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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

[This article was originally written in 1938. It is now republished in response to some questions regarding the Gifford Trust. As it is likely to be of interest to others we are reprinting the original article.]

A Breach of Trust

THE Gifford Trust is one of the best known of British lectureships. It was founded by Lord Gifford, a famous Scotch Judge, more than fifty years ago, and its lectures—with one or two exceptions—have been issued to the public. I do not know whether Lord Gifford called himself a Christian, and in any case what he called himself is not material to my reason for writing. His Christianity could not have been of a very virile type. He was probably a philosophical kind of Theist, with leanings towards a general and popular misunderstanding of Spinoza. But whatever he was, and whatever he called himself, the founding of the Gifford Trust lectureship marked him as a man of wide and tolerant outlook. By his will he left a sum of £80,000 for a lectureship or classes to be instituted by the Scotch Universities for "Promoting, Advancing, Teaching and Diffusing the Study of Natural Theology, in the widest sense of the words, the Knowledge of God, the Infinite, the All, the First and only Cause, the one and the sole Substance, the sole Being, the sole Reality and the sole Existence, the Knowledge of His Nature and Attributes, the Knowledge of the Nature and Foundations of Ethics or morals, and all obligations or duties thence arising."

So far it looks as though the Trust was an ordinary religious Trust, which might have little more in view than the fixing of mental fetters on succeeding generations by paid lectureships, although even as it stands there is evidence here of a little wider outlook than is shown in the ordinary religious bequest of this kind. But, as a Judge, Lord Gifford had probably noted how frequently liberal intentions are frustrated by strong religious views, which may justify any rascality so long as it stops short of actual criminal delinquency. So Lord Gifford proceeds to make it quite clear to his executors what he has in view. The will provides that in instituting these scholarships:—

"The lectureships shall be appointed from time to time, each for a period of two years and no longer. . . . The lecturers appointed shall be subjected to no test of any kind, and shall not be required to take any oath or to emit or subscribe any declaration of belief, or to make any promise of any kind; they may be of any denomination whatever or of no denomination at all. . . . they may be of any religion or way of thinking, or, as is sometimes said, they may be of no religion, or they may be so-called Sceptics, or Agnostics, or Free-thinkers. . . . I wish the lecturers to treat their subject

as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all possible sciences. . . . without reference to or reliance upon any supposed special, exceptional, or so called miraculous revelation. I wish it to be treated just as astronomy or chemistry is. The lecturers shall be under no restraint whatever in their treatment of their theme."

That seems precise enough, and definite enough, and there is no mistaking the intention of Lord Gifford. He wished the question of belief in the existence of God to be discussed from all points of view. Those without belief in God were not to be barred. The belief in God was to be treated exactly as lecturers would treat any other subject—as a pure question of natural science. It could be treated from the standpoint of a believer or from that of an unbeliever. It is the way in which every question should be discussed. To science the belief in God is of no greater importance than any other belief. There is only one scientific standpoint from which to discuss the belief in God, and that is from the point of view of origin, nature and history.

No testator ever made a will that more clearly showed his intention than did Lord Gifford. Had he intended his bequest to be spent in merely propping up religious views, he would have stopped with the first paragraph I have cited from his will. But he knew the religious world, he evidently appreciated how lax the sense of moral obligation is where religion is concerned, hence the elaborate protestation that no one was to be asked because of his opinion, asked to avow any opinion, or excluded on account of his opinion. Sceptics, Agnostics, Freethinkers, were to be placed on exactly the same level as Christian believers. The intentions of the testator were admirable. But no law has ever been devised that can make Christians act with complete justice where the interests of their Church or their religion are concerned.

Artful!

The Gifford Trust has been effective for nearly sixty years. Yet during the whole of that period not a single avowed unbeliever—one who was opposed to the belief in God, and who would have traced the idea back to its origin, who would have shown how it began in a complete misunderstanding of the nature of phenomena, and how it has lived by, at its best, an identification of itself with ethical and social sentiments, and the extent to which it has operated in obstructing the development of a sane and healthy social life—not a single person of this type has been invited to deliver a course of Gifford Lectures. The trustees did not refuse to administer the Trust, that might have led to comment and to the appointment of men who would; or, if they had said we will not appoint anyone who attacks the belief in God, they would have advertised their delinquency. They adopted the policy of inviting speakers

who could be trusted not to make any direct attack on the belief in God. The Trustees did not say no avowed Atheist or Agnostic shall be invited to speak, they simply did not invite them. By their conduct they rendered nugatory the essential thing the Trust was intended to secure. Lord Gifford drew up an admirable document, he had admirable intentions, he intended to give all points of view a chance, but he overlooked an important consideration. The conscience of a good Christian is governed by his religion, and whenever religious considerations enter the sphere of either moral obligation or intellectual rectitude these two last things suffer. He forgot the trustees. Had he selected as the first trustees men whom he could have trusted to carry out his real intentions, and had they set an example by selecting two or three avowed unbelievers to deliver a course of lectures, their example might have had some influence. But even that is doubtful. It is probable that the law might have been invoked to set aside that part of the will as being against public policy.

Other Examples

Of course, the deliberate setting aside of an essential part of the intentions of Lord Gifford is not the only example of its kind. Of minor kinds, the example I recently gave of Lord Morley's funeral is one. The expressed desire by his father that Bertrand Russell was to be brought up without any religious instruction, is another illustration to the same end. Many of the educational charitable bequests that date back centuries, and which were originally intended to include "poor" people have been so administered that only children of the "better" classes benefit. So far as Freethinkers are concerned we have the introduction of theology into the London University, although it was founded by Freethinkers and for the express purpose of keeping religion out—except so far as it might be discussed from all points of view. To-day no Professor would dare to preach open and explicit Atheism in London University.

America provides us with an even more glaring example of this misdirection in the famous Girard Trust. Stephen Girard was an avowed unbeliever. A very wealthy man, he left large sums for charitable purposes. The Girard estate is at present valued at about forty million dollars. One of Girard's bequests, consisting of over five million dollars, was left to build a college for orphans. By express provision, no ecclesiastic or minister of any sect whatever was to be permitted to enter the college. The children were to receive a secular education, and left to do as they pleased when they grew up with regard to religion. These provisions have been completely ignored. It is one of the most scandalous cases that America has to offer, although we can provide very many similar ones in this country.

A Word to the Wise

I was led to refer back to the Gifford case because I was recently asked to give my opinion of the provisions of a will intended to provide for lectures on much the lines of Lord Gifford's will, but more strongly expressed. I am not at liberty to disclose the name of the donor, but he is a personal friend and I believe his intentions will be carried out. After looking at the will I said that it seemed quite good, so far as I could judge. But at the same time I felt bound to point out that it was not possible to draw up a

Trust, Articles of Association, or a Constitution of a Society that did not ultimately depend for their loyal discharge upon the character of the men and women who administered the Trust, or Articles. Men who are intellectually honest will do what they can faithfully to carry out the intentions of the deed they administer. But place in power those who think that anything in which they believe must either be protected from attack, or may be attacked in the name of the trust they administer, and who will seek, by twisting words into conformity with their own ideas, to justify a distinct abuse of their trust, and almost anything may happen. I can imagine a Trust that is essentially religious being controlled by a certain type of unbeliever, and using its money to circulate "The Freethinker" on the ground that it is good to let religious people see what an evil thing Freethought is. In a similar way, no matter how carefully rules are formed or Trusts devised, it will always be possible for them to be diverted from their proper purpose. And where money is in question, or ambitions are concerned, such attempts at diversion are bound to occur. In every case it is the men and women who administer a trust—whether it be a legal or a moral one—that matters. I think nearly all the Christian Nonconformist bodies are governed by a Trust, but the vast majority of them are to-day indulging in teachings that are out of conformity with their And if the founders of the Nonconformist Trusts could be made conscious of what teachings are being set forth in the names of the chapels they founded, it would be enough to make them turn in their graves.

