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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Our Preachers

I HAVE before me a print of two speeches broadcast by the B.B.C., and then printed in "The Listener." The speakers were Mr. W. H. Moore, of Harrow School, and Lord Elton. Both are safe advocates, that is, they may be trusted never to say anything that disturbs what the B.B.C. calls "The Christian Tradition." In practice that means a presentation of historic Christianity which completely ignores all that is now known concerning the origin and development of the Christian legend. The B.B.C. selects a form of Christian belief of which most educated men and women are getting ashamed. Nothing may be said that would shake the faith of the very ignorant; nay, they must be encouraged as much as is possible. It was Karl Marx who said that religion was the opium of the people. It is the B.B.C. that constantly illustrates the truth of that saying.

Mr. Moore begins his part of the business with the heading "Godliness and good learning." The two things nowadays do not fit, particularly when they are presented as historic Christianity. Probably both Lord Elton and Mr. Moore remember that God's message to Adam and Eve was not to eat from the tree of knowledge. But for the wisdom shown by Eve and Satan the human race would have remained eternally ignorant. Humanity has to thank Satan and Eve for much. In any case "good learning" has something sinister about it. In sober truth, I do not know any learning that is bad. To be blind to what goes on is not wisdom. It is an exhibition of cowardice.

I will take only one part of what Mr. Moore has to say because a large section of what he does say reads as though he and Lord Elton had each agreed upon it beforehand. Mr. Moore puts to parents what he considers a very searching consideration. He says that parents desire their children to be "straight" and also "healthy-minded." That sounds to us like a rattle of words. The most bigoted of Roman Catholics will agree with the wording while they twist and distort the minds of children in the interests of the Church. In sober truth the vast majority of parents do try their hardest to develop the mind of their children and often end in distorting their intelligence. With hardly disguised scorn for those who do not agree with his conception of ethics, Mr. Moore asks parents: "Are we anxious for honesty, for goodness in itself?" The only effective answer to his question is to ask another: "What is honesty in itself? What is goodness in itself?" The question is an old one and it was a very famous man who gave the answer. Someone asked Socrates: "What is the meaning of 'Good'?" And he replied by asking, did his questioner mean something to wear, or to eat or gain, etc. And the questioner replied—he was a forerunner of Mr. Moore—"No,

I mean what is good in itself?" "I see," replied Socrates, "you mean something that is good for nothing." Mr. Moore should know that "honesty" in itself and "goodness" in itself, are just nothing at all. But I fancy that a great many things that are taught at Harrow deserve discarding.

But Mr. Moore does really appear to believe that morals have no authority without God. He says in downright language that the ultimate authority for morality is God, and that is downright foolishness. My cat will look after its kittens and fight in their defence. A dog will defend his master to the death. Primitive peoples live in a manner which demands that the amenities of collective association shall be observed. Mankind recognised the distinctions between "right" and "wrong" long before the gods were heard of, and that distinction will be preserved long after the gods have taken their place as mere shadows of human ignorance. I am shocked to think of the backwardness of "Harrow."

Now let us go a step further. Let us assume that man's moral sense came to him as a special gift from God, emphasised by God sacrificing his only Son. Suppose everything that is good was given to Man by God. Well, after that we know the social value—there are no others—of honesty, kindness, truthfulness, etc. Mankind has grown up, and so far Man is quite independent of God. Why then this insistence, not upon God placing us on his level, but merely to spend our lives on a "Glory Hallelujah" chorus? Why can we not use the goodness that we know and value, and let it go at that? In what sense is the human race dependent upon God and his Son?

Consider. A man, Copernicus, taught us that the earth went round the sun. Darwin taught us to understand a special theory of evolution. Tylor laid down the outline of a scientific anthropology, and so on. But once the knowledge of these things is ours, the things themselves are independent of their discoverers.

Perhaps one day our schools that are worthy of their name will teach pupils that the tools they use, the ideas they have, the instruments that have been invented, that all these things come, not from men, but from Man. They will realise that from the animal-like stage, mankind has moved step by step, and that all we have comes to us from mankind and has so built up the mental riches we have. Discoveries and inventions are not made by this or that man. They are made by the race, and in that unending story of development the gods are merely so many illustrations of the false paths Man has trodden. Strictly speaking, discoveries whether expressed in this state or in that, belong to mankind as a whole. Ideas are built on preceding ideas. There is no break in the process however numerous the stumbles may be.

Now I put it to the Head Master of Harrow that if all the moral qualities came from God, and particularly from Jesus, the name of Jesus has no more to do with the nature

of morals than the movement of the earth round the sun has to do with Copernicus, or the fact of evolution with Charles Darwin. The values of honesty, truthfulness and kindness are values that belong to associated Man, and even to animals. It should be obvious that when we talk about morals we are discussing values, and these values are independent of particular men or of gods. Now that the God Jesus is passing into the background we have Jesus the moral teacher taking his place. But that will not do for a religion. The Christian apologist is merely adding a dishonesty to an absurdity.

A Preacher at Sea

Lord Elton and Mr. Moore run so completely on parallel lines that I may properly take whatever Lord Elton says on ethics as already dealt with, and whatever Mr. Moore has said on historic Christianity will be dealt with when examining Lord Elton's contribution. They remind us of the struggles of two blind men trying to climb a tree that isn't there.

Here is Lord Elton's opening passage:—

"There can be no doubt that Christianity was responsible for a complete revolution in human conduct."

That sounds like an echo of Hitler's claim concerning Holland, Poland, and other places. But dating from the alleged birth of Jesus, four centuries passed before the Church came to power. It was slow work to say the least of it. And even at that it was the political manoeuvring of the unscrupulous that finally established the Church.

