and Eve. Christian theology has it that man was made for the glory of God, but up to date Satan appears to have gained most. Topsy's question, “Why doesn't God kill the devil?” has never been answered. We are left wondering. It may have been part of God's plan that woman should develop into what Christian theology said she was—a wicked, dangerous creature—in order for the second part of God's plan of salvation to work. The sociologist will give plenty of explanations accounting for what is called the subjection of woman, but with these we are not concerned. What we are concerned with is to point out the Christian attitude towards woman, and also to observe that this attitude was taken up by Christian leaders and teachers as a direct consequence of the disobedience of “our first parents.”

It should, however, be noted that there is no convincing evidence that primitive peoples do look upon woman as being inferior to man. Their attitude is rather that women are *different* from men, and this difference, which leads to fear, is connected with her sexual functions and child-bearing. (On this we may have something to say later.) Current literature on this point is now plentiful and authoritative.

The Christian Church builds, historically, on the Biblical account of the fall of man and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

This series of notes is in reply to a question: “What is Christianity?” There are so many forms of Christianity, we declined the task of answering. But Christianity is an historic religion based upon the Bible. The clergy are crying: “Back to the Bible.” We take them at their word, and give the essentials of Christianity as presented in the Bible.

It was because Eve tempted Adam that the whole scheme of creation was upset. When God questions Adam, his excuse is it is “the woman thou gavest me.” One of the greatest of Christian writers, Tertullian, addressed woman in this way:—

“Do you not know that each one of you is an Eve? . . . You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of the forbidden tree; you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, Man.”

There is more of this, all of the same texture.

This view of woman runs right through the Old and the New Testaments, and right through Christian history until the present day. In the Bible (Exodus xx. 1, 7, 8) the parents have the Divine sanction to sell their daughters either as brides or slaves. In none of the Jewish religious ceremonies does woman play an equal part with man. Such a phrase as “The congregation of the Children of Israel” refers to man only. The old Jewish law prohibits women, among other things, from giving evidence in a court of law. Man owns the woman very much as he owns cattle. When Shakespeare makes Petruchio say:—

“She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
My household stuff, my field, my barn,
My horse, my ox, my anything,”

he is exhibiting the Old and New Testament estimation of the social position of woman.

The New Testament shows no improvement on the Old. Jesus took twelve disciples, but not one of them was a woman. St. Paul says that man was not created for woman; woman was created for man. They, he says, “are commanded to keep under obedience.” Woman was to keep silent in the Church and to obey her husband in all things.

With the earliest Christian leaders, the more they loved Jesus the more they hated women—at least in theory.

St. Chrysostom says that “woman is a necessary evil, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill.” Gregory Thaumaturgus said “A person may find one chaste among a thousand men, but among women never.”

One could fill many pages with this kind of vituperation of women by the leading Christian writers in the earlier centuries. At the Council of Macon the question was actually discussed whether woman could be regarded as a human being. The thesis for discussion ran as follows:—

“Nature, which ever aims at perfection, would always produce men, and that when a woman is born, it is, as it were, by mistake and an error of nature, as when anyone is born blind and lame, or with any other natural defect, or like the fruit of some trees which never ripen. Thus a woman is an animal produced by accident.”

An Act of Henry VIII. prohibited women reading the New Testament, and it was not until the time of Charles II. that the law was repealed which sanctioned a husband beating his wife provided the stick did not exceed a given thickness. One modern authority on the position of women in antiquity, the Rev. Principal Donaldson, summed up the influence of Christianity on women thus:—

"Man is a male and woman is a female, and this distinction exists in nature for the benefit of the race. What the early Christians did was to strike the male out of the definition of man and human out of the definition of woman."

In the sixteenth century, John Knox, in his famous "First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women," says:—

"By the order of nature, by the malediction and curse pronounced against woman by the mouth of St. Paul . . . God hath rejected woman from rule, empire and authority over man. . . . From all women, whether married or unmarried, is all authority taken. . . . For women to office in the State is traitorous and rebellious against God."

Luther's opinion was little improvement on that of Knox. It was as coarse as that of St. Paul—"It is better for a man to marry than to burn. A woman's function was to breed children, to attend to the house and to obey her husband in all things." Even John Milton puts into the mouth of Eve, addressing Adam:—

"God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise."

We are not writing a history of the relations of Christian superstition to the position of woman, merely indicating the influence Christian belief had in determining her social position. And whatever other causes may have operated—and in social and political life important influences are seldom single—the fact remains that in all the Christian Churches the equality of men and women as human beings was strongly denied. One of the leaders in America of the claim for the social equality of the sexes was Mrs. M. J. Gage, and in her "Woman, Church and State" she has marshalled evidence marking the nation-wide opposition to the agitation for the freedom of women. One of her strongest opponents was the Rev. W. V. Tunstall, and he insisted that woman was under a curse, and that that curse had never been revoked. He wound up by saying that

"The Bible is addressed to man and not to woman. Man comes through Jesus, and woman comes to Jesus through man. Every privilege she enjoys she receives through her husband, for God has declared that woman shall not rule man but be subject to him."

And another famous woman worker sums up her experience by saying that

"The most bitter, outspoken enemies of woman are found among clergymen and bishops of the Protestant religion."

Readers must not permit this passage to cancel the fact that the Roman Church has never admitted the "rights of women" except to take a part in the subordinate work of the Churches.

—In this country the names of men and women who worked for the social equality of the sexes were over-

whelmingly those of "unbelievers." Lloyd Garrison, on one of his visits to England to help the anti-slavery crusade in the United States, had to fight Christian opposition arising from the fact that he had women speakers on his platform.

Let us also face the fact that until very recently there was not a single church in this country that would permit a woman preacher in the pulpit. For more than half a century there has been a struggle to permit the full rights of women as equal with man. That has not yet been achieved, although no Church has made greater use of women in subordinate capacities.

Just after the last world war began (1914) an absurd "National Mission of Repentance and Hope" was launched by the established Church. In this Mission some women proposed taking a hand. The clergy were willing, but the women wished to preach. That was too much. The Bishops of London and Chelmsford suggested they should preach from the pulpit steps. The pulpit was sacred to man. It was the savage spirit of taboo in operation. In fact, a large body of clergymen threatened to have nothing to do with the movement if women were permitted to preach anywhere in the church. The English Church Union bawled its loudest against such an innovation, dead against the example of Jesus, who had no woman among his preachers, and St. Paul, who distinctly forbade women to speak in Church. A whole page of "The Times" newspaper for August 9, 1916, published the following, signed by clergy of the Diocese of London:—

"We believe that to grant permission to women to preach in our churches is contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the mind and general practice of the whole Catholic Church. Still more, we believe that such permission will be an encouragement to those women who publicly claim their right to be appointed to the priesthood and episcopate of the Church, which claim is heretical."

Consider just another handful of facts. It took over sixty years of hard fighting for woman to have the right to vote, and in the end the Government gave her the vote because of the help she had given during the first world war. It took forty years' struggle to get the Criminal Law Amendment Act into force. It took thirty years to pass the Married Woman's Property Act (1882). It took twenty years' fighting to enable women to enter the medical profession.

We have stepped aside from our main theme to outline a very lengthy story, and for the purpose of illustrating the power of an established superstition. For whatever other forces may have been at work, they were all buttressed by Christian prejudice. God had placed a curse on woman, for she was the cause of the fall of man. And wherever the Christian Church existed the social and religious inferiority of woman was proclaimed. And two things must be borne in mind. What a Christian majority would not permit—the political equality of woman—was grudgingly granted because of the help she gave in the war of 1914-18. In a single day the non-religious Soviet Government brushed away the social and political differences. And our praise of Russian women has been loud and frequent.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued.)