It is always the men and women in control that matter. However careful one may be in drawing up rules or in drafting constitutions, the conscientious execution of them depends upon the human material with which one has to work. That is one reason, and I think a good one, for calling attention to the misuse of the Gifford Trust. The Trustees have done nothing against the law. No one with any right to speak can say that the trust has been legally misused. From the religious or party point of view it has not been misused. But nevertheless the intention of the testator had not been realised. And what has been realised could have been realised—was being realised—without it. If the will had provided that a given proportion of the selected lecturers should have been avowed disbelievers in a God, then the Gifford lecturers might have discussed the belief in God just as one discusses an ordinary question. But even then I am not sure that human ingenuity acting dishonestly might not have found some way out of the straight and narrow path of intellectual rectitude.

CHAPMAN COHEN

A RECORD OF RELIGIOUS AUSTERITY

ALTHOUGH now little read, Edmund Gosse's "Father and Son" (Heinemann) is a study of permanent interest to Rationalists. The mournful superstitions and morbid miseries sought and suffered by Calvinists and Plymouth Brethren, as to secure salvation after death are realistically recalled in a work composed by one who, as a child, was the unwilling victim of religious rigour.

Let us trust that the Puritan austerities of the past will never return. Strangely enough, Edmund's father was an eminent

scientist, yet, his credulity and abject folly in his religious observances appeared astounding to his more enlightened contemporaries.

Gosse's mother was also extremely pious and both parents dedicated their only child to the service of their deity. When the child was two months old, she wrote in her diary: "We have given him to the Lord: and we trust He will really manifest him to be His own, if he grow up; and if the Lord take him early, we will not doubt that he is taken to Himself."

Bibliolatry and prayer were the guiding principles of both parents and they never doubted their correct interpretation of the Scriptures or their personal relationship with God. "So confident were they of their intercourse with God," avers their son, "that they asked for no other guide. They recognised no spiritual authority among men, they subjected themselves to no priest or minister, they troubled their consciences about no current manifestation of 'religious opinion.' They lived in an intellectual cell."

As the boy acquired the art of reading his early pleasure in books was gratified, so far as it could be, by the perusal of the serious and sombre volumes in his home. No secular or religious fiction was permitted and Scott's poetry was *tabooed* by his mother as untrue. She herself wrote improving books, but she deemed the exercise of mere imagination as folly and sin. She supplicated release from this shortcoming as it "has hindered my prayers and prevented any improvement and therefore humbled me very much." She had considerable literary gifts, and her son surmised that had she given scope to her imagination she would have become a noted novelist.

The elder Gosse had lived in the tropics and he favoured missionary activities for his son, but Mrs. Gosse anticipated that he would be another Wesley or Whitefield when he reached man's estate.

Their God was so intimately associated with his parents that their child considered the divinity a fourth member of the family. Moreover, he regarded his father as equally omniscient, until he noticed that his parent could be both misled and mistaken. This was an early instance of a scepticism which gradually became complete.

The religionists most closely akin to the Gosses were sunk in the most primitive superstitions. Our author assures us that: "If anyone was ill it showed that 'the Lord's hand was extended in chastisement' and much prayer was poured forth in order that it might be explained to the sufferer, or to his relations, in what he or they had sinned. People would, for instance, go on living over a cesspool, working themselves up into an agony to discover how they had incurred the displeasure of the Lord, but never moving away." When the boy was ill and the physician recommended treatment, this was disregarded by his pious parents. "If I was feeble it was the Lord's Will, and we must acquiesce."

According to his parents' belief, the efficacy of prayer was such that in answer, God would always provide. So the boy innocently prayed for a toy he had seen displayed in a shop in Islington, "carefully adding the words 'If it is thy Will.'" But the father declared he must not pray for things of that description, but for what we really needed. But our informant tells us: "I needed the humming-top a great deal more than I did the conversion of the heathen or the restitution of Jerusalem to the Jews, two objects of my nightly supplication that left me cold."

The sin of idolatry was constantly reprobated by the elder Gosse's saintly communion and the son closely interrogated his father concerning this wicked custom. This, he gathered, was the evil practice of worshipping anything except the Lord himself who would manifest his anger towards any Christian who bowed to wood or stone. The boy, however, was unconvinced and decided to pray to a chair and await the consequence.

"Having carried this act of idolatry safely through," he states, "I waited to see what would happen. It was a fine day, and I gazed up at the slip of white sky . . . and expected something to appear in it. God would certainly exhibit his anger in some terrible form, and would chastise my sinful and wilful action. I was very much alarmed, and still more excited; I breathed the sharp air of defiance. But nothing happened; there was not a cloud in the sky. . . Presently I was quite sure that nothing would happen. I had committed idolatry, flagrantly and deliberately, and God did not care."

In indoctrinating his boy of eight with supernatural concepts the father treated his child as if he were a miniature man for he had not the faintest acquaintance with child psychology. Throughout his infancy and early adolescence, the boy was so nauseated with primitive beliefs and observances that his ultimate emancipation from his father's creed became inevitable.

After Mrs. Gosse's death the family migrated to Devon where much innocent pleasure was afforded by natural history studies along the seashore. The lad had now attained the age of ten and this was the eventful time when the theory of evolution agitated men's minds. Lyell suggested that before the principle of Natural Selection was published to the world, leading biologists should be privately informed of its tenour. Both Darwin and Hooker sounded Gosse who was strongly inclined to accept it. "Let it be admitted at once," avers his son, "mournful as this admission is, that every instinct in his intelligence went out at first to greet the new light. It had hardly done so when the opening chapter of 'Genesis' checked it at the outset." He consulted Carpenter and they agreed to reject the new discovery and cling to the fixity of species. Moreover, it was unfortunate that as Gosse had now left London his intercourse with Royal Society friends came to an end.

To explain the multitudinous facts upon which the evolutionists relied, Gosse put forward the ludicrous hypothesis that the past modifications of the earth's surface and the changes of the fossils imbedded in the rocks resulted from a chaos arising from the creation. Gosse's book was received with laughter and was dismissed as an attempt to prove "that God hid the fossils in the rocks in order to tempt geologists into infidelity." Men of science smiled nor did the Churches receive Gosse's proposed reconciliation at all gladly.

Naturally Gosse was bitterly grieved with the scornful reception of his well-meant volume. Also, his standing as a scientific writer and lecturer was greatly reduced, while sadly enough, he attributed his failure to some sin he had inadvertently committed for which God now punished him, and this deepened his depression.