Before we have time to digest Lord Elton's curious history, we are presented with this:—

"What is the story of the Middle Ages if not the gradual return of civilisation in Europe by Christianity?"

Lord Elton gives his essay the title of "Manners Founded on a Christian Faith." If he had said "Examples of Christian Truth" his essay would have been quite illustrative. For the "Middle Ages" date from, say, 1300, that is about nine hundred years after the establishing of the Christian Church. What then becomes of the statement that Christianity "by its conquest worked a complete revolution in human conduct?" What was the human conduct that created this miracle? Certainly it did not exist in the nine hundred years covered by the dating from the establishment of the Church by Constantine. There was no miracle in that. And it is Christian historians who call those nine centuries the "Dark Ages." Admittedly life sank lower and lower, the old philosophies of Greece and Rome were almost buried. Life became more brutal and mentally lower. And when the revival came in Europe it came from the more civilised non-Christian East, and from the Greek and Roman culture which Christianity did its best to destroy. Will Lord Elton be good enough to tell us what Christianity was doing from the fourth to the thirteenth centuries, and why that period was called the "Dark Ages?"

May a mere Atheist suggest to Lord Elton a careful reading of two books by Professor Dill of Queen's College, Belfast—"Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire," (1898), and "Roman Society from Nero

to Marcus Aurelius" (1905)—and if he would fully realise how shrivelled life became under the Christian Church, he may take Professor Legge's two volumes "Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity" (1915). Then finally, for the moment, a careful reading from page 347 to 539 of volume six of one of the most gigantic works of our time, Arnold Toynbee's "Study of History." These books should help all open minds to appreciate the rich culture that went down before the rise of the Cross. Probably nothing like it stands in European history—unless one can take the short reign of Hitlerism.

We may return to this later. For the moment we return to another of Lord Elton's "Pipe Dreams." He says quite seriously:—

"The Church educated men out of the evil old pagan tradition of unbridled violence and oppression. Consider the contrary of the medieval idea of the chivalrous knight, honourable, courteous, kind, and scrupulous and considerate even to his enemies, with the typical pagan warrior, bloodthirsty, merciless and brutal, and you have the measure of the impact of Christianity upon human manners."

Really this is not history, it is not even romance, it is just nonsense or deliberate falsity. Or perhaps the approach to the pantomime season has persuaded him to write as he does. Of course he is safe with the B.B.C. protecting him from open criticism. The joke of it lies in the fact that it was from the Mohammedan world that the better rules of combat came, as did so much science and philosophy which they had retrieved from the destructive hands of the Church. Lord Elton seems incapable of recognising that the tales of knighthood had their strongest development in Mohammedan Spain and in the North of France. It was the celebrated Ascham—of "schoolmaster fame"—who declared the exploits of these gallant Christian knights to be nothing but "open slaughter and bold bawdryo." If Lord Elton wishes to see how advanced the Mohammedan world was, we commend to his notice "The Legacy of Islam" by Sir Thomas Arnold (Oxford Press, 1931). As to the gallant Christian knights brimming over with kindness and honesty, and tenderness to women, we have their modern representatives in the men who are being searched for so eagerly by the police to answer for housebreaking, ill treatment of women, etc. It was the gallant knights, wedded to God, who roamed the country, robbing where they could, seizing women of wealth and forcing them to marriage, robbing hamlets and towns, and acting well as forerunners to the gangs that have caused the U.S.A. so much trouble in our own days.

But I have forgotten them in war—their chivalry, their kindness, their scrupulous behaviour displayed in the early Middle Ages. Perhaps the best way to realise these God-intoxicated knights is to take them during the Crusades. Fanaticism never ran higher than it did then. I will be content with a few brief examples of these chivalrous and honourable men filled with consideration for their enemies. I will take a picture drawn by Gibbon:—

"If contemporary accounts are to be credited, all the vices of the infamous Babylon prevailed among the liberators of Sion. Beneath the tents of the Crusaders voluptuousness formed a hideous union. Impure love with all the excesses of debauch mingled with the images of death."

Michaud, in his "History of the Crusades," says:—

"The Saracens were forced to throw themselves from the tops of towers and houses; they were burnt alive; they were dragged from their subterranean retreats; they were immolated on piles of the dead . . . The subjugated people were dragged into the public places and slain as victims. Women with children at the breast, girls and boys, all were slaughtered. The squares, the streets, and even the uninhabited places of Jerusalem, were strewn with the dead bodies of men and women and the mangled limbs of children."

These are but samples from bulk and it is only fair to Lord Elton's ideal knights to say that they did not confine themselves in their behaviour to those belonging to people of opposite creeds. In all the nations of Europe through which Elton's gentle and godly knights passed there was the story of pillage, murder, and of the outraging of women.

There is just one more point raised by Lord Elton and Mr. Moore. Immediately following his fantastic creation of the Christian knight, Lord Elton says:—

"Then came the Renaissance, the revival of the literature of pagan Greece and Rome followed by the birth of modern science."