THE REMINISCENCES OF 'RONALD STORRS

SIR RONALD STORR'S "Orientations" reviews his official life as an adviser and administrator in British mandated and protected territory overseas. This is a work of standard value which has enjoyed an extensive sale. Originally published in 1937 (Nicholson and Watson; 21s.) a cheaper edition at 10s. 6d. is about to appear.

After serving his apprenticeship as a public official under Cromer, Eldon Gorst and Kitchener successively, in Egypt, Storrs was subsequently appointed Governor of Jerusalem. Later, he presided over the Cypriots, whose peculiar characteristics he portrays from the standpoint of a sympathetic and humane observer who, while fully alive to the mistakes and omissions of British administration in Cyprus, is also aware of the malpractices, sectarian rivalry and passion for priority, displayed by so many Cypriots themselves.

In Jerusalem, as in Cyprus, although economic factors played their part, the outstanding cause of turmoil and trouble was religious and racial animosity. For while the moderate-minded were inclined to compose their quarrels with those of a different cult, the obstinately orthodox proved oblivious to reason.

The period embraced by Storrs includes the First World War, and his earlier Palestine experiences coincide with Allenby's military triumphs and the stirring adventures of that very extraordinary man, Lawrence of Arabia. Storrs devotes an informative and illuminating chapter to the author of "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," with whom he was personally acquainted. The son of an Anglican dignitary, our author unobtrusively reveals a wide knowledge of the masters of modern letters, including Meredith, Swinburne and Gibbon, while he bends with reverence before the immortal writers of the ancient pagan world.

With his appointment as Military Governor of Jerusalem, Storrs eagerly entered upon his new duties. But he was soon confronted with difficulties and discouragements rarely realised by hasty and ill-informed critics of Colonial administration. When the Turks retreated from Jerusalem they are said to have carried away practically everything that was likely to be useful to the civilian population. This is almost inevitable in war, and the scarcity of food constituted a serious problem. General Allenby, however, on being informed, dispatched lorry loads of grain without delay and, despite hoarding and the cornering of small coinage, the city was able to function. But its condition was filthy and an epidemic of typhus was feared. The sale of old clothes and mattresses was forbidden to lessen the risks of infection, and the sanitary officers had no sinecure. Beggars abounded, "and the eye, the ear and the nose were violently assaulted at every corner."

Then came constant disputes concerning the ownership of furniture and fittings belonging to the conflicting sectarian bodies, for during their occupation the Turks and Germans had made over to their favoured cult whatever it fancied, and as much of this property had changed hands, the task of restoring it to its rightful possessors was no easy one. As Storrs asks: "When an excited friar appeared, claiming ten bedsteads, a dozen wardrobes and scores of knives, forks and spoons scattered all over the city, and none of them marked, who could pronounce what was whose?"

Again, to intensify the agony, 2,000 Armenian refugees invaded the Holy City. But worse remained in store, as a later entry indicates, when "7,000 refugees—Armenian, Syrian, Latin, Orthodox, Protestant and Moslem—were flung on my hands this week." But the American Red Cross, the Syrian and Palestine Relief Fund, with other humanitarian organisations, rendered invaluable assistance, even if the cloven hoof of religious intolerance obtruded itself when Catholic susceptibilities found expression.

Allenby's first proclamation guaranteed equal rights to the three religions represented in Jerusalem, and this undertaking was faithfully observed by the civil authorities. It is notorious that under Ottoman rule the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was guarded by a Moslem sentry, whose duty was to prevent broils and bloodshed when rival Christians gathered there. With the British occupation, which was nominally Christian, strong recommendations, states Sir Ronald, "were made to me by undenominational Christians that this Moslem ward over the holiest place in Christendom was an outrage which no Christian Governor should tolerate. Few of these critics have ever entered the Holy Sepulchre (or indeed any other church): none had paused to consider what manner of Christian would have proved an acceptable candidate for the post. The Orthodox Community would never have tolerated a Roman Catholic; nor a Roman an Orthodox or an Anglican. Neither could have endured a Protestant, assuming that any Protestant would have consented to act. The Shaikh [Moslem guardian] did his work well, maintaining the *status quo* and public order as long as he could, and on occasions calling in the police. I will go so far as to say that he was the one functionary—military, civil or religious—from High Commissioner to municipal scavenger, against whom throughout my nine years in Jerusalem, I never heard a complaint."

The spring festival of Easter, so calm in most Christian lands, is a time of intensified turmoil in Jerusalem. In pre-Christian centuries the Jews celebrated their Passover at this season. The two festivals caused so much commotion that, when under Arabian rule, the illustrious Saladin instituted the Feast of the Prophet Moses to synchronise with the celebrations of the Christians and Jews. These exciting observances not only attracted the pious from far and near, but brought into prominence an array of malcontents as well as the dregs of the neighbouring population.

Nor was the disorder special to Easter, for Christmas served also to provoke scandalous exhibitions of pious malevolence. For Storrs testifies that: "The Greeks and Armenians, whose respective Epiphany and Christmas fall on the same day, came to blows in the Grotto of the Nativity, Bethlehem, and had to be parted by the special guards (chosen from experts at these disgraceful brawls) that I had posted there."

It was, however, at the celebration of the Orthodox Greek Holy Fire observance that excitement became most frenzied. This curious ritual, we gather, is apt to occasion "drunkenness, savagery and murder, whose climax of horrible slaughter is recounted in Curzon's 'Monasteries of the Levant.'" So embittered is the hatred of Greeks and Armenians towards each other that even if their pastors were to counsel moderation—which they are usually disinclined to do—they would be stigmatised as traitors by their flocks.

In an official memorandum, Storrs submitted to General Headquarters the precautions he designed to adopt in order to prevent theological homicide. As Easter drew near the passions of the Orthodox rose to fever heat and the number of troops deemed necessary by the Turkish authorities to preserve peace during Lent in the Holy Sepulchre is stated to have been a minimum of "50 men; whilst for the actual celebration of the Holy Fire at 7 p.m. on Easter Eve, no fewer than 600 troops have been employed." And, as at this time, turbulent Greek patriarchs had been deported, it was thought advisable to enlist the services of the Archbishop of the Orthodox Church of Mount Sinai. Fortunately the ceremony on this occasion was free from murder and, records Storrs, "the few (but fairly hard) blows aimed by the Armenians at the Archbishop, as he passed in glittering tiara from the Tomb to the Golgotha Chamber, were intercepted by my outstretched arm."

Under Ronald Storrs' administration Jerusalem's water supply—a very urgent requirement—was assured and several other important improvements were carried out. His impressions of

people he met in the Holy City were extensive and peculiar, and Storrs was both edified and amused by the curious views they expressed. Tourists soon succumbed to its supposed sanctity or, on the other hand, expressed their keen disappointment, while the *Intelligentsia* usually regarded it as a mere relic of the past. Some of Storrs's correspondents "had not heard there was such a place." Others supposed Jerusalem a city mentioned in the Bible. "I was occasionally asked," Storrs avers, "whether the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was A.D. or B.C. A baronet asked me to show him the way to the Villa Rose, which he had been told he really ought to see before leaving. It appeared to be the approach to the Via Dolorosa. Most visitors fell into one or two categories—the ecstatic, who prostrated at every site, even when two or more were credited with the same event, and the sceptical, who explained away evidence and tradition which they would have accepted implicitly for Tiberius or Shakespeare."

Other visitors were completely disillusioned by the bad roads, shabby hotels and the Sacred City's odours. Some appealed for mementoes of Jerusalem, and these supplicants wrote from all parts of the globe, while local solicitations were not wanting. An orthodox Arab petitioned the newly-appointed Governor for a favour and concluded his letter as follows: "I do beseech Your Excellency to grant my request for the sake of J. Christ, Esq., a gentleman whom Your Honour so closely resembles."