Our author recalls a great Evangelical Conference in London where a massive speaker's oration was directed against the tepidity of professed Christians in denouncing idolatry. "At this very moment is proceeding unreprieved," he complained, "a blasphemous celebration of the birth of Shakespeare, a lost soul suffering for his sins in hell."

The elder Gosse was convinced of the Second Coming when a selected few would be caught up in the air and conveyed to heaven. In parting with his boy at night he would say: "Who knows? We may meet next in the air with all the cohorts of God's saints." "My father," notes the son, "lived for a quarter of a century more, never losing the hope of 'not tasting death' and as the last moments of mortality approached, he was bitterly disappointed at what he held to be a scanty reward for his long faith and patience."

This appears a weird apprenticeship for a writer like Edmund Gosse, who became the intimate of such resplendent Rationalist stars as Swinburne, Meredith, Hardy and other literary heretics who adorned the Victorian Age.

BRITAIN v. ROME

II.

IN considering the effects of organised Roman Catholic activity on British social life we have to bear in mind, in the first place, that the nature of the Roman religion is such as to produce a condition closely approaching fanaticism in the mind of the Catholic "enthusiast."

This state of enthusiasm—to give it its mildest description—tends to make the subject of it lose sight of the fact that other interests may be involved in a question in addition to those for which he is working. He also develops a keen sense of injustice, which is probably largely due to the fact that in this country the Catholic Church plays a good deal upon its minority position. There is nothing more stimulating to the sense of injustice than constantly being told that one is in a minority, especially when the suggestion of oppression and persecution is coupled to it.

These factors result in a strongly "defensive" attitude on the part of Catholic workers in the social sphere. They become, indeed, so sensitive of their own differences that their non-Catholic fellows also become sensitive, and there grows up an attitude of mind among non-Catholics that one has to be very careful not to hurt the "delicate" religious feelings of the Catholics. This has been particularly manifest in the Labour movement during the past twenty or thirty years; so much so that more than one cynic has been led to suggest that, just as the Church of England is the Conservative Party at prayer, so the Catholic Church in England is the Labour Party at prayer.

Perhaps the simile is somewhat exaggerated, but it certainly illustrates the tendency of recent years, as both Parliamentary and municipal history will show on the appropriate occasions. One thing is crystal clear—that is, that the Catholic Church saw the leftward trend in Britain many years ago and set its machinery to work assiduously towards the end, either of capturing or corrupting the movement. It has had a good measure of success in corrupting—and one wonders how a movement which gets "het up" about even mild political heresies can countenance in its midst a strong element representative of the most reactionary institution in history, and authoritatively declared by the Pope himself to be opposed to Socialism.

In recent years when, with a war-time Coalition Government, it was not quite so easy to bring Parliamentary pressure to bear, the tendency has been for the Church to apply itself more closely to local administration. Branches of the Catholic Parents and Electors' Association have been formed in various parts of the country, including Westminster, Southwark, Birmingham, Liverpool, Salford, Lancaster, Newcastle, Hexham, Portsmouth, Brentwood, Nottingham, and elsewhere, while in the West Riding the founder branch at Bradford and an active daughter branch at Leeds, have given skilled tuition to the rest.

Bradford C.P.E.A., indeed, had become so strong a force in local politics that it was virtually in the position of nominating its own candidates in some of the city's wards during last year's municipal elections. In one ward where no Labour ward group existed, two Catholics had their election addresses ready before any official nomination was made by the Party, and they stood and were elected under the Labour banner.

Once elected, such councillors invariably work for the good of the Church on all occasions where its interests may be involved, this even to the detriment of well-founded public and party principles. As an example, the case of a Catholic Church in Bradford may be quoted.

It has always been the policy of the city's Labour group to resist the sale of municipally owned land to private interests, and this policy has been adhered to on occasions when, perhaps, in the best interests of the city, a departure might have been justified. But when it came to a question of selling some public land in connection with the development of a Catholic Church,

Catholic influence was so strong that party policy went by the board—and the land was sold! Where even the prospect of attracting new industries has failed to modify party policy on the question of municipal land, the Catholic Church has secured humble acquiescence to its interests.

So much (and a great deal more) for the method of direct penetration. There is also the method of intimidation. Catholic P.E.A.'s have become adept in the art of intimidating public representatives by means of circulars, letters, and questionnaires. I have studied many such documents which have been sent from time to time by Catholic organisations to M.P.'s and councillors who were considered to have offended against Rome by voting or not voting as the case might be. One councillor friend of mine has a remarkable collection of these documents, and it is interesting to note the frequency with which the phrase appears, "a note has been made of this," always conveying a threatening implication.

At public meetings the injured feelings of Catholics are often displayed by an ostentatious show of "taking names and addresses." During my recent election campaign when I fought on the specific issue of Roman Catholic school grants, the name-taking pantomime became farcical; the names of my chairman at meetings, and of questioners at meetings being furtively sought by C.P.E.A. "spies," and at one big public meeting a Roman Catholic headmaster was so ridiculous as to jump up at the end and loudly demand the name of a well-known councillor who had opposed the Catholic point of view by voting in favour of a protest against the grants.

"Rough stuff" also plays its part in the Catholic repertoire of intimidation, and I have personally been threatened with violence ("we'll get a knife in your back one of these dark nights"), and even waited for and followed. But I readily admit that this sort of thing (within my own experience) is typical only of the ignorant type of Catholic who is inflamed with a consuming passion to honour his Church and prove his Christianity by acting like a hooligan. The more intelligent Catholic lay enthusiast recognises that far greater success may be achieved by the subtle methods, and the elite of the C.P.E.A.'s infinitely prefer the skillful form of intimidation.

One widely practised aspect of the game is to aim at securing administrative appointments for sons and daughters of the Church or to select such from those holding appointments, and see that they are made and kept "Church conscious." The recent case of the Roman Catholic priest charged with an offence against a boy, whose case was taken in a separate court, held "out of hours," illustrates this point. The priest was bound over, and despite the subsequent scandal there was no re-trial of the case. But a layman, charged with a similar offence a few weeks ago, was sentenced to the (idiotic) term of fourteen years imprisonment. There are many disgraceful examples of "Church consciousness" in administrative life, and a clean-up is long overdue. I am afraid that in this connection to fight against the god-idea alone is not sufficient, for the task calls for the smashing up of a system of moral corruption and hypocrisy that is something distinct in itself (though admittedly it grew out of the existence of religion) and calls for vigorous intervention by Freethinkers and other socially minded citizens wherever the practice is found.

There also exists an astonishing complex of other Catholic organisations in many walks of secular life, each contributing its quota to the general plan for imposing on the community as a whole the outlook of the very small Roman minority. What other construction can be put upon the existence of, say, the Catholic Pharmaceutical Society, whose members, though supposedly trading as chemists for the convenience of the public, will not sell contraceptives even though they be required by non-Catholics? Or a Catholic Medical Association which, on vital matters such as emergency abortion (permissible for saving the life of a mother) listens to the twaddle of Cardinal Griffin.

and follows the doctrines of the Roman Church rather than hearing the voice of humanity and following the precepts of medical science?