As a statement of fact it will pass, but what is left unsaid would put a very different light on the picture. For the "Renaissance" stands for re-birth, something recovered from apparent death. Moreover, Lord Elton reminds us that the Renaissance was also called the "Middle Ages," and Middle Ages implies a period before and after. It is probable that Lord Elton did not care to tell us that of the three ages, the first was the Christian Age, known as the "Dark Ages." From the fourth century until the twelfth Christianity came nearer ruling the roost than it has ever done. Finally, the Renaissance was the re-birth, the recovery of the philosophy and science of pagan Rome and Greece, plus the developments which had been made by the Mohammedans and the Jews. Lord Elton says he would call people Christian who acted in a Christian manner. I therefore affirm that there is no doubt of Lord Elton being a real Christian, one who, had he lived in the Dark Ages, would have stood up well for the faith. There was re-birth in European history, and that consisted of the running back to the ancient learning in science and in philosophy and the return to the point at which the Christian rule had stopped. In the history of European culture, the Christian faith stands where the German Crusade would have stood had the plans of Christian Hitler been carried out to the end.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

MITHRAISM IN ANCIENT ROME

IMPERIAL Rome is apt to be regarded as the proud mistress of the ancient world. Yet, from the death of Alexander the Great, till the Moslem conquest of Rome's Asiatic dominions in the seventh century of our era, there continued an almost uninterrupted conflict between the Greek and the later Latin Power and Persia.

While Alexander lived the defeated Persians acknowledged his sovereignty, but with the break-up of his Empire, the

Persians revolted from the rule of his successors. Later, when the Romans had subjugated the Greek domains, they discovered that Alexander's conquests in Asia Minor were rapidly reverting to the rule of a revived Persian State partly known as Parthia.

With the overthrow of the earlier Roman Republic and the creation of the Empire, the conflict between East and West was intensified, especially when Rome's decline became evident. Peace was maintained during the reign of Augustus, but under succeeding Emperors the contest was resumed and, although Trajan in the first century A.D., led a triumphant army into the East his Asiatic conquests were restored to their previous possessors by the sagacious Hadrian as soon as he ascended the throne. Frontier victories were gained by the Romans under Marcus Aurelius, but subsequently the Roman Emperor, Valerian, surrendered with his entire army to the Persians. But later, however, Aurelian restored Rome's prestige in the East, while in the reign of Diocletian the Romans overran five Persian provinces.

Yet, under Constantine, the Romans met with heavy losses and the Persians would have conquered the whole of Rome's Asiatic domains if their own Eastern possessions had not been invaded by hostile barbaric tribes from Central Asia.

Then, for a time, there was a fairly constant Persian advance despite the transient triumphs of the heroic Julian and the successes of that splendid soldier Belisarius. Afterwards, the Persians regained their lost territories and in A.D. 603, it appeared that the Persians had won the fight in a struggle that had lasted for five centuries. As Gibbon, Winwood Reade, and others have recorded, the Persian Chosroes became master of Antioch, Jerusalem and Egypt, and it seemed probable that Persia would restore the immense Empire of Darius. But Rome rallied and, as Legge notes in his scholarly "Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity" (C.U.P., 2 Vols., 1915): "The Roman Emperor Heraclius . . . from his besieged capital of Constantinople collected an army which dashed into Persia in a manner worthy of Alexander himself. After six brilliant campaigns he dictated to the Persians a triumphant peace in the very heart of their Empire. A few years later its shattered and disorganised remains fell an easy prey to the Mohammedan invaders."

But if the Romans proved victorious on the battlefield, Persian manners and fashions received a ready welcome and Oriental luxury became keenly appreciated by the former austere Roman destroyers of Carthage.

The Solar Divinity had always been revered in Persia and the adoration of its sun god, Mithras, soon pervaded Rome. For some time past, Mithras had been included in the Pantheon, and Diocletian and his associate Galerius in A.D. 307 conferred Imperial favour upon the Persian deity as the invincible Sun God and guardian of the State.

It is still uncertain at what time, and under what circumstances, the cult of Mithras was first introduced into Rome. But apparently it arrived from Asia Minor with the many Oriental immigrants who settled in the Latin Capital.

When once established, however, Mithraism spread with amazing rapidity. The Roman soldiers eagerly accepted the faith, but as so many had been stationed in the border provinces where Mithraism had long prevailed this is not surprising. But that this cult became almost universal is proved by its surviving memorials. M. Cumont notes that these monuments may be traced "from the shores of the Euxine to the North of Brittany and to the fringe of the Sahara." In addition, these remains extend to London and the leading provincial centres of the Roman occupation of Britain. Moreover, with the exception of Greece, all the other European countries embraced by Rome bear witness to Mithra's ascendancy. His cult certainly invaded Vedic India where, as Legge observes, "the name of Mithra

(Concluded on page 20)

ACID DROPS

The Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Hewlett Johnson, says we can rejoice over the victory of the Allies. We agree, but the Dean means more than appears on the surface. The Dean would have been wiser not to call attention to the fact that God, who should have prevented the war occurring, did nothing. What would have been said of any man who could have prevented the war but decided to stand still and watch the "circus"? Dr. Johnson says that the world needs an integration of all peoples with God the Father leading. Well, if we can get different peoples to join hands, we can dispense with the Father God who watches his children being slaughtered and then asks for praise for himself.

We were very pleased to see an excellent article in "Reveille" for December. A very strong article—not for the first time—strongly against compulsory attendance at Church services. All who care to know can know the truth about religion in the Army. A very large number of men decline to be registered as having any religion at all, and a much larger number would also register as "No religion" if they felt sure no petty persecutions would follow. This fear of consequences goes to the higher ranks as well as the lower ones. Here there is the fear that an open declaration may stand in the way of promotion, and the more wooden-headed officers would say that it might undermine discipline. Meanwhile we have Field-Marshal Montgomery ordering vouched-for monthly attendance at Church services. We have all respect for his ability as a soldier—if what we hear be true—but we have yet to learn that he has any scientific understanding of religion.