Storrs's painstaking analysis of the causes of the inveterate antagonism between the Christian and Moslem Arabs and the Zionists was evidently inspired by a firm determination to ascertain and publish the truth. As an administrator, the Governor strove to act impartially, with the result that he was reviled by both belligerents, and his chapter on this thorny theme should be consulted by those interested. Invited to breakfast in Downing Street with the then Premier, Lloyd George, he was sternly told that complaints had arrived from both sides. "I answered," states Storrs, "that this was all too probable, imagining for a moment that this was leading up to my resignation. 'Well,' he said, 'if either one side stops complaining you will be dismissed.'" T. F. PALMER.

RICHARD CARLILE (1790—1843)

I.

A HUNDRED years ago died one of the most courageous fighters for freedom of thought and speech, and freedom of the Press, this country has ever produced. We have had many such, of course, but there is something unique in the lion-hearted Richard Carlile and his brave stand against a bigoted and intolerant government, a stand resulting in the ultimate victory of one man against the combined forces of reaction, the liberation of thought, and the beginning of almost a new era in this country.

One or two excellent articles on him and his work have appeared in our daily Press, and the B.B.C. broadcasted an address on the European Service—though why they did not do so on the Home or Forces programme is a mystery which no doubt they could explain. A notice will be found of Carlile in most encyclopædias, though he appears not to have received the attention he should have had in some of our histories.

Richard Carlile was born in Ashburton, Devonshire, on December 8, 1790. His father seems to have been rather erratic—a shoemaker, exciseman, schoolmaster and soldier, dying at the age of 34 and leaving his widow and three small children. A small business assisted the mother at first, but by the time Richard was ten, sickness and poverty assailed the family, and soon he was apprenticed to a tinman whom he served for over seven years. He hated the work and the long hours, but though he wanted to earn his living by the pen he found this at the time impossible and was obliged to continue his work as a

tinman. He married at 23; Mrs. Carlile being 30—and perhaps it was this disparity in their ages, together with intellectual differences, which led to their separation 20 years later. Both Mrs. Carlile and his sister were opposed to many of Richard's anti-religious ideas, though, to their credit let it be said, they did not hesitate a moment to help him and even share his imprisonment. "They behaved with a bravery worthy of their name," declared George Jacob Holyoake in his "Life of Carlile." "They resolutely refused to compromise—the sister, the brother, the wife—at all risks to themselves. None of his family, save a first cousin, countenanced his proceedings; he stood alone on his own hearth, as he stood often alone in the world."

It was when he was 26 years of age that Richard Carlile began his fight for a free Press by helping Thomas Wooler to sell the notorious "Black Dwarf"—a journal which deserves an article to itself in these columns. Carlile felt that in politics, publishers and writers were too timid, and he wished to show them an example of the kind of boldness he had in mind. Later in life he admitted that he had made a mistake in taking it for granted that such a lead would bring the people on to his side. "I had not calculated," he said, "that, after having conquered the authorities by self-sacrifice, the greater difficulty would remain of having to conquer the ignorance and vice of the people by still more painful sacrifices."

However, he made a start by reprinting "Wat Tyler," Robert Southey's seditious poem which the poet had written in youthful enthusiasm and which he now wanted to suppress. It is a tribute to the people who bought it that no fewer than 25,000 copies were sold in 1817. The drawn-out wars with France and other countries had hit the people of England hard, and they bitterly resented their awful poverty and long hours of labour (when it could be got), and which resulted in what we now call the "Hungry Thirties." The times were ripe for sedition and revolution, and the authorities used every means to keep the people down. "Wat Tyler" was an incitement to revolt—as the man himself had been.

Carlile also reprinted William Hone's famous "Parodies," which had been suppressed. Hone was a bit of a dare-devil in his young days—he turned Christian later—and these parodies were certainly blasphemous, if there is really such a thing as blasphemy. He was tried and acquitted, and a public subscription procured him £3,000. Carlile, however, got 18 weeks' imprisonment *without trial*—this should be noted—and was only released when Hone was acquitted. And he got no public subscription.

In the meantime, Carlile became acquainted with the work of Thomas Paine, and undaunted by the fate of the previous publishers of that great Freethinker, he decided to bring out not only the "Age of Reason" but also other heretical works like Palmer's "Principles of Nature," "Watson Refuted," "Good Sense" and many others.

Here it may be as well to remind ourselves that Williams, who published the first and second part of the "Age of Reason" in 1797, got twelve months for doing so. D. I. Eaton, who published the third part in 1812, got 18 months and the pillory, and he only escaped another sentence for publishing "Ecce Homo" by dying. The author of that work, a Mr. Houston, got two years and was fined £200 in addition. It was, of course, a convinced belief in that religion of love, Christianity, which prompted these savage sentences, particularly those parts which insisted on our loving each other, and doing good to those that harm us.

With these endearing precedents to go by, the Government was soon on the track of Carlile, and by 1819 he had six indictments to face. For publishing Paine's "Theological Works" he got two years in gaol and a fine of £1,000; for publishing the "Principles of Nature," one year in gaol and a fine of £500; and he had also to find securities for life for his future good behaviour, £1,000 from himself and two others for £100 each.

In addition, the Sheriff took possession of his shop, stock, house and furniture—though Carlile managed somehow to bring out the "Age of Reason" in twopenny parts, and thus sold more copies in a month than were previously sold in a year. It is also interesting to note, so steadfastly courageous was he, that Carlile insisted on reading out the complete work at his trial as part of his defence.

With Mrs. Carlile now at the helm, an attempt was made to carry on; but both she and his sister were arrested, tried, fined and imprisoned, and they were followed by a number of Carlile's shopmen, all of whom were sentenced to serve terms of imprisonment ranging from six months to two years.

Not being able to pay the fines, and getting little from the seizure of the house, shop and stock, the Government forced Richard to remain another three years in prison, making six years in all. Mrs. Carlile served two years, as did his sister. But his shopmen carried on, and another batch (including John Clarke, the author of "A Critical Review of Jesus Christ," one of the most bitter attacks on Jesus ever written) were also made to serve savage sentences.

But the sale of the "blasphemous" publications went on, and finally the Cabinet had to confess itself beaten, and no more people from his shop were arrested.

It was a glorious victory for the right of free publication and free speech—but won only at the expense of serving over 50 years in prison, the time spent by Carlile and his brave band of followers.

H. CUTNER.

"FOUNDATION OF THE FAITH—YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY"

RECENTLY, a book with the above title was published in Welsh under the auspices of the Students' Christian Movement. The book consists of nine articles—eight by ministers and one by a professor in a theological college.

It is explained in the foreword that the book is intended primarily for use in the study circles of the Students' Christian Movement in university and training colleges. The Annual Report of the S.C.M. for 1941 is quoted to the effect "that many students of the colleges have no clear idea of what Christianity is. To them, living a Christian life is synonymous with 'living a good life.' Words like forgiveness, mercy, justification, have lost their Biblical meaning for them. . . . And in their perplexity they often ask for assistance to understand the Christian faith." I wonder if "many" of them do. If that quotation gives the correct position it shows a pretty serious state of affairs. If students who have had sufficient education to enable them to enter colleges are so ignorant of the tenets of the Faith, what can be the condition of those who have not had such educational opportunities?

For months past one could hardly open a weekly newspaper or periodical in Wales without seeing references to the need for more religious teaching in the day schools, and in the foreword to the above-mentioned book it is stated that one of the objects of the volume is "to endeavour to lead the readers back to the Bible and to help them to read it intelligently. We must, as religionists, in Wales acknowledge once more the authority of the Bible as the Word of God."