Despite its trivial numerical position in Britain, Rome has probably more off-shoot secular branches of activity than any other movement in the country. Each and all work at all times, night and day, as it were, to interfere with the liberty, convenience, and happiness of non-Catholics by asserting their own point of view to the detriment of the non-Catholic point of view, putting it across on all occasions, and by hook or by crook.

Such an institution cannot be checked by compromise. It must be courageously and militantly opposed. And it is the practical task of Freethinkers to do this—to lay the trail of opposition and exposure so that one day, perhaps, the timid politician may follow in our wake, gingerly picking his democratic steps across the religious ruins which he dare not negotiate without the Freethought pioneer who always blasts the first path!

F. J. CORINA.

INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC CULTURE ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE WEST

(Concluded from page 84)

FRANCE, however, had been subjected to Islamic influences at a much earlier date than the period of Sully. Charlemagne had understood that Law and Force were useless in his endeavours to reform and organise barbarians. He understood that the arts and letters were the only means of overthrowing barbarism. (It seems that this lesson has not yet been understood in modern times). Charlemagne knew Harun-al-Rashid who had sent him a clock as a present. In 777 he concluded treaties of alliance with the Moors of Saragossa and Huesca. Through these treaties he brought to France Moors from Spain and Arabs from Syria—grammarians, musicians and mathematicians. At a later period the Venetian traders arrived in France.

The manuscript of antiquities of Limoges dates the arrival of Venetians between 988 and 989. It goes on as follows: "The old registers of the country tell us that the Venetian traders of merchandise from the East being unable to pass their ships on their way from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic through the Straits of Gibraltar (on account of the difficulties of passage), came to settle at Limoges and established the Venetian Exchange, bringing spices and other stuffs from the East, through Aiguillon, Mortes by mule or camel to Limoges and thence to La Rochelle, Brittany, England, Scotland, etc." This happened at a time when architects were trying to find to replace the wooden ceilings of churches, an easy prey to fire, by something more solid. In this way the cupola was introduced. But this cupola was the Eastern cupola of Byzantium or Mesopotamia and it came through Venice together with spices, silk and fabrics from Syria, Baghdad, Egypt, Sicily and Spain. All these fabrics are to be found in all mediæval tombs of the 12th century or paintings of that period. In the path of trade art followed, and the architecture of Saintonge, Poitou, Anjou, Maine and especially Normandy adapted for their own use drawings and especially decorative designs of Eastern patterning. All along the Rhone and Saone we see Venetian influence and through Venice the Islamic East is present.

All the decorative motifs as far as Toulouse and the mouth of the Gironde are Eastern. In 984 St. Front was built reproducing St. Mark of Venice. It was designed either from the plans of a Venetian architect or from the drawings of a Frenchman who studied St. Mark. In this I quote the great authority Viollet-le-Duc. The cupolas, however, of St. Front belong to the ovoidal Islamic type and this tradition still persists in modern French church buildings such as those by Vandremere, Magne and others. I venture to suggest that the Renaissance, rich in Eastern designs such as the arabesque, the beehive pattern and other geometrical designs adopted the principle of contrast of dome

and spire from the Islamic cupola and minaret. The ellipsoidal form of the Renaissance dome forming an independent external shell from the internal vault has not yet been satisfactorily explained. The artistic mind always works on some precedent, however slender it may be. Did not the stalactite motif develop from the corbelled tiles (first to be seen at the mosque of Al-Zayashi in Mesopotamia) and did not the Irish interlaced decorative carving as well as the Northern German and Scandinavian find their primary form in Coptic and Arabic designs? To the same origin may be attributed the geometrical cornices to be found in early Renaissance buildings.

From this short expose of the influence of Islam on Western architecture it may be seen that many new ideas were due to the impact of the East and the West, one of the least expected being the origin of modern taxation. With income tax at 10s. in the £1, it is comforting to know that Louis VII. in 1146 levied a tax on personal property and his example was soon followed by Henry II. who raised twopence on the £1 and also the Saladin tithe to finance the crusades. This flow of ideas may be explained also by the fact that craftsmen of all creeds and races travelled in far distant countries in search of work. In time of war these craftsmen formed the "smalla" that followed the camps. Tolerance was a virtue greatly practised by Muslim rulers. In Spain, Christians and Muslims lived side by side, creating a friendly atmosphere seldom seen in Europe in the Middle Ages. So much so that the French who had helped Alphonso VIII. to win the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) deserted the Spanish king in disgust when they saw how kindly he treated the conquered Muslims. "L'Islam est une religion d'hommes," says Renan. It would be fitting, therefore, to recall the verses of the Qur-an: "Men are the enemies of each other. Were they left to their instincts of violence and greed, they would utterly lay waste the earth."

PROFESSOR HECTOR O. CORFIATO, S.A.D.G.

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From "The Islamic Review"

"WHAT IS YOUR ENGLAND?"

I MET him on the Embankment, he was a corporal in the United States Army Air Force. He had been talking on a variety of subjects when he suddenly asked, "What have we been fighting for?" After a rather strained silence I replied, "For the 'four freedoms' and our own particular countries." It was then that he asked something which I still find it difficult to answer, "You in England have been fighting for England and liberty. What is your England?" I was unable to answer at the time, but a few days ago I recalled our conversation, and that question brought to my mind the film version of Eric Knight's novel "This Above All." I remember the tensely dramatic scene in which Joan Fontaine tries to convince Tyrone Power that England is worth fighting for. Because of that memory I am at last able to reply to my American friend's question.

If a man asked you what your England was, you would talk of Shakespeare and apple blossom in Kent, and of castles, great families, and ancient traditions. Of the sun on the cliffs of Dover, and of class distinctions, and royalty. Yet, even then, you would not have answered the query. I asked a friend what he thought, and his reply was that "England is a lump of dirt dumped in the Atlantic next door to a bigger lump of dirt called Europe and Asia." But men don't die for dirt.

I have come to the conclusion that the answer is a different one for every person you ask. For a peer it is a comfortable country residence. For a Cockney two-penn'orth o' chips an' 'arf uv aile. We have not fought for anything concrete, whilst we know what we mean when we say we have been fighting for freedom, we cannot say what we mean when we say we have been fighting for England—England is abstract and indefinable.

FRANCIS I. GOULD.

ACID DROPS

Bishop Harwood has a keen eye to business. Speaking at Bedford he said there is an opinion going round that if you live a good life you are a good Christian. There are two things here that invite criticism. The first is the statement as given which is now a very popular one and has nothing definitely Christian about it. There are good men as well as bad ones in every religion and in every group of humans. Secondly, if that were enough and if people were only decent, there would be no need for bishops and parsons. But no priest from the lowest to the highest can agree with this definition. So we think that from the official point of view the Bishop is both historically and religiously right when he says "there is no suggestion anywhere in the New Testament that one could be a Christian without being a member of the Christian body." In plain language, a religion that does not find a place for bishops and other officers is not worth bothering about. As an American would say: "Bishop Harwood has said a mouthful."