Here is a telling passage in an article that hits out straight from the shoulder:—

"To-day the most Christian country in the world needs a good supply of Vickers Armstrong guns. Even the Japanese—more fervently religious than any Allied nation—found faith was no match for atomic bombs. The modern soldier is often a thinking man, and he resents being driven into a hypocritical simulation of obedience. He no longer accepts the incredible jumble of fact and fiction as a child accepts the Christmas hoax. The pages of history for two thousand years have dripped with the blood of people slaughtered in the name of a man who was called the Prince of Peace. Your thinking soldier does not like being forced under threat of punishment to bow his head in what is often a butcher's Valhalla."

There is much more good matter in the article, but we congratulate "Reveille" on having courage on a subject that calls for attention. There is a larger proportion of soldiers and sailors of all ranks who go unwillingly to Church services. During the war we had to intervene in order to secure the freedom of opinion that should be the unquestioned right of all. We emphasise that "should be," because freedom of speech is often a mere figure of speech—particularly where religion is concerned.

Here are a few expressions from other sources. Our brother-in-arms, the New York "Truth Seeker," cites a sergeant in the Pacific as saying: "A large number of Prayer Books and Testaments were available on board ship when we left the States. I would say that less than 10 per cent. of the men took advantage of them. With the exception of the Latter Day Saints, the men do not take their religion seriously."

From an English Captain: "I think a lot of soldiers have Bibles given them, and feel an obligation to hang on to them, but I don't notice much religion amongst them." From a Captain in the Philippines: "The chaplains do not find, even under battle conditions, a resurgent Christian or even religious feeling. Their spiritual ministrations are inevitably attended by the unlettered, the ignorant, the unhappy—nearly all enlisted men. The negroes turn out in droves—if there is a singing or a coloured chaplain. The war will definitely, in my

opinion, settle the hash of all religions except the Catholics." We think some of these opinions would be echoed by more soldiers than people imagine. And ultimately it must mean the end of Church parades.

The appointment of 32 Cardinals, with emphasis laid less on the Italian ones than ever before, is, of course, a political move. Italy is not shining very well these days, and it is even suggested that the Holy See may quit Rome; for, to follow an old saying—"Where the Pope is there is Rome." The Vatican is old, and very shrewd in temporal matters, and saw quite clearly that a preponderance of Italian priests these days round the Pope was inadvisable, to put the matter very kindly—hence three of the new Cardinals were allotted to America, one each to Canada and Australia, and the rest all over the world. Toronto gets a Cardinal for the first time, so does Cuba, while Australia gets a Cardinal for the first time since 1911. It is all very intriguing—and very political; but the power of the Papacy, all the same, has never been so low as now in all its history.

The Pope, in his Christmas message, pleaded for no "revenge on the conquered nations." But we do not remember that he pleaded with Franco for "no revenge" on the conquered Spanish Government and the unfortunate people and soldiers who supported it. In fact, never has Franco received one word of reproof or admonition from the Vatican. What the Pope does not like, we suspect, is any suggestion of Protestant countries like England and the United States making Catholic Italy and Catholic Germany pay for the crimes they have committed against humanity. What Catholic Franco does to Spanish Communists and Anarchists is quite another matter.

It is astonishing—to all who do not understand religion—how readily the evil of religion is recognised by religionists—when they differ from the religion in question. For example, the Allies have decreed that Shintoism is to be abolished in Japan on the ground that it is a manufactured religion. But consider the number of religions that exist under the general name of "Christian." And consider also how much harm—in one way or another and by one Christian body and another—has been done. Some people may recall the "horror" expressed when the Russian revolutionists merely checked the attempt of the priesthood to break down the new Russian State. No one of standing will say that the Russian revolution was not one of the best things that had happened to the Russian people. Nay, if Revolutionary Russia had been Christian Russia, our place in the world would not have been as comfortable as it is. So it remains for those who can study events with an open—and informed—mind to realise that religion makes for evil wherever civilisation is concerned.

So far as the historic Christian Churches are concerned, they have all steadily held that woman is an inferior creature, and therefore should hold an inferior position in the Churches. That is apt to be overlooked by most people now that women are taking their place in public life. But there are reminders for those who have a good memory and are fond of a reading of history. Here, for example, is a long list of adverse votes in the Church of Scotland on the question of whether women should be permitted to be admitted as "Elders." It is issued by the "Glasgow Herald" for December 20. It is not a complete list, but the figures cover about 25 of the Churches, and the adverse votes against the women run to about twenty to one. It should also be borne in mind that when Jesus selected his disciples they were all men. Women were not represented.

Another god has gone out of practice. But not in the usual way in which gods sleek out of notice. The Emperor of Japan has proclaimed that he is no longer a god, and that is rather a pity. At least, so long as he remained a god the world would have been able to know where to find a real god—or as real a god as gods can be. Now we shall have to be content with a few gods that exist among very primitive people. It is true that our own King by the ceremony that took place in Westminster Abbey became a god incarnate, but no one appears to take that very seriously. Gods are getting scarce and puny.

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SUGAR PLUMS

Now that the world war is formally over the papers are beginning to contain hints; sometimes they are in the shape of editorials, sometimes in the shape of letters, but all warning Christians that one feature that has come to the front is the substantial growth of Atheism. One letter that appeared in the "Western Mail" (Cardiff) says that it appears that in Russia and elsewhere Atheism has now appeared stronger than ever, and the world knows that in China and also India, Atheism is now growing. But why stop at two or three nations? The fact is that Atheism is growing all over the world. In England it has not merely grown, but a large portion of those who hid their Atheism by Agnosticism, Rationalism and other evasive terms, are now coming out in the open, and once Atheism with any one, a step back is almost impossible.