Very well; but what about the following sentences taken from the article contributed by the Rev. Professor Bleddyn Jones-Roberts, Aberystwyth, on "According to the Law of Moses"? "I know that it is not the intention of the Law, nor the Old Testament as a whole, to give a complete history of the people of Israel, but selections were made [how or by whom is not stated] from the store of the old stories of the nation of those events which provide a background for new light on, and new knowledge of, God. . . . Therefore, I feel no shame nor bashfulness

in reading the stories which are called unworthy—the stories about the cruelty of Cain, the drunkenness of Noah and the greed of Lot, and many similar things—although I wish to emphasise that these are stories which should not be placed in the hands of schoolchildren nor in the hands of irreligious people, particularly irreligious young people. They belong to very primitive strata, and their purpose is to explain some facts of importance in the history of the nation, and which were a part of their religious growth. I understand the stories about the call of Abraham, and the vicissitudes of his children, his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren in exactly the same way." It will be noted that the Rev. Professor Bleddyn Jones-Roberts does not mention Lot's daughters. Perhaps there are limits to his lack of bashfulness! Not only does he treat the calling of Abraham as a myth, but the stories about Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Esau and the whole twelve tribes of Israel are thrown overboard to lighten the old ship. I personally am rather sorry to part with Ishmael and Esau, who were rather decent fellows.

In the second part of the book there is an article dealing with modern conditions, bearing the heading "The End of an Epoch," by the Rev. Mansel John, B.A., Aberystwyth. In the course of the article he says: "Gradually, established religion, especially on the Continent, became subservient to Cæsar. . . . The Church frequently failed to inspire progress in social justice. She sought rather the support of the State, and she has had to suffer the consequences. She failed also to lead the nations towards mutual understanding and to yield their "sovereign rights" to the King for the sake of the family of nations. In consequence there arose the poisonous anti-religions of Fascism, Nazism and orthodox Communism. Whatever may be the manifest weaknesses and deception of these systems, they were utilised by God to punish sham-Christianity; and it is necessary to differentiate between criticising systematic religion and condemning God." "They were utilised by God!" I think that phrase touches bottom even in theological inanity.

THOS. OWEN.

ACID DROPS

WE don't know much about Henry Martin, save that he is Editor-in-Chief of the Press Association, but then there are quite a number of the newspaper world's great men who we do not know, and have little desire to know. But he is a curious "cuss" in his religious ideas—away back in the beginning at least of the nineteenth century, when the earth had hardly got used to going round the sun, and evolution was just beginning to make itself known to few but a handful of "cranky" scientists. If Mr. Martin had lived in those days he would have been a shining light in the religious world. Now he has to flicker as the editor-in-chief of the Press Association.

So, addressing the newspaper world, Mr. Martin says that "proprietors, managers and editors ought at once to reevaluate their personal responsibility to the millions of readers God has entrusted to their care. . . . The Peter Pans of journalism must grow up and realise that there is a widespread hunger for spiritual sustenance which it is the duty of the Press to satisfy." Further, "Proprietors and editors should give an unmistakable lead to their staff." If that is really Mr. Martin's idea of what a newspaper should be, a mere purveyor of a very narrow type of religion, we cannot congratulate the Press Association of its Editor-in-Chief. He would convert every writer into a Hot Gospeller, and leave all opposing opinions outside.

Our own opinion is that the first duty of a newspaper is to provide news—good reliable, honest news. There was a time when newspapers at least professed that to be their aim. Now most of them place large circulations first, and to get them will utilise whatever makes for that end. They are agents of men, not of gods, and are more interested in advertisers than in angels.

The newspaper has gained in power is undeniable. That the power exercised is due to plain speaking on important matters is very doubtful. And one of the greatest scandals of the Press of late years is precisely the feature that Mr. Martin eulogises—that of playing the part of Hot Gospellers—with its inevitable policy of boycotting any opinion that seriously criticises the great superstition of the ages. Our Press needs to cultivate greater honesty and courage. Not more religion.

Father Andrew, the Catholic member of The Anvil, may find himself in trouble with the Vatican if he plays about with God's Will as loosely as he did at a recent session of The Anvil. It has always been understood that everything that happened did so because it was God's Will, but now we have Father Andrew stating (with particular reference to the cruelties of war) that such things happen because man's will is in conflict with God's Will, and therefore God's Will cannot prevail. If humble Catholics perceive that man's will is able to rule out God's Will, the Holy Church might lose customers faster than it is doing, and eventually people might regard man's will as the only thing that matters—in which case Father Andrew and many others would have to look for a fresh job, or go to the Labour Exchange to "sign on." Perhaps it is as well (for the churches) that The Anvil has come to an end.

We had a sneaking admiration for the Catholic representative on the B.B.C. "Anvil" fake. He seems sincere, and, for a professional Christian advocate, tolerably honest—that is, within the limits of his creed. The "Anvil" had to deal with the question of "Were Adam and Eve historical persons?" Fr. Andrews said certainly they were, and Christians must take the whole chapter of Genesis. Well, if one can swallow the other parts of Genesis, there seems no justification for jibbing at Adam and Eve—and vice-versa. The Anglo-Catholics were quiet, ashamed to endorse and too timid openly to oppose. We have no doubt but that Miss Trevelyan and Canon Cockin would have liked to endorse what was said, but their congregations are a little different from that which the Roman Church has in hand. With both it is not a case of what is true, but how much will "my" congregation follow.

When it was announced that the Churches in this country were to have a Day of Prayer for Russia, the Roman Catholic Church in England announced that they had for some time been having a prayer for Russia every Sunday by the order of the Pope. We were surprised and we had a suspicion that there was a real "Christian truth" floating about, and a Christian truth is generally not far off from a lie. The prefix is enough to damn it. For with non-religious things truth is truth, and there's an end of it.

Our suspicion was not unjustifiable. For it turns out that it was the late Pope who ordered prayers to be said for Russia and the prayers had no regard for the war; they were instituted before war occurred, and the aim was to bring Russia back to Christianity. The prayer the Church was asked to join in was one for victory in this war. If a lie is an intention to deceive, we can easily and properly find a correct descriptive term for the statement made. The Papacy, and the leaders of Roman Catholicism all over the world, are in fear of Russia growing in influence, not merely for their war-like feats, but also because they have lifted the people of Russia so far above the level of "Holy Russia."

Some years ago one of our contributors suggested that the whole of the religious propaganda of the B.B.C. was engineered from Germany in order to lower the status of England in the eyes of educated people in other countries. We do not endorse this because we do not think that foolishness and cunning is more prevalent here than it is elsewhere. Still, the suggestion has its attractive side.

The Bishop of Berlin is reported in Catholic papers as saying that the life of the innocent individual, be it an unborn child or an old person, is sacred; the innocent shall not be punished with, or in place of, the guilty. Good teaching, but the Bishop ought to give up his job. For it is one of the fundamental teachings of

every branch of the Christian Church, Catholic or Protestant, that the whole human race had to suffer, by the edict of God, for the sin of "our first parents." There is of course nothing new in professing Christians rising superior to their creed. They would be banished from civilised society if they did not. Still, the text "As in Adam all men die so in Christ shall all be made alive," remains with all its ugly inferences.

Once upon a time Christians were logical enough to find an incarnation of spirits in many people—and more than one kind of spirit. The devil took up his lodging place in a man. Readers of the New Testament will remember that Jesus detected several, and in one case bargained with the devils that if they came out of the man they could take up their residence in some pigs; and it was so, and the pigs ran down into the sea and were drowned. It may be noted that the pigs did not belong to Jesus. Nowadays if that were done the performer would have been open to an action at law. Even to-day the process of throwing out evil spirits exists with the Roman Church. We would like to observe the devil when he came out.