Very graciously the "Catholic Herald" in a leading article says: "We are prepared for a measure of Capitalism, and even a measure of Communism where any of these help to redress social and economic justice in a techno-cratie and predominantly democratic age." That is very gracious, particularly as the meaning of the passage is that the Roman Church will agree to anything that promises to keep the Church well in front, and can boss the movements of the people. We never had any doubts on that head. But what the Roman Church has to overcome is the growing conviction that religion has had its day.

Mr. J. Simmons, M.P., evidently belongs to that class of people who have the feeling that all is not right with Christianity but lacks the courage to break with an old association. It is a very common attitude, but reformers should be built of stouter stuff. There are all sorts of opinions or excuses for not throwing Christianity overboard, but the commonest is that of informing the world that Christianity has not failed because it has never been tried. But that is the greatest failure of all. It is bad enough to say that a teaching has never received the appreciation it should have received. That is the fate of many, and never was that truer than in the case of Freethought that has had to face a continuous and widely-spread opposition throughout, and in some cases has still not been recognised. But when we are dealing with what claims to be a message from Heaven, we are on different grounds. Mortals may fail and their very names forgotten, but for God stalking the world to find someone who will give him a night's lodging is too ridiculous for comment.

But that happens to be the case with Mr. Simmons, M.P. We must put in the full name and title because the title cannot well be ignored. He says it is ridiculous to say that Christianity has failed. It has never been tried. One would like to know what it is that has never been tried? If the story were true we should have to say that never before in the world's history has a religion received more numerous and varied trials. Almost every doctrine has been tried rightside up and upside down, and every doctrine has been set aside with more or less strength. Christianity has been tried, it has had power, and it is steadily declining. It was never so weak as it is to-day.

Mr. Simmons, as usual in such circumstances, states that Christianity insists men should love one another, etc. It really does not matter who or what said that. It is not a Christian saying any more than it is an Egyptian saying or a Mohammedan saying, or a saying from any group of people one cares to select. And long before it was written it was practised. To call a thing or a teaching Christian, it must have a feature that is present in Christianity but is not present elsewhere. People can be honest without Jesus, they can be truthful without Jesus, they can be a decent husband or wife, or parent, or be a good citizen without Jesus. There is nothing in the shape of ethics that can be monopolised by Christianity. As a matter of plain fact all these things were found in action long before they were expressed in words or writing. So with all politeness we desire to say that when Mr. Simmons says that "everything will fail

unless we have for inspiration the teaching of Christ," he is talking double-barrelled nonsense.

The very hard-shell Christians of Teignmouth are rejoicing because 561 people voted against Sunday openings of cinemas and only 169 voted in favour. It is quite clear that the larger proportion of the people did not vote, and this means that if cinemas were opened they would raise no objections. By this vote people who wish to go to a cinema or other places of amusement cannot be allowed to do so. If any place is a nuisance, a real nuisance, that can be closed under the existing law. What we are witnessing is really the intolerance of a section of the people dominating the whole. No one prevents people going to Church, and it is the bigots who, by a very foolish law, are trying to prevent people going to a cinema.

From the "Cape Argus" newspaper we learn that large parts of South Africa have been in need of water. The old Christian method was to take a shortage of water as evidence of God's displeasure, and when the rain came it was a mark that his children had been forgiven. But times alter, and the Archbishop is wide awake to the situation. So he explained that the old method was to "regard the state of the weather a signal proof of God's pleasure or otherwise." But times have changed, so the Archbishop says, "our creator is the supreme arbiter of the weather. He nevertheless is not primarily the cause of drought." The Archbishop is obviously a very artful "cove." We leave our readers to work out the problem involved.

But South Africa has not the only "artful cove" at work. We have them here. Take the following from one who has been begging and praying for people to write to him. He declares that 50,000 people have now written to the Rev. W. H. Elliott to say how they are ready to give England a "spiritual" movement. Mr. Elliott is very proud and happy, but when one comes to think about it, this seems very little indeed for a nation of 45 millions who are always considered in text books and reference works as Christian. We don't doubt for a moment that out of the remnants of believers, the real believers, a paltry 50,000 still remain desperately anxious to show their faith. Even Mr. Elliott feels this a little, for he pathetically implores another 50,000 to send in their names. And what good will the 100,000 do?

Take as an answer Mr. Elliott's own admissions as to the old pre-war League of Prayer. It touched, he tells us, over 5 millions just before the war, and "its card of prayer was translated into 50 or 60 languages, including 15 dialects of India." Thus millions of prayers went up aloft every day, and what was the result? The most awful war in history, entailing the greatest destruction of property and life, and accompanied by such human misery as the world has never known. Mr. Elliott says the League still goes on. We do not doubt it, but if ever an example was needed to prove that Christian prayer accomplishes nothing whatever, he has himself given the answer.

Mr. Harold Riley of the Church Union is very riled indeed. He has just found out, from a Hong Kong journal January, 1946, that the lady whom the Bishop of Hong Kong "ordained" in 1944—and being a Bishop he could do it—is still exercising her ministry. This is very shocking, and Mr. Riley appears to be a little disturbed as to where the salary comes from, especially as the "ordination" has been "repudiated" by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Well, she may be doing it all "for love," and if her congregation adores her what has it to do with Mr. Riley? After all, we guarantee that she saves as many souls in a week as the Archbishop does in the whole of his lifetime.

There is no doubt that Roman Catholics get value for their money. And their reward is cash down. For example, the "Liverpool Echo" publishes the news in the cash-down column: "M.C. offers grateful thanks, St. Jude, for her son's examination pass." "P.M. thanks the Mother of God and St. Jude for P.M. getting the house that was 'obtained.'" And so forth. It is no use saying that fools and their money are soon parted. These people told the saints just what they wanted and what they wanted came. What better evidence could one get!

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SUGAR PLUMS

We dealt last week at some length with the quality of the Rev. D. R. Davies. His pleading is not worth dealing more with at length, but two or three comments by Mr. Davies may be serviceable on the lines practised by the Spartans, who made their slaves drunk in order to impress the minds of youth against drunkenness. Here is a good sample. Mr. Davies says that we must have "Nothing less than the recovery by our generation of the whole Christian attitude to life, the world and man." That is all, and anyone can put that into concrete form by taking Christianity, say, a few hundred years ago. Witchcraft would be in full swing, the Church empowered to see that men and women should be imprisoned, tortured and executed for insulting the Church, the earth would be flat, the sun would be going round the earth, the Bible would be accepted as true from beginning to end, freedom of thought where religion was concerned was unborn, and so forth and so forth.

So Mr. Davies says emphatically "Christianity must be re-invented." But Christianity is being re-invented. Christianity has become the upholder of all the social things that are likely to come into force. It is ready to throw on one side the historic Christianity and lie, and lie again, in order to keep the new Christianity alive. All the up-to-date Christian leaders are asking to be given to-day the controlling power they once had—and having got that they trust somehow to restore the power of the Churches. The trick is an old one, it is being practised to-day in many directions, but we do not think the situations are favourable for Christianity—old or new.