But the writer in the letter indicated asked for Christian believers to be up and doing. But what can Christians do? Of course those who still believe in Christianity can become more active in trumpeting their Christianity, and some lazy believers to be more active. But that has not the least effect on anyone who has become a real Atheist. When a child discovers that twice times one are two it cannot be made three or four. A lukewarm believer may be persuaded into an active one, but that is all. Christianity is still powerful, but the increase of the knowledge of the origin of religions and their development must always finally result in the rapid decay of mankind's greatest illusion.

Mr. J. T. Brighton will visit Belfast on Sunday, January 20, and will lecture outdoors in the afternoon, and indoors at the Grand Central Hotel, Belfast, in the evening. His subject for the evening meeting will be "Man—Whence—Whither." We understand that all the necessary regulations and filling in of forms have been met and that Mr. Brighton should be on the spot at the appointed time.

The Manchester Branch N.S.S. holds another of its meetings in the Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints, to-day, when Mr. J. V. Shortt will lecture on "Christ Jesus." The lecture begins at 3 p.m., and we wish the local branch and the speaker the successful meeting they deserve.

The "Daily Telegraph" Saturday preacher, the Rev. I. B. Ashby, continues his weekly dose for sick minds. He opens in anything but a cheerful sermon by admitting that there is a widespread abstention from Church, but, of course, he remarks that staying away from Church does not of necessity involve disbelief in Christianity. We agree, but it is one of the first steps towards throwing religion aside altogether. Mr. Ashby also thinks the men who have left the Church will find that "life without God is found to be unsatisfying . . . and consequently there are to-day large numbers of people who, seeking after God, find him."

The man gets more foolish as he unfolds his mentality to the world. Where are the men, or women, who, having developed to the point of understanding what "God" stands for, walk about moaning that they wish to find a god? Any parson looking for a job may weep at the outlook of the Churches, but can one really tell whether a man has lost or found a god by the measure of his faith. Earlier generations of Christian preachers had sense enough to wait for the half-liberated man to undergo sorrow until he was dying. But his unbelief was only pretence. To-day men give up belief in gods largely because they know how the myth of gods and devils, ghosts and angels, came into existence. Mr. Ashby is much behind his time. The final proof is found in the kind of argument he uses.

From the "Cape Times," one of the leading South African papers, we learn that the Synod of the Cape Dutch Reformed Church solemnly declared that the theory of evolution was undermining the "Word of God," and they also protested against the popularising of the "evolution idea" in the Press generally and in the African "Children's Encyclopædia." The poor things. We wonder whether the Synod objects to the earth going round the sun! If so, it should be stopped without delay.

Another bit of news that comes to us from the "Cape Argus" is interesting. The Rev. R. J. Cooke writes that in the 1914-18 war there was much greater attention to religion than there was in the Forces of the war that has just ended (?). There was "a tremendous indifference and apathy towards religion." We believe that would be the testimony of other clergymen who were with the Forces. But the parson speaks when Mr. Cooke adds that he did not mean that the men were "antagonistic towards religion." Well, it is obvious that they were not interested in it, and that is enough to go on with.

We do not expect that many people now read the works of P. G. Hammerton, although in the days of our youth Hammerton had a great vogue and it was not undeserved. He wielded a vigorous pen and dealt with human subjects that would while away an idle hour or set one building on the conclusions he reached. Here is a specimen. He is talking of French and English in the matter of lying. The regular way would be to declare that the Englishman's word is his bond, although in ordinary life the difference lies in the method of the lie rather than upon anything else. But the Englishman would say that "an Englishman's word is his bond," etc., etc. The Frenchman would lay his hand on his heart and talk about the honour of a Frenchman. And the two would depart with their previous opinions of each "as before." As a result of his examination of the two, Hammerton concludes:—

"There is a difference in kind and quality between French and English lying. The French are daring enough. They have much audacity, but little skill. They will say what is not true with wonderful decision, and they will stick to it afterwards, but the English surpass them infinitely in craft and guile. The typical French lie is not merely half a truth, it is entangled with half-a-dozen truths or semblances of truth, so that it becomes most difficult to separate them."

Yes, the present generation should read Hammerton's writings. His books of travel are full of good things. And they are human.

"PLAYING WITH WORDS"

I.

MANY of our Sophists are playing with the idea of mysticism. As Havelock Ellis puts it, we can find no words to express our feelings. In commenting upon Joadian inanities we are dealing with a problem. Although Joad as usual finds a childish way of stating it, he gives an indication of one way of approach. In his remarks on mystical contemplation, Joad made the assertion that "Language, invented to convey the meanings and uses of this world" cannot be conveniently applied to "another." It is remarkable how these religious apologists "stand on their heads and think with their feet," as Chapman Cohen would say. This Freudian inversion no doubt accounts for Joad's lapse. Surely, being a pedlar of antiquated nonsense, he is aware of the falsity of the first part of this assertion. Our language is inherited from a world that is past, the world of to-day is different. That is why we are under the constant necessity of revising and changing its meanings. Again, the particular piece of language in question was applied to "another world." The etymology of the words will show this, and will also show the mystical methods used. The word contemplation originally meant observation of the stars. So mystical contemplation was inspiration through the influence of, in communion with, the stars. We have an astrological concept. In passing we note the characteristic inversion of these astrological mystics.