From the "Bath Chronicle and Herald" we learn that Councillor Clement visited a school where he listened to a religious service conducted by "small children." He was greatly impressed, and he felt that religion was to them "a live and real thing." We do not doubt it for a moment. Neither are we in doubt as to the calibre of the Councillor's intelligence. We suggest to him that he widens his experience by getting a class of "small children" to go through some of Andersen's fairy tales and see what "a live and real thing" the characters are to them. A class of small children would take a natural interest in both. The pity of it is when adults are equally impressed. Of course, "adult" is used with reference to age alone.

We have a more elaborate piece of information coming from Earl Grey, presented in "The Western Mail" of February 8. He finds it very curious that while men entering the army are asked to state their religion, children entering school are not allowed to express a preference for religion. Children enter school at five years of age, and quite clearly they have neither a knowledge of or a preference for religion. It is the parents who inflict their opinions on the child. The Councillor and the Earl should work well together.

Earl Grey thinks that to withhold the knowledge of Jesus and his teaching is to rob them of a "great strategic reserve." But to place the miracle-working Jesus before children as sober history, and to forbid their questioning the truth of what is before them, is to take advantage of the child and rob it of the opportunity of forming an independence of mind upon which the value of its character in after life will depend. And we may note that Earl Grey wants even the ethical teaching—that considerably dishonest teachers and parsons drag out of the New Testament—to be placed before children, not because that teaching "is beautiful, or because it seems to pay, but because Christ is the son of God." We rather pity the children that are brought up under the authority of Earl Grey.

Our Minister of Economic Warfare says that when the war ends the active criminals among the Germans will find no refuge on earth, "their only refuge will be in hell." Lord Selborne is a Christian, and therefore should be better acquainted with the destination of Hitler and company. Hell, if we are to trust the heads of the Christian Church, has a large number of very admirable characters, men and women, who have been remarkable for their courage, their ability and their high character. The message of the Bible is: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow," and surely the lesson of the thieves on the cross is that no matter how bad a man is belief in Jesus will save them at the last moment. And look at the characters that have gone to heaven—unless Christianity is a living lie. As a good Christian, Lord Selborne should say that probably Heaven will be the destination of the Nazi leaders. We are tough enough to say they deserve it. In hell they would run the danger of a boycott.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

- S. GORDON.—Articles received with thanks. But we are terribly overloaded with copy. Damn the war and all that caused it!
- O. HAY.—Letter has been handed to our business manager.
- C. MURDOCH.—Mr. Cohen hopes to visit Glasgow early in April. To circulating and advertising "The Freethinker": J. Isherwood, 3s.

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

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

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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

ON Sunday next (March 7) the Leicester Secular Society will celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the opening of the "Secular Hall." There will be a mixed programme, and Mr. Cohen has promised to deliver an address on "Rocks Ahead." Admission is free. The chair will be taken at three o'clock.

There were a fair number of notices of The Richard Carlile Centenary, several of which we noted last week. We have seen some more since, and we feel sure there are many we have not come across. If we may use a very vulgar phrase, the "snottiest" appeared in the "Times Literary Supplement" for February 13. The chief aim of this journal is to be quite respectable, to give far more praise than is usually deserved to religious productions, and to either damn with faint praise or ignore anything that attacks religious beliefs or is likely to discount established and more or less out-of-date institutions. The writer of the article before us dees admit the power of Carlile's propaganda, his determination not to be suppressed, and finishes with asserting his right to be called what Heine wished to be recognised, "a brave soldier in the liberation war of humanity." On the other hand, Carlile had "a rather vulgar swagger in his method of campaigning in keeping with the vulgarity of his dress," and he printed "Paine's 'Age of Reason' in his passion to take every opportunity of getting into trouble." In general, the whole tone of the article is to leave the reader who does not know Carlile with the idea that he was a rather coarse, offensive individual, who was brave, stubborn, but not of first-rate quality.

Those who have studied Carlile's publications and writings and have come, so to speak, to live with him—which is the only qualifying way of understanding such men—get a picture of a very different kind. To begin with, there was no "vulgarity" about his dress. He used the ordinary respectable dress of his day, and no one that we can remember ever charged him with foppiness. Perhaps it is an implied offence that we have no pictures of Carlile dressed in rags and brandishing a brandy bottle. Paine was less fortunate. To say that Carlile published the "Age of Reason" because he wished to take every opportunity of getting into trouble is so untrue that it is difficult not to think of it as a deliberate slander. The book was published as part of Carlile's announced resolve to publish any-

thing that the Government said should not be published. He published a work on Birth Control for the same reason that he issued the "Age of Reason," and knowing the class of rulers Britain had in the Carlilean days, his resolve was justifiable. It was very difficult in those days to do what was right, where human freedom was concerned, without getting into trouble.

Carlile was always a staunch Republican, as was Paine. And when one remembers that a man like Leigh Hunt was sent to prison for calling the filthy Prince Regent, afterwards George the Fourth, "A fat Adonis of forty" we can form some idea of what a man with Carlile's determination to oppose tyranny and intolerance, whenever it appeared, had to face.

Had Carlile really been a fop, had he really loved display, had he even the slightest tendency to come to terms with Governments which hated freedom of thought and speech, he might not have played the great part he did. Had he done what he did for liberty, but had also been fighting in the name of Jesus Christ, then we fancy the *Times Supplement* would have been less grudging in its unavoidable praise and more appreciative of one of the greatest characters of the nineteenth century. Englishmen owe much to Carlile, as they owe much to those who followed Carlile, but have been, and are, kept in ignorance of their indebtedness by self-interest and religious prejudice.

One of our readers asks whether there is in the Christian theology any encouragement of kindness to animals. We are bound to say nothing worth bothering about; and the proof of this is that only two or three generations ago it was found necessary, helped largely by Freethinkers such as the late H. S. Salt, that a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was formed. Such societies are not formed unless there is some need for their existence. In respect of kindness to animals, Christianity ranks rather low in the scale. The Christian teaching was that animals have no souls and no future life; and you have it on the word of leading Christians to-day that if man has no soul and there is no God, then there is no real basis for morality—and St. Paul asked contemptuously, "Doth God care for oxen?"

Of course, there has always been, ever since in those far-away days when animals were broken in to the conditions of human society, men and women who were fond of domesticated animals, and the Greek and Latin poets had something to say in favour of kindness to animals. In China kindness to animals is very ancient teaching. Kindness to animals is part of the teaching of Buddhism. In Mohammedanism kindness to animals is a part of their creed. The Old Testament—as the Jews were a pastoral people—said something in favour of kindness to animals—but not overmuch. It is when we come to the New Testament that we find a blank. We commend to our questioner "Christianity and Morals," by Professor Westermarck, published in 1939.

We offer a word of advice to our readers. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Russian Army has brought widespread praise of the Russian people. They are being hailed as the leading saviour of Europe against the threat of German Nazism. But let us note, and remember that the real significance of reborn Russia lies in the social rebirth of the Russian people. For this reason we advise all who are interested to make a filing cabinet that will preserve as many as possible of the tributes paid to Russia by prominent people in this country. They will be educative in themselves and also in noting the qualities and tributes paid to the Russia of to-day. We may return to the subject next week.

We give full marks to an educational scheme devised by Hilde Marchant. The outline of her plan covers two full pages of the "Daily Mirror" for February 8, and does not include religion either by definite statement or by implication. We cite one passage in her introduction:—

"It is not too much to say that anyone who sets up special schools open only to those of any particular class, is guilty

of an act malignant to the society in which he lives. Roman Catholic schools, Protestant schools, schools for the rich, and so on, are all sordid attacks on the nation's unity and social health."