In the "Sunday Chronicle" a Miss Jane Clegg tells us she is glad "that the Church is aiming to give itself a stronger foundation of human interest." This is a delightful compliment paid to a Church which has ever boasted that its interest has always been human—did not "our Lord" himself go about "doing good"? Miss Clegg also wants to know how can "an overworked, harassed clergyman" be expected to turn out one or sometimes two perfect addresses every week to "inspire" his congregation? It appears to us that very few clergymen, even when not harassed, are able to turn out a "gifted" address once a year—if ever at all. In any case, the world can get on very well without the addresses, and nobody compels a clergyman to take on the job. Our sympathy still remains with the congregation.

The "Church Times" complains that as Christians "we are in violent rebellion against much that is accepted in the secular society into which we are born." The operative word is "secular," for hitherto it has always been violently contended that it is a "Christian" society into which we are born. If, for example, an Atheist is found to be a decent, kind, human being,

it is constantly urged that it is the result of his "Christian" environment that he has imbibed "Christian" morality with his mother's milk, and in his life it is always the "Christian" rule of life that guides his conduct. But if the "Church Times" is right, and it is a secular society which surrounds us, how does it account for a "decent" Atheist? We would dearly like to see an answer.

In the Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints, Manchester, to-day, Mr. F. A. Hornibrook will speak on "The Vatican Menace." The course of lectures there have been very well attended and this, the last of the series, should attract a full house. The lecture begins at 3 p.m.

We do not think that we should care to live in some of the islands of the Outer Hebrides. It is a very lonely kind of place, although we believe it has its natural beauties, but it is not a naturally joyful home. There have been attempts to erect village halls in honour of returning servicemen. But the elders are adamant—which is so often the equivalent of "being a damned nuisance." They are afraid that such places will become "Temples for the Devil." Perhaps, but if that were so, even if the "Devil" was a visitor every evening it would certainly be a relief from God's own favourites. The ministers reply to all applications and arguments, "There will be no halls. You want Temples for the Devil. We know well what the halls would be used for—dancing, singing, and so forth." So the old residents see to it that there is no enjoyment on Sunday.

The situation reminds one of the old Scotch preacher who, when he was asked to lend a hand to develop "happy Sunday afternoons" replied by thanking God that there had never been a "happy Sunday afternoon in his Church." Well, we should remember that while much is told us of Jesus, he is never presented as laughing.

It is also worth chronicling that for a man to join a Church in the Outer Hebrides he must be known publicly for at least six months or a year so that a religious change called "conversion" had come over him. On second thoughts we should like to visit the Outer Hebrides. It gives us some idea of the way people lived about three or four hundred years ago in solitary places.

Pity the poor parson! If he sticks hard to his Church he misses the people outside; and if he goes to those outside, the people in Church complain that he is neglecting his religion. No wonder there is unrest among the clergy.

If this continues we shall feel pitifully towards the clergy. Every week we have to note the cries of the clergy that while they have plenty of seats in Church, there are very few occupied, except in the case of preachers who are careful not to say too much religion. The last case we have come across is the Rev. P. S. Lee, who asks for twelve volunteers to help him in persuading people to come to church. He says that he has eight thousand souls in his parish, but only about 2 per cent. will for certain arrive in heaven. He cannot frighten his parishioners with sending them to hell, for it is likely that all their friends are already there, and they may desire to meet them. One can be quite certain that the fine characters that have gone to hell will have a place really worth living in by now.

The Editor of the "Church Times" is seriously disturbed. He had taken it for granted that the Education Act would have provided for the children having their "regular opening act in a church," but it is now decided that this would be illegal. We are very pleased to know that it is so. It is bad enough to have religion in the State schools, but to give the Church the first drive at the children is to weaken the authority of the school. One day we hope to see religion abolished altogether from the State schools.

Further, the "C.T." remarks that instruction is indispensable to the Church, but prayer is literally vital. We agree. Instruction invites some kind of thinking, but prayer is essentially and scientifically drugging all who submit to it. A person on his or her knees leaves off thinking seriously, and the less of that the better for the Church.

AN ARCHANGEL—DAMAGED

II.

I SAID in my previous article that in interpreting a man's mind on religion considerable attention should be given to his youthful attitude. In young life we are naturally unguarded and exuberant; what we really think will come spontaneously out. This is a prelude to a remarkable passage in "Pickwick Papers" wherein Tony Weller says to Sam:—

"She's been getting rayther in the Methodistical order lately, Sammy. She is uncommon pious to be sure. She's got hold of some invention for grown-up people being born again, Sammy—the 'new birth' I think they calls it. I should very much like to see that system in haaction, Sammy. I should very much like to see your mother-in-law born again. Wouldn't I put her out to nurse!"

No doubt in the general hilarity caused by "Pickwick" this bold sally was not particularly noticed by many. A few, however, demurred, and not surprisingly. Even now, a hundred years after it was written, I doubt if any young Baptist would dare to read it at his literary society. Dickens knew so little of Christian doctrine that apparently he was under the impression that regeneration was an "invention" of Little Bethel. For all his recommendations of the New Testament, it is obvious that his perusal of it was very perfunctory. As in the "Life of Our Lord" (sold for £40,000), when he wrote about religion he was so little interested he could not take the trouble to get his facts right.

Another curious example of the same kind of thing came twelve years after. In "Dombey and Son," referring to the "nature of pure love," he said:—

"The flame that in its grossed composition has the taint of earth, may prey upon the breast that gives it shelter, but the sacred fire from heaven is as gentle in the heart, as when it rested on the heads of the assembled twelve and showed each man his brother brightened and unhurt."

If Dickens had referred to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles he would have found the "Day of Pentecost" was concerned with the "gift of tongues," and had nothing whatever to do with love. An unfledged curate would have known better. Dickens tackling theology was in wandering mazes lost. Like Stephen Blackpool, with economics, it was all a muddle.

Then there is dear old Captain Cuttle. He must obviously be beloved by all readers. Let us then make him pious—at any rate on Sundays! Then he "read a certain Divine Sermon once delivered on a mount, and appeared to read it with as reverent an understanding of its heavenly spirit as if he had got it off by heart in Greek and had been able to write any number of fierce theological disquisitions on its every phrase." Captain Cuttle might have got down his Bible on Sundays, but more likely, as an old lady in one of the novels got down Buchan's "Domestic Medicine"—to fall asleep over it. Dickens's idea of the simplicity of the sermon revealed his own simple mind. If conscription had come in with the Crimean War I wonder what his disquisition would have been on the subject of non-resistance! He favoured that War, so what might have been his embarrassment had one of his sons, reading the New Testament on father's advice but with more attention, elected to become a conscientious objector? Surely an old sea dog like Cuttle must have been mystified by the advice "Resist not evil."

Then there are the pious children. I do not think Dickens found them in his own nursery. They were created for a peculiar public that presumably liked them. Hear Lucie Manette's little son on his heavenward flight: "Dear Papa and Mamma, I'm very sorry to leave you both and to leave my pretty sister, but I am called and I must go!" One squirms to read such a passage from a man of genius. Stuff, sad stuff, as George III. unhappily

said of Shakespeare. As Andrew Lang truly remarked, Dickens wallowed naked in the pathetic. In Victorian days you could not get the effect of pathos without turning on the tap of religious emotion.