The psychology of the desire to forget is seen to be a factor in the development of language, for only in forgetting the old can we devise a new. Our language, like our physical form, is vestigial; it contains unmistakable marks of its evolutionary origin. Language is a cemetery of dead gods. If the use of these vestiges has departed the abuse remains. Words and phrases have associations such as to produce emotional reactions of an involuntary and often irrational character. The oratory of a political demagogue, the ranting of an evangelical pastor, or the catch-phrases of commercial advertising, is evidence of this. Our reactions to these things are in the nature of conditioned reflex, but the Behaviourist's conception of thinking as verbalisation is inadequate, in that it does not touch what has been called visual thinking, such as that involved in Freudian dream psychology. Yet it expresses a vital truth, and both types of psychology are needed in the consideration of the evolution of language.

There are great difficulties in the study of oral language, but we have abundant evidence in written script. Though we can form no idea of what the corresponding spoken language sounded like we can trace the development in writing. We can trace the alphabetical, back through the syllabic, to the pictographic script. That is, each letter of the alphabet is derived from a picture. We can go still further, and trace this picture writing to the use of magic inscriptions used, for instance, to make a weapon more effective. They were in effect, magic incantations, of a visual or pictographical character.

The contagious and sympathetic aspects of magic correspond to the physical and psychological aspects of thinking, as an expression of desire and emotion. Magic demonstrates an awareness of the recognition of similarities and the elements of causation; similarity of consequence. Failure to realise differences leads to semblance being mistaken for self, and coincidence for consequence. Magic is wishful thinking in which memory, as in dreams, is undifferential and unsequential. But there is not and can be no conscious thinking, as we understand the word. This magic is not in the realm of the conscious, but of the unconscious, or subconscious.

In the absence of words men thought pictographically. Unlike our Joads, who live in a jungle of words, these men lived in a phantasmagoria of living forms. They saw pictures or images in dreams and hallucinations, they saw pictures in the fire, pictures in the clouds, just as to-day we see pictures in tea leaves.

And they used pictures to express their desires. Having no language in which to verbalise either their surroundings or feelings, these men thought in terms of imagery and the more vivid their imagination the more they were impressed by it. To this pre-verbalising pictographical way of thinking a great thinker was a great "seer." Their Joads and Brainstrusters were men who "saw things," and in the absence of B.B.C. television or the cinema, other methods of "seeing" were used. Abstinence from food, or sexual intercourse, the use of drugs, or any other method of "seeing" was the essence of wisdom. By such methods men "saw" into the past, or into the future, or into the "innermost depths of being." By such methods they saw "the reality revealed in mystical contemplation."

These men were conscious only of their desires and emotions, and of a sense of intimacy; of an intimate relationship with things other than themselves, that is with other "selves." Their attitude towards these things was personal, and by a characteristic inversion, things were personified. These men were as unconscious of the social character of what they were doing as our Joads are of the social character of mind. These magic practices did not persist because they were either reasonable or effective, it was the social factor which was the condition of both their persistence and development.

This magic was the origin of our language; in expressing their desires in this way they were aiding in co-operation, by recognising their similarity of motives. Language is a social extension of memory, by means of which men associate their ideas and hand on their remembrances to future generations. It is this awareness of similarity of motives, and the similarity of men's reactions to these images which forms the basis of that symbolism which later develops into language. The totem may be given as an illustration of this. Here a thing or image of a thing is a symbol of the group considered as a personal relationship. Thus we find not only the insurance of group association, but also a basis of classification, the pictographical grouping under one image or symbol.

The social development involves the relationship of magic to religion. We can account for the development by considering magic as an expression of desire, and religion as an expression of restraint, such as the taboo, acting as an unconscious social discipline; and further, that magic is essentially practical, and religion is essentially theoretical. This unconscious social discipline develops into a theoretical authority, justified by a more and more elaborate system of beliefs. This restraint, acting upon the individual gives rise to inhibitions, complexes and sublimations, in combination with a complex religious symbolism, such as the half animal half human gods of Egypt, or the winged bull of the Assyrians; together with a complex system of hieroglyphics. We can see the characteristic inversion; the personality of the individual is imputed to the authority, which supplants the impersonal taboo, and is justified by the belief in survival.

In associating these symbols with the sounds he uttered man eventually arrived at an alphabetical script, in which the individual symbols stand for sounds, and only have meaning when used in association as words. The transformation is gradual and for a time we find the two modes of thinking side by side. In Hebrew script we have them in combination. Each letter of the alphabet is also a pictographical symbol, and a word may be both alphabetically and pictographically interpreted.

H. H. PREECE.

"YOUNG BRITON"—FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE

DR. GIBSON, a shrewd ecclesiastical authority, says: "No person could erect a Church without the consent of the bishop." To this must be added the fact that no building can be a Church until it is endowed and consecrated; that no consecration can take place without a bishop; that the bishop cannot be a bishop