We should like to see this backed by all trade union organisations, by all who claim to be interested in education, and all who wish to create a society in which equality is a real thing, while at the same time giving the greatest possible freedom to the exercise of ability in any and every direction. At present we are faced with a conspiracy to, so far as it is possible, turn out pupils who shall be as like-minded as it is possible to make them.

We are asked by one of our contributors, who is at present in the Forces, whether there are any Freethinkers in the Marlborough, Devizes, Swindon or Chippenham area with whom he could make friendly contact. We shall be pleased to help if friends in the area indicated will write us.

The Brains Trust business has made question-asking very popular, and if the B.B.C. could only be brought to deal with questions honestly and impartially, one could congratulate them on the feature they introduced. Many papers have opened a kind of question column—it was very popular some thirty years ago, before sensationalism took a front place. The Rev. Mr. W. H. Elliot, once a kind of pet of the B.B.C., replies to a questioner in the "Sunday Graphic." The question was:—

"You said in one of your answers that even if we pray for our boys, God can't protect them on the battlefield. Then what is the use of prayer?"

The Rev. Elliot replies that there are

"circumstances where I don't think God can save a boy from death. If he is within so many yards of a bursting shell, how can God save him?"

That is what is called "passing on the baby." Someone asks a question, and Mr. Elliot returns it with a "How can God do anything with a bursting shell?" Of course he can't. Neither could he do anything with a straight punch from the shoulder. In fact, God can only do what can be done without him, and therefore is not the slightest use to anyone. We wonder whether Mr. Elliot is a humorist? He is certainly funny—funnier than his congregation realises.

BERNARD SHAW AGAIN

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW might be described as the trumpet-most-major. He has blown it in strong blasts of self-praise almost all his life, and there was point in Israel Zangwill's remark that in days when so few men believed in any god at all, it was refreshing to find one believing so much in himself. It was to be expected, therefore, that the trumpet would be orchestrated by a number of biographers and critics—Holbrook Jackson, G. K. Chesterton, Joseph McCabe, Archibald Henderson, Frank Harris, etc. Now comes Mr. Hesketh Pearson with the best life of Shaw I have read. (It is published by William Collins at 21s.)

To readers of "The Freethinker" the interest will primarily be in Shaw's reactions to religious appeals. Making a rather dubious remark that "seldom do human beings inherit their main characteristics directly from their parents, and Shaw is probably the only famous man in history whose outstanding mental traits were clearly apparent in his father and mother," Mr. Pearson introduces us to the former, George Carr Shaw, evidently a puckish personality:—

"This sense of anti-climax, plenteously bequeathed to his son, was so much part of his nature that though a Protestant, he could not suppress it when discussing the Bible. 'The more sacred an idea or a situation was by convention,' wrote his son, 'the more irresistible was it to him as the jumping-off place for a plunge into laughter. Thus, when I scoffed at the Bible, he would instantly and quite sincerely rebuke me, telling me, with what little sternness was in his nature, that I should not speak so; that no educated man would make such a display of ignorance; that the Bible was universally recognised as a literary and historical masterpiece; and as

much more to the same effect as he could muster. But when he reached the point of feeling really impressive, a convulsion of internal chuckling would wrinkle up his eyes, and (I knowing all the time quite well what was coming) he would cap his eulogy by assuring me, with an air of perfect fairness, that even the worst enemy of religion could say no worse of the Bible than it was the damndest parcel of lies ever written."

If George Carr had lived to admire the antics of George Bernard he might have been far prouder than ever was Mr. Vincent Crummies of the Infant Phenomenon.

"I was both baptised and vaccinated," said a wit, "but neither of them took." This was so in the case of the former with Mr. Pearson's hero.

"Baby Shaw was christened by a clerical uncle; his godfather was too drunk to turn up at the ceremony, so the sexton was ordered to renounce the devil and all his works on the child's behalf. Going bail for the future G. B. S. might be regarded as about the riskiest undertaking in the history of the Established Church, but one baby looks very much like another and the sexton never wavered. The infant's godmother shouldered her responsibility in the same spirit. After giving him a Bible with a gilt clasp and edges, larger than those given to his sisters because his sex entitled him to a heavier book, just as it necessitated heavier boots, she practically dropped his acquaintance, only saw him about four times in the next twenty years, and never once alluded to the affair at the font."

Private prayer, Mr. Pearson, calls "the only outlet for his budding literary genius." "I cannot recall the words of the final form I adopted; but I remember that it was in three movements, like a sonata, and in the best Church of Ireland style. It ended with the Lord's Prayer; and I repeated it every night in bed. I had been warned by my nurse that warm prayers were no use, and that only kneeling by my bedside in the cold could I hope for a hearing; but I criticised this admonition unfavourably on various grounds, the real one being my preference for warmth and comfort." This advocacy of "cold prayers" was also heard by young Edwin Pugh as related in his delightful book, "With the Eyes of a Child." The idea was no more irrational than the one now prevailing that if, on certain appointed days, all Christians say it all together, and in sufficient numbers, the ear bear, will listen to pleas for victory.

Then there was, in the words of Frank Harris, "an irreligious Rabelaisian uncle, a ship's surgeon." He thought the raising of Lazarus was, as Chesterton put it, a "put up job." No doubt the uncle had been reading Renan. I recall a Methodist parson at my father's dinner table mentioning this horror but, of course, not using such a phrase. I resolved to read Renan in consequence.

His first outburst into print suggested that he suffered from the neglect of that errant godmother. It was occasioned by the visit to Dublin of Moody and Sankey (extracts from the latter's hymns are in the New Oxford Dictionary of Quotations!). "Shaw went to their performance . . . and wrote a letter printed in 'Public Opinion' on April 3, 1875, in which he attributed the success of the undertaking, 'not to a revival of religion, but to public curiosity, novelty and excitement.' The effect of the revival on individuals, he asserted, had 'a tendency to make them highly objectionable members of society.'"

Mr. Pearson, judging from his fascinating pages, is not so well informed of the later stages of his hero's career in the matter of religion. We are told nothing of how, in the first decade of this century, Shaw announced that he had found Christ—some kind of one—through the ministrations of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, whose tragedy one hopes will some day be written as thoroughly as that of Ramsay MacDonald by McNeill Weir. Encouraged by his attitude, the reverend gentleman induced Shaw in October,

1913, to address a huge audience at the City Temple on "Christian Economics," an anomaly of a title almost as bad as "Christian Electricity," which Moncure Conway once expected to meet. Joseph McCabe was present, and gives a vivid picture of the scene when Shaw spoke as follows:—

"A friend had died and gone to heaven. [All the youths and maidens who had come to hear Shavian jokes leaned forward with beaming expectancy at this solitary promise of humour.] To St. Peter at the gate he explained that he wanted to have a word with the Almighty. When Peter demurred and the man insisted, Paul, Moses and other ancients were summoned to a Council. [The smile slowly disappeared and the hundreds of Christian faces became graver and graver.] They decided that the man had a right to 'see' God and conducted him across the golden streets to a sort of cathedral where a melancholy old man sat on a gorgeous throne above the altar. The man was advancing towards him when Peter drew him back. 'We have,' he whispered, 'granted you your right to see God, but you cannot speak to him because—between ourselves—God has gone mad.' And in the awed silence over the vast audience broke the cold and relentless assurance of the lecturer. 'That is what is wrong with the world: the God in us has gone mad.'"