In one matter Dickens was consistent throughout. On religion he advocated a passionate reticence. He did not quite go so far as Shaftesbury and Disraeli and say that the wise man never said what his religion was (a counsel of caution not courage) but he did say he would only whisper it about. In the Preface to the first cheap edition of "Pickwick" he said, of the "truth and beauty" of the Christian religion, "the more we are earnest as to feeling it, the less we are disposed to hold about it." An amazing doctrine—very hard on the poor parson. Most unnatural too. "They do not love that do not show their love," says Julia in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." Dickens took the same line to the end. Writing on the day before he died to a correspondent who was justly uneasy about an illustration in "Edwin Drood" to "the highly popular lamb who was long and unresistingly led to the slaughter"—Dickens probably was unaware of the origin of the phrase—he said he had always "striven to express veneration for the life and lessons of our Saviour," but, he added, "I have never made proclamation of this from the housetops." His correspondent might well have asked (taking housetops as a synonym for a pulpit), "Why not?" Corybantic Christianity, as Huxley called the Salvation Army, was yet to come. To many of us it is more impressive in sincerity than the attitude of so many who declare they are Christians at heart but run no risk of being bored at Church. We have this religious reticence very marked to-day—so we are told. Our soldiers, sailors and airmen were always fighting a good fight against Nazidom with all their might because Christ was their strength and Christ their right, but they would not have thought of saying anything about it!

I have mentioned the last day of Dickens's conscious life. He delighted the orthodox were to find that he had then, in writing "Edwin Drood," used the phrase "Resurrection and the Life." It had figured at the end of "A Tale of Two Cities" in recounting the death of Carton. What the reader is supposed to understand is not clear. Was it a voice from the sky, some reflection of the novelist? What did the phrase mean? I am sure Dickens would have been embarrassed had you asked him. The explanation he really gives himself. Referring to Carton he says: "Long ago . . . he had followed his father to his grave. These solemn words which had been read . . . rose in his mind as he went down the dark streets." Most happily later he added: "The chain of association that brought words home like the rusty old ship's anchor from the past might have been easily found." A religious ceremony may evoke an esoteric emotion. I daresay the present Dean of St. Paul's would read the ordinary burial service over a heretic. Dr. Gilbert Murray though without the least belief in what he implied—that future life depended upon a certain theological belief in this.

Walter Bagshot, in a fine essay on Dickens, said that sometimes the novelist felt that it was his duty to reflect, and his reflections were the worst reading in the world. Certainly they seldom rise above the level of the adolescent. "For abstract speculation he had not the slightest turn or taste," wrote F. T. Marzials. "In no single one of his characters does he exhibit any fierce mental struggle as between truth and error. All the side of human experience with its anguish of battle, its despair and its triumphs, seems to have been unknown to him." Edwin Waegenknecht, an American writer, in his fine psychographic study of Dickens, made the most of his religious beliefs, candidly said: "There were several things that religion never able to do for Dickens. It never brought him peace. His life he was conscious of wanting something, restless, searching for a satisfaction he never found."

When J. M. Robertson reviewed my "Dickens and Religion" he generously and mistakenly suggested that there would be further editions in demand. Robertson, however, was far from the cult. He avowed his distance. He recalled William Archer saying that there would be forty Thackerays before there is another Dickens to which his own response was "Thank Gawd for that." If Robertson, like myself, had been secretary of the branch of a Dickens Fellowship he would have realised that the Dickens cult comes nearer to a religion than any other. Critical works about "the Master" appeal to no more than rationalistic works about religion appeal to the average churchgoer. Dickensians will turn away from them (I did not know of more than one purchase of my book in my branch although a copy could be obtained for a shilling), as they will also from suggestions of Dickens's unchastity. The policy of the blind eye, adopted by Christendom since Constantine, will be that of their faith in Charles Dickens.

I would, however, like to ask them how they explain the curious fact that the advice given by the novelist to his sons about Bible reading and prayer was never carried out by the former's creations? Pickwick, Jarndyce, the Cheerybles, even Joe Gargery—I am sure many readers would have liked to have seen him, like the other village blacksmith, of a pious disposition—apparently get on very well without religion. A novelist is as omnipotent in his world as the god of Genesis. Dickens, if his religious moral was so impelling, should have urged it here. My conclusion is that Dickens and his characters had so little regard for another order of existence that they were more qualified for membership of the N.S.S. than any Christian Church.

WILLIAM KENT.

"THERE GOES THE PRIEST"

THE priest led a chaste life, occupying himself with his few parishioners and with prayers and fasting. But he had a cycle with a motor attachment. It made a great deal of noise. "Ah," people would say when they heard it, "there goes the priest." It made the priest feel very important. He was always smiling gently like someone who is very sure of himself. Sometimes, when he was driving down a deserted lane to visit an isolated member of his flock, he would shout to the winds: "Here comes the priest, here comes the priest!"

Then something went wrong with the motor attachment. The priest took it to a garage and the mechanic said the whole damned thing was busted. It couldn't be repaired and the priest couldn't afford to buy another. It had been given him by a rich lady who had left the district. The priest had to go about silently. The town didn't pay much attention to him any more. Why should the citizen notice a man in black who behaved himself and never made any trouble? There was no reason to notice the priest unless one heard the pop-pop of his cycle. The few members of his flock thought the priest was looking ill, and one or two of them remarked "Father doesn't smile any more." But they thought it might be a stage on the way to sainthood.

Then to everyone's utter amazement an unmarried girl down at Pod's Cottages started the rumour that a certain reverend gentleman might be responsible for the child she would have in the spring. Of course nobody knew if "there was any truth in the story," but "there's no smoke without fire, is there, my dear?" People looked up again when the priest appeared in the streets. "There goes the priest," they'd say. Once again the priest was smiling. For it was just like the old days when he had a cycle which went pop-pop.

Then the rich old lady came back to the town. She heard about the priest's accident. She bought a new motor attachment for the priest's cycle and sent it round to the presbytery. The next morning the priest's housekeeper found him hanging from the eard of his dressing gown.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

BOOKS WORTH WHILE

"Into Whose Hands" by George Ryley Scott, published by Gerald E. Swan Limited, Edgware House, Burn Street, Marylebone, London, W.1; price 21s.

THIS is a book which deals with the examination of obscene libel in its legal, sociological and literary aspects. It traces the origin and development of obscenity and the law relating to it and the methods of censorship in vogue and as applicable to the drama, films and the radio as well as to books and pictures.

It is divided into four sections; the first being the question of definition as far as the legal position is concerned, while in this section also there is a chapter dealing with the methods of censorship, another one on the objects of censorship and perhaps an even more striking one on the absurdity of censorship.

Part Two deals with the search for a motive and brings in the historical aspect of censorship.

The author points out that censorship in itself is nothing new; it existed long before the coming of the Christian era, but it was the early Christians who brought it to a fine art. Right on to the time of the Council of Nice, 325, on to the Inquisition, right up to the present day, the Church has always clamped down on any expression of opinions which were contrary to their dogma and especially anything which dealt with sex. Sex is the only immorality the Church recognises. It has never thundered against the immorality of slums, malnutrition or war but has, on the contrary, drenched the whole world in blood which they excused by saying that these were Holy Wars.