until he is made one by the law and until he swears that he holds the spiritualities and temporalities of his see from the Sovereign; that the Sovereign cannot be made ruler except by the law; that the law cannot be made except by Parliament; and that Parliament cannot be a Parliament until it is made by the people. Parliament, however, may do some odd things not in keeping with the wish of the nation, as exemplified in the endeavours of the Legislature to turn a nation of Papists into a nation of Churchmen by Acts of Parliament; but these Acts the people can make the Parliament undo. Indeed! Yes, the people are at the head of the whole business, and can put up the public shutters of this public Established Church whenever they list. It was the people's Parliament that founded this public Establishment by the Acts 2 and 3, Edward VI., c. 1; and by other Acts people were commanded to attend it or undergo horrible sufferings and death. But the Clergy are of divine appointment, and your Acts of Parliament have nothing to do with them, have they? Oh, yes they have. Remember that the present Establishment claims no connection with Popery, except it be when the Golden Calf and apostolic descent are in question. The first Archbishop of Canterbury was St. Austin, who was appointed by the Pope about the year 598, and the first Archbishop of York was of Pope Gregory's appointment about the year 622. If Archbishops and bishops are of divine appointment, how is it that they were not appointed before a Pontiff took the idea into his head to make the appointments; and how is it that the Pope had to cease making bishops in England when the British Parliament passed the Act 25, Henry VIII., c. 20, by which the present mode of creating archbishops and bishops was first fashioned, and by which bishops are given the title of "Lord?" How is it that before Henry VIII. threw off the yoke of Popery it was not necessary to have the Sovereign the "supreme head of the Church, next and immediately after Christ," and that the Church could do without such Supreme head during the reign of Mary, and during the Commonwealth? The whole business is law. It is provided by Acts of Parliament that Archbishops and Bishops shall have seats in the House of Lords, and the law says where and how they shall sit. The Act is that of 25, Henry VIII., c. 10, Section 3, setting forth that: "The Bishops shall sit in Parliament, on the right side of the Parliament Chamber, in this order: First, the Archbishop of Canterbury; next to him, on the same form, the Archbishop of York; then the Bishop of London; then the Bishop of Durham; then the Bishop of Winchester; then all the other bishops after their ancienties." The Archbishop of Canterbury is the first peer of the realm next to the Royal Blood, and takes precedence over all the nobility (privileged loafers) and of the great officers of the State, except the Lord Chancellor. This is all brought about by Act of Parliament. Christ never had such princely characters for His ministers, not He, He was content to be born in a stable and choose poor fishermen for His followers; but the successors of these "followers" are princes revelling in gilded palaces, and in fine raiment. Catch the modern successors of the Apostles anywhere near a stable, except it be to view their richly-caparisoned steeds, and the detective shall be rewarded with an uncommon sight! Then where does the "divinity" come in when every bishop has to say before he gets his bishopric that he does homage to the Sovereign from whom he gets his spiritualities and temporalities? The Archbishops and Bishops are consecrated according to the rites set forth in the Prayer Book, made by the Act 2 and 3, Edward VI., c. 1.

"EPICETUS RENKLUAF."

OBITUARY

It is with regret that we learn from the local Press of the death of a friend of long standing, Dr. W. L. English, of Haslington, Crewe. We leave the printed notice of his death to indicate how high he stood in the opinions of those who knew

him. He was more than a doctor to them; he was a friend ready to help in many ways, never harsh in his judgment or unready in his help. He was a man of wide reading and sustained convictions. These led him to Freethought; it was on that ground we met, and his opinions once formed never wavered. It is a curious thing that the last letter I had from him dealt with something I had written on Death. He said that the man who could face life should have no fear concerning death. The expression was characteristic of one who had done so much to make the life of many better than it would have been in his absence. The suggestion has been made that a memorial in the shape of an endowment for a local hospital should be secured, the money to be raised by public subscription. If he could have decided by what method his name should be perpetuated, I am sure he would applaud this attempt.

There were many tributes paid to him. I select part of one by Mr. E. Sims-Hilditch (Chairman of Nantwich Rural Council):—

"It was a profound shock to the people of Haslington and District to hear on Tuesday morning that Dr. W. English had passed away during the night. His death will be deplored by everybody in Haslington, patients and friends alike, and of every class in the village, where his long connection with the people had made him a highly respected doctor and friend. 'Dr. Willie,' as he was affectionately called, was in the truest sense of the word a popular doctor, possessing great gifts as a wonderful healer of the sick, a gentleman of sterling character, and one of the most attractive and most genuine persons I have ever known. He never knew what it was to flag, and he used every hour of his life for the benefit of the people who called for his services. Day and night he could be found in the lonely roads, often in most atrocious weather, journeying to some remote spot to minister to the needs of a sick patient. I have heard so many wonderful tributes to him—surely no one has ever made such a mark in the Haslington people's lives. There was no one just like him. His life was splendid with skill, courtesy, high-heartedness, and that quality of splendid human understanding which is above all qualities in the world. The people of Haslington will never forget to be terribly proud of so splendid a man, and this village, needing at this time especially those rare qualities of human kindness, will miss him throughout this generation."

C. C.

MRS. ANNIE HAMPSON.

We regret to record the death, at the age of 85, of Mrs. Annie Crockford Hampson of Bolton. She was a member of the Manchester Branch and although prevented by age from taking an active part in the work she retained a keen interest in the Movement. Her husband, also a branch member, passed away some ten years ago. She is survived by two daughters to whom we extend our sympathy. In accordance with the wishes of the deceased a short Secular service was conducted at the Manchester Crematorium by Mr. W. Collins.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

LONDON—OUTDOOR

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Sunday 12 noon, Mr. ENAY.

LONDON—INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m., S. K. RATCLIFFE: "Hopes and Fears for 1946." Tuesday, 7 p.m., Conway Discussion Circle, Prof. H. J. LASKI: "The Social Basis of Ethical Principles."

COUNTRY—INDOOR

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints, Manchester).—Sunday, 3 p.m., Mr. J. V. SHORT: "Christ Jesus."

AN ARCHBISHOP'S GUARANTEE

[This is an exact copy of a circular letter issued by Archbishop Sinnott of Winnipeg, Canada]

Archbishop's House,
363, St. Mary Ave.

Winnipeg, Man., March 1, 1944.