A few years later, writing a Preface to that singular play, "Androcles and the Lion" (its merits are over-rated by Mr. Pearson), Shaw's conclusions about Jesus were as follows. "It is easy to believe that an overwrought preacher at last went mad as Swift, Ruskin and Nietzsche went mad. Every asylum has in it a patient suffering from the delusion that he is a god, yet otherwise safe enough." The suggestion that insanity runs in the Holy Family, made when the first Editor of "The Freethinker" was in gaol, might have taken Shaw there too. Shaw has certainly carried the idea to a logical conclusion, for he suggests at times that the world created by the heavenly father (equated by him with the Life Force—about as comforting to the average Christian as Matthew Arnold's "Not ourselves that makes for Righteousness") is equally mad. There was, however, a tiny bit of method in his madness when G. B. S. made his avowal! Samuel Butler, one of his mentors, said that the modern man's idea was that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, Charles Darwin, that whosoever believed on him should not perish. . . . Shaw inclines to substitute himself for the patient, humble hermit of Down.

(To be concluded) W. KENT.

POWER, PRIVILEGE, PELF

Apt alliteration's artful aid.—CHARLES CHURCHILL.

Power like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches. —SHELLEY.

A FAVOURITE of childhood days was the story of Sindbad the Sailor. According to the story which never failed to thrill—wonder why—poor Sindbad was beguiled into carrying the Old Man of the sea on his back. Once in this comfortable position and with arms tightly locked around Sindbad's neck, the Old Man would not budge neither would he loosen his grip nor change position for a while. After much suffering, both mentally and physically, and being on the verge of collapse, Sindbad eventually got rid of his "close," albeit unpleasant companion, and to make certain that such an unhappy and almost fatal experience would not be repeated, "liquidated" his tormentor forthwith by stoning him to death.

Now Sindbad had but one burden to contend with, whereas most of us have three old men of the sea, viz.: Old Man Power, Old Man Privilege and Old Man Pelf. These worthies will resist all our efforts to throw them from their comfortable positions.

According to Tolstoy, "the rich (old) man will do anything for the poor man except get off his back." Similarly, Power and Privilege will be equally obliging, we may be sure!

Most of us when very young enjoyed the thrill of being swung high into the air by father and placed into position astride his shoulders. From this privileged, elevated and advantageous position one had, or so it appeared, a bird's-eye view of a procession or a regiment of soldiers headed by a band. (Some folk may repine that this was the only occasion when they were head and shoulders above anyone else.) This feeling of exaltation must animate those who possess power, privilege or pelf. Together they comprise the triple crown of authority—scintillating but adamant. Is it an occasion for wonder when those in possession of such powerful weapons will resort to any means—fair or foul—to prevent a change of ownership? For to have power is to have command—to be noticed, and perhaps admired and revered! What joys these must be! And then privilege, when one has a right or immunity not enjoyed by others! What bliss is this! And pelf? The possession of this in abundance enables one to satisfy all the promptings of that important primary instinct, bodily comfort.

It is said, apropos of motives, that circumstances alter cases, and that if anyone of ordinary circumstances suddenly acquires, or has thrust upon him, one or more of these envied possessions, the new owner would doubtless resist very strongly any attempt to deprive him of ownership. In short, what was "wrong" for another man to possess is quite satisfactory when possessed by *him*. It is probable that the matter is not thought of in this way at all. The problem, if one exists, is one of possession. His future actions are now determined by the assertion "it is mine."

You, reader, may ponder over the thrills you have experienced in the battle of life and the satisfaction you received in outwitting your adversary, whether it was on the playing field, in business, whilst courting, or perhaps in actual warfare. You may be in possession of something which was formerly owned by your adversary—some small acquisition which doubtless satisfied your honour and appeased your ambition. But when the feeling of acquisitiveness is powerfully supported by envy, jealousy and greed, what then? The technique employed varies with individuals, classes and nations, but the end to be attained is the same, i.e. possession of Power, Privilege and Pelf. In the case of war these powerful motives are invariably disguised and, cunningly attired, are paraded as Pretexes. It often happens that when these have served their purpose others are made. When the manufacture ceases—usually for reasons known to the makers only—the combatants exclaim: "What are we fighting for?" Hostilities then cease.

In an ordinary individual, given the necessities sufficient to succour the body (material comfort), it is suggested that the greater the cultural possessions and accomplishments the less is the desire to add to the material possessions. Conversely, the lower the cultural attainments and interests, the greater the desire for mere material gratifications. In any case:—

"Man wants but little here below
Nor wants that little long."

Goldsmith was right. But man in many instances succumbs to an unreasoning desire for power, privilege or pelf.

"Conquerors," said Carlyle, "are a class of men with whom, for the most part, the world could well dispense." On the other hand, "a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some affluence of Wisdom, is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us." (Essay on Burns.)

Many are the evils that spring from abuse of power, privilege and pelf. This tricephalous monster bars the road to freedom and understanding. Whence comes the champion to liberate mankind from its baneful influence?

History gives many instances of tyrants who have been dethroned, and of some who have been killed. Emulating the action of Sindbad, who disposed of his living burden, we read of oppressed peoples who, goaded beyond endurance, have overthrown tyrannical rulers. Sometimes a tyrant, combining oppression with deep cunning has, at a time of danger, allied himself with his people. Sheltering behind their backs, he points to the monster whom he can no longer control and says to the people: "It is you he is after," or "How happy we shall be when he is killed," or perhaps he will say: "There will be a place in the sun for all of us when he is disposed of." The monster loses a head (maybe two), and perhaps the tyrant is killed. But as time goes on the monster is resuscitated and grows a head in place of the one decapitated, and thus the unholy trinity is complete again. The people, slowly recovering from the effects of battle, rise "Phoenix like" from the ashes of their homes, but bearing another burden. Yes, Tolstoy was right!

Time was when people were wont to act as "a law unto themselves," because, as Wordsworth said:—

The good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan
That they should take who have the power
And they should keep who can.

These sentiments are general among nations, as the world bears painful witness. On the other hand, Swift maintained that power is no blessing in itself, but when it is employed to protect the innocent. Some nations strive to effect what is known as a "balance of power," but this is determined by the one that holds the scales acting in collaboration with an ally who, in his turn, and at a propitious moment, "tips the scales in our favour."

Power, privilege and pelf would have no place in the ideal State. But is there likely to be an ideal State? According to Plato—No!

A man who is rightly attuned to virtue may, however, be in an ideal state of mind. S. GORDON HOGG.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE

THE Bible was inspired from cover to cover until Freethinkers exposed the stupidity. Socialism was a dangerous economic quicksand until its teachings spread, then, quite suddenly, it was discovered that Jesus was a Socialist, and in the Christian Socialist movement Comrade Jesus was made responsible for some queer red-tie economics. The same Christian policy is at work where science is concerned.

The historic attitude of the Christian Churches towards science is too well known to need repetition here. Unable to prevent the development of science and the diffusion of its achievements, the Churches made more sudden discoveries. By an unfortunate mistake they had been bitterly attacking their best friend and support—science. The mistake was only discovered when they were reeling under left hooks, uppercuts, and being punched all round the ring. The move succeeded and now an occasional bout of shadow boxing under conventional Science v. Religion rules the real situation.

In the 19th century fever was having a good time in London. In 1850 it was estimated that 80,000 houses occupied by 640,000 Londoners were without water supply. Water wells received their supplies from rain draining through soil containing cess-pools, leaky gaspipes, porous sewers and burial grounds. In 1863, 170 persons were living in 31 rooms in a Whitechapel street; in another, 82 people shared 25 rooms. The result can be easily imagined. Some houses were not free from fever cases for years; beds in which fever victims had died were let as soon as the corpse was removed. Then came a reorganisation of local

authority, schemes of sanitation began to operate, the strongholds of fever were destroyed and public health rapidly improved. A fever germ of to-day, gifted with speech and anxious to hide the eclipse of the disease, might, in an imaginary talk on sanitation and fever, take the following line: "It is true, in the past, sanitation and fever were suspicious of each other and frequently quarrelled. The mistrust was largely due to misunderstanding each other's prerogative. All that is now past, and both realise they each have an important part to play in the life of man. Sanitation and fever need each other—neither would be complete without the help of the other—and it is the recognition that both have helped to broaden human experience in social life which has drawn sanitation and fever closer together in mutual respect."