There are 21 cases of some well-known prosecutions cited. These date from the persecution of John Wilkes, 1763, to the attack on the booksellers in 1942. Included in these is the Bradlaugh Case, 1877, the Gott Case in 1922, and the persecution of D. H. Lawrence in 1929.

The author clearly points out that the smut hounds, as he terms those who instituted these proceedings, made no distinction between scientific works such as Havelock Ellis's "Psychology of Sex" and the cheap tawdry pornographic novels. In this section he deals with the radio and says: "The censorship exercised by the B.B.C. over the programmes which it gives over the air is complete. . . This censorship is all the more effective owing to the fact that masses have been led to believe, and for the most part, do believe, that everything coming over the air bears the hall mark of authenticity. The truth of the matter is that the B.B.C., by means of a consistent policy of suppression, distortion and evasion, presents in the most teaching, convincing form possible, a tissue of half truths, and it is neither more nor less than an instrument of propaganda." We know that the B.B.C. will not allow any criticism of religion and when they do, very occasionally, give a talk on men like Darwin, Huxley and Paine, they are careful not to offend the ears of their listeners, they are careful not to state the real opinions of such men but they mention that their religious views were unorthodox.

Yet we have so-called Freethinkers who express their pleasure with these miserable crumbs that are thrown to us! What a mean spirit!

The third section deals with the evil shadow of the censor, and the fourth with the question of Reform.

If the price of this book is beyond the pockets of some readers, they might ask for it at public libraries.

The author has a fine literary style, it is clearly written and he marshals his facts well.

A book worth buying and keeping.

"Science and Nutrition" by A. L. Bacharach, published by Watts & Co., 5 and 6, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4; price 5s.

This book, one of the latest publications of Watts & Co., has a preface by Sir J. C. Drummond, F.R.S., Professor of Bio-

chemistry in the University of London. He writes: "The survival of Democracy or its annihilation during the next few years may easily be determined by the measure of attention given in the various countries, to what have come to be called 'The Problem of Human Nutrition.'"

It is safe to say that during and since the war the British people have talked and thought more about food than they have ever done before. They have heard about vitamins, energy producing foods, calories, proteins, carbohydrates and fats, until the average man in the street has, at all events, some idea what these things now mean.

This book of 142 pages expressed in clear, simple language, shows what nutritional science is and the influence of diet on health. It is not a stodgy book full of tables of food values—its pages are crammed full of interest.

It is essentially a book for the homo and its range is so varied that it will appeal to every member of the household.

F. A. HORNIBROOK.

ILLUSIONS AND DELUSIONS

A SCIENTIFIC sociology should relate theory with practice. The Greek intelligentsia lived in a world of shadows, yet it is true to say that they were the first to attempt a secular concept of social life. In the "Republic" and "Laws," Plato set out to justify the status quo. His idealism is a complete distraction. The "Eternal Verities" are sheer delusion, and only serve to amuse and bemuse. The Muses are not the *raison d'être*. The philosophy of the Heroic Age is no explanation of the Dyonasian or Eleusian mysteries, nor of the Ecclesia. "What is truth," said jesting Pilate. The ideology had no relationship with current technology. It was socially bankrupt, yet it is still common to-day. It was followed by Epicurean enjoyment and Stoic acquiescence, which led to the Neo-Platonic mystic philosophy of self-abnegation.

The Gnostics applied the philosophical duality of shadow and reality to the social group, which was conceived as the body of the god, of which the individuals were members, whose desires and emotions expressed the power and will of the god. This social anthropomorphism involves the projection of personality as a totemic symbol, a mystic communion and an animistic concept of motive. The individual was identified with the god and the power of the god was expressed in the activities of the group. This pseudo-philosophy with its mystic ideology squared the technology of the times. Knowledge of the technique being the Gnosis, divine knowledge.

In identifying the saviour god of the fertility cults with the Logos, the Gnostics bridged the gulf between philosophic theory and economic practice, giving a social ideology to the eucharistic, orgiastic and corybantic aspects of the mystery. This rationalisation resuscitated the religious ideology associated with current technology so that the evangelical miracle play had an astrological and an agricultural, a personal and a social, a theoretical and a practical meaning. Its ideology was rooted in both tradition and custom.

Aristotle was more practical than Plato. He was less concerned with "Reality" than with "Actuality." His "Politics" dealt with the art of government, and his principles are still the mode to-day. He advised the study of the technique of militarism, of ethics and rhetoric. Militaristic heroics, pomp and pageantry, the magic of the mystery, were used to produce the necessary blood-lust and fanaticism, and to justify the smash-and-grab survival of hunting stage technology. The military masquerade and the miracle play covered the whole of social life. "My country right or wrong" is characteristic of creed, class or clique. The ethic was "honour among thieves." Rhetorical exaggeration led to vituperation and vilification. The virulence arose in the animistic concept of motive, and the personification of the

social group perpetuated the feud. Such was the characteristic of the "Pax Romana." The glory that was Greece and Rome led to the glory of Kingdom Come.

It was "Bread and the Circus" and power politics. The strength of a leader is in his following. The appeal was to the lowest common denominator. The appeal to the dialectical animosities of the feud and to superstitious fear led to "the triumph of barbarism and religion" which were the technology and ideology of the "Dark Ages." A characteristic feud was the condemnation of the merchant Jew by the landed gentry. By the time we get to Augustine, everything is the will of God. The Church is the body of Christ, the Pope is its head and the supreme authority is heard in the ecclesiastical Synod. Pain and suffering is a discipline, a preparation for eternity. Militaristic heroics is replaced by the fear of hell, Stoic acquiescence by the duty of obedience, Epicurean enjoyment by superstitious adoration.

With the Renaissance an attempt at rational justification was made by Machiavelli. Insensate feudal animosities and murderous theological brutalities were justified on the ground that the end justifies the means, the end being the glorification of the State, which is a law unto itself. The sovereignty of the State is the counterpart of the divinity of kings. This raised two questions. The first, what is the State, was emphatically answered by the pompous "Roi Soleil." The glorification of art was the sanctification of autocracy. But the art of government is futile unless the second question is answered. Accepting the depravity of Man, Adam Smith in his "Wealth of Nations" set out the benefits of trade and commerce. Improved technique of production and maritime discoveries had led to the re-emergence of the merchant, and attempts to suppress usury had strengthened the financier.

This led to the study of political economy and the development of a science of economics indicates the industrial revolution. With the growth of urban areas came a gradual disappearance of the agricultural folk-lore, and the spread of a mechanistic ideology. Religion lost touch with the technique of production but still held the field in the social aspect of technology which still retained its character. Political supremacy shifted from aristocracy to merchant, industrialist and financier successively with improved technique, greater production, higher standards of living; with mass production came mass organisation, mass psychology and mass hysteria. From a world of philosophic theory out of touch with social practice we have arrived at a world of practical success with no social theory. We still have a religious ideology.

When Karl Marx added "for profit" to Ricardo's definition of wealth, it was a step in the wrong direction. The question of motive is false, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" and it plays into the hands of the reactionaries. With the Fascist and Nazi copying the "technique of revolution," we have ourselves back in the Middle Ages. Class hatred is as primitive as class distinction. Class animosity is feudal and