MY DEAR CATHOLIC PARENTS,

I have received from the pastors of the different parishes a list of those who have boys overseas. Some time ago, as you are aware, I called on Catholic mothers to enrol their boys as Perpetual Members of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith. I said: "What better guarantee for any boy exposed to all the hazards of war! A guarantee, should he be killed, that he will go at once to his Maker, to be with Him for all eternity. A guarantee, should it be God's will, that he will return to his dear mother and to those who love him." This has been explained to you over and over again, from the pulpit and you have been urged to enrol your boys. A few, who have been personally contacted, have answered the appeal, but all the others have maintained a stolid indifference. If I were to conclude that you are indifferent to the safety of your boy, I would be doing you a grave injustice. You are not indifferent. What then can be the reason for the inaction! Some say, in fact many say, that they cannot afford it. That is not a reason, that is a specious excuse, unworthy of a Catholic mother. You receive a portion of the boy's pay, and what better use can you make of it. "Oh," you answer, "I am trying to have a nest egg for my boy when he returns." When he returns. Wouldn't it be better to take the best means you know to ensure the boy's return. If he does not return, what good, under Heaven, will the "nest egg" be to him. I am not advising you to take the boy's money, I would much prefer that you use your own money. But, if you must take the boy's money, take it as a loan. Surely you will be able to make it up in the years to come. Do you not think, with a little economy and a few less shows, you will be able to set aside one dollar a month, until the full amount is paid up? It is not necessary to pay the \$40.00 at once. You can pay any sum you wish by instalments. You can pay, say, \$5.00 a month, or \$10.00 every three months. You can take a year, you can take two years, you can take even three years. Three years, that is almost the equivalent of one dollar per month. The important thing is to ensure the boy's safety, as far as we can do so—his safety in time and eternity.

One Catholic mother in this Archdiocese enrolled her boy on February 20, paying \$20.00. He was killed on February 22. Do you not think that the mother's heart found some consolation in what she had done?

I have placed this matter in the hands of the Franciscan Fathers, at 233, Carlton Street (Tele. 29-136). If you want further explanation, see them or get in touch with them. If time permits, they will probably get in touch with you.

Dear Catholic parents, we have a chance to do something that will live long in the annals of the Church in Western Canada, and let us merit God's blessing by doing it.

Yours very devotedly in Xto.,

ALPHO A. SINNOTT
(Archbishop of Winnipeg).

THE RUINS, OR A SURVEY OF THE REVOLUTIONS OF EMPIRES, to which is added THE LAW OF NATURE. By C. F. Voiney. A Revision of the Translation of 1795, with an introduction. Price, post free, 3s. 2d.

MATERIALISM RESTATED, by Chapman Cohen. Price 4s. 6d.; postage 2½d.

DETERMINISM OR FREEWILL? By Chapman Cohen. Price in cloth, 2s. 8d., post free; paper cover, 2s. 2d., post free.

MITHRAISM IN ANCIENT ROME

(Concluded from page 15)

constantly occurs in the sacred texts as 'the shining one,' meaning apparently the material sun. He is there invoked in company with Varuna, generally considered as god of the sky and therefore according to some the prototype of the Greek Zeus and the Latin Jupiter."

The career of Mithras as depicted on his monuments is difficult to decipher in detail. Evidently he was born of a virgin, but arose from a rock. In several representations of Mithras' birth he is attended by shepherds; and M. Cumont, the leading authority on Mithraism, suggests "a parallel between this and the adoration of the shepherds at the birth of Christ."

Difficulties of interpretation are intensified by the disappearance and, judging from analogy, the deliberate Christian destruction of every written record relating to Mithras' faith. For, with the impending triumph of the Roman Church, Pagan and heretical documents were constantly given to the flames.

Moreover, little publicity was given to Mithraic worship, for nearly all its rites and ceremonies were conducted in secret. Still, it is evident that converts to the solar cult were baptised by complete immersion and this was said to wash away their sins. Porphyry indeed asserts that the Mithraists, like their Christian competitors, saluted each other as brothers and addressed their priests as fathers.

For two centuries Mithraism dominated the Roman world. During this period there was a slight revival of the earlier Pagan observances but it soon passed away. When Mithraism in its turn declined, its chief adherents were patricians and State officials who had connived at the evasion of the malevolent edicts prohibiting every aspect of Pagan worship. Then, as Legge remarks: "The invasions of Alaric and Attila probably completed what the Christian mob had begun."

The brief ascendancy of Mithraism, according to M. Cumont and Sir Samuel Dill, was largely due to the fact that it made little appeal to women who in all ages and climes have served as a permanent prop to the priestly caste. Practically a man's cult, Mithraism possessed none of the elaborate and solemn ceremonies of the Catholic Church. Mithra's devotees seem to have celebrated their religious rites either in their own dwellings or in the temples of other divinities. "In neither case," concludes Legge, "would there have been much need for the assistance of women in their propaganda, who would, moreover, have probably felt little interest in a worship from the most solemn and distinctive parts of which they were excluded. The Mithraists therefore had to dispense with the support of a very large and important fraction of the community which was easily won over to the side of their rivals."

Mithraism was monotheistic and probably, like the earlier attempted reformation in Egypt, it was too refined a faith to withstand the appeal of a cult which made a powerful emotional and alarming impression by threatening with eternal damnation all who rejected the Christian creed. The cosmopolitan population of Rome and the dwellers in the Imperial provinces were beguiled by the traditions of a semi-human deity who walked on earth and ministered unto men. A god of this type made a pronounced human appeal, especially to women, to whom a solar deity such as Mithras seemed far too remote for adoration and worship. In any event, by fair means or foul, the Galilean cult triumphed and, as history proves, the majestic civilisation of Pagan Rome dissolved into chaos and old night.

T. F. PALMER.

ROME OR REASON? A Question for To-day. By Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 4d.; by post 5d.