Now substitute science for sanitation, and religion for fever, and the comments might have come from a talk on Science and Religion by a theologian bent on hiding the defeat of Christianity.

The "Religion and Science" controversy leads to wide confusion. That is an advantage to an intellectually obsolete religion like Christianity. A clean-cut Christianity and Science would leave the Christian open to devastating attacks from the front, both flanks and from the rear, but under Religion and Science he need not touch Christianity at all, but give the impression that he is giving the Christian case.

Science is not looking for a god. Science seeks to turn the unknown of to-day into the known of to-morrow. Gods are not discovered by science: science explains them and then deposits them in museums, and attempts to picture god and science rubbing noses during talks on religion and science are examples of amateur or professional theological trickery. No theologian or religious man of science would dare to openly assert that science had hitched its wagon to the God of the Bible, the Christian God, the God who made everything out of nothing, the God who strolled in the garden at the end of the day in much the same manner as a British working man, except there was no pipe of shag, the creator of the universe who tried his hand at tailoring for ladies and gents, who loved the smell of roast meat, was carried about in a box, a God who was captured in battle. No reputable man of science would dare to affirm that science was in harmony with that God, the real God of the Bible and the God of Christianity. True, theologians need not be so particular. Whilst deliberate deception would ruin the career of a man of science, it is rather an asset to a theologian. Deception on God's behalf is not an offence in religion, because it is necessary and, being necessary, the necessity selects the right man for its service. Let us remember that when we listen to talks on religion, especially if the subject is "Religion and Science."

R. II. ROSETTI.

CONAN DOYLE'S EARLY RELIGIOUS DISBELIEFS—III.

IT is towards the close of "The Stark Munro Letters" that Doyle relates the visit of a curate to his consulting rooms.

Doyle pays a compliment to the physical appearance of his visitor.

"Still," he says, "I have no love for the cloth.

"Just as cotton, which is in itself the most harmless substance in the world, becomes dangerous on being dipped into nitric acid, so the mildest of mortals is to be feared if he is once soaked in sectarian religion.

"If he has any rancour or hardness in him it will bring it out.

"I was therefore by no means overjoyed to see my visitor, though I trust that I received him with fitting courtesy."

Space permits of only a few sentences in the exchanges that followed.

"I trust," said the curate, "that we shall see you at St. Joseph's?"

"I was compelled to explain that it was not probable.

"A Roman Catholic?" he asked, in a not unfriendly voice.

"I shook my head; but nothing would discourage him.

"Not a dissenter!" he exclaimed, with a sudden hardening of his genial face.

"I shook my head again.

"Ah, a little lax—a little remiss!" he said playfully and with an expression of relief. "Professional men get into these ways. They have much to distract them. At least, you cling fast, no doubt, to the fundamental truths of Christianity?"

"I believe from the bottom of my heart," said I, "that the founder of it was the best and sweetest character of whom we have any record in the history of this planet."

"But instead of soothing him, my conciliatory answer seemed to be taken as a challenge.

"I trust," said he, severely, "that your belief goes further than that. You are surely prepared to admit that He was an incarnation of the Godhead?"

"Does it not strike you," I said, "that if He were but a frail mortal like ourselves, His life assumes a much deeper significance? It then becomes a standard towards which we might work.

If, on the other hand, He was intrinsically of a different nature to ourselves, then His existence loses its point, since we and He start upon a different basis. To my mind it is obvious that such a supposition takes away the beauty and the moral of His life.

If He was divine, then He could not sin, and there was an end of the matter. We who are not divine and can sin, have little to learn from a life like that."

"He triumphed over sin," said my visitor, as if a text or a phrase were an argument.

"A cheap triumph!" I said. "You remember that Roman Emperor who used to descend into the arena fully armed, and pit himself against some poor wretch who had only a leaden foil which would double up at a thrust. According to your theory of your Master's life, you would have it that he faced the temptations of the world at such an advantage that they were only harmless leaden things, and not the sharp assailants which we find them. I confess, in my own case, that my sympathy is as strong when I think of His weaknesses as of His wisdom and His virtue. They come more home to me, I suppose, since I am weak myself."

"Perhaps you would be good enough to tell me what has impressed you as weak in His conduct?" asked my visitor stiffly.

"Well, the more human traits—weak is hardly the word I should have used. His rebuke of the Sabbatarians, His personal violence to the hucksters, His rather unreasoning petulance against the fig-tree because it bore no fruit at the wrong season of the year, His very human feeling towards the housewife who hustled about when He was talking, His gratification that the ointment should have been used for Him instead of being devoted to the poor, His self-distrust before the crisis—these make me realise and love the man."

"You are a Unitarian, then, or rather, perhaps a Deist," said the curate, with a combative flush."

Doyle goes on to say that his retort to this was, "You may label me as you like"; that this elicited from the curate, "You believe in nothing"; and that his (Doyle's) final words were:

"I carry my own church about under my own hat. Bricks and mortar won't make a staircase to heaven. I believe with your Master that the human heart is the best temple. I am sorry to see that you differ from Him upon the point."

Clearly would there appear to be here—whatever the other views he held—a denial by Doyle of the Divinity of Jesus.

In another instance, Doyle had as a fellow-passenger on a railway journey "a hale, white-haired old Roman Catholic priest"—Father Logan.

"He had," says Doyle, "the defects as well as the virtues of his class, for he was absolutely reactionary in his views.

"We discussed religion with fervour, and his theology was somewhere about the Early Pliocene. He might have chatted the matter over with a priest of Charlemagne's Court, and they would have shaken hands after every sentence. He would acknowledge this and claim it as a merit. It was consistency in his eyes.

"If our astronomers and inventors and law-givers had been equally consistent, where would modern civilisation be?"

"Is religion the only domain of thought which is non-progressive, and to be referred for ever to a standard set 2,000 years ago?"

"Can they not see that as the human brain evolves it must take a wider outlook?"

"A half-formed brain makes a half-formed God, and who shall say that our brains are even half-formed yet?"

"The truly inspired priest is the man or woman with the big brain.

"It is not the shaven patch on the outside, but it is the sixty ounces within which is the real mark of election."

Yes; we may fittingly conclude "The Stark Munro Letters" by repeating the substance of the questions here asked: Where would our modern civilisation be if, during the past 2,000 years, there had been the same stagnation in all other spheres of life than there has been in religion?

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

FRANK HILL.

CORRESPONDENCE

LUCRETIVS

SIR,—For some time past I have been reading Lucretius. Of all the works I have come across, Latin text and translations, by Creech, Selby Watson (the reverend who murdered his wife), John Mason Good, H. A. J. Munro, W. H. Mallock and H. S. Salt (selections), all except the last named were Christians. All French editions, as far as I know, are also by Christians. It is astounding to me that no outstanding Freethinker seems to have brought out an edition of Lucretius. Of course, I read your article on Lucretius of some forty years since with pleasure. I have a copy of Masson's "Lucretius, Epicurean and Poet," a complementary volume to "The Atomic Theory of Lucretius" by the same author. This last work I am wanting, and will be pleased if any of your readers can put me in the way of obtaining a copy.—Yours, etc.,

AMBROSE G. BARKER.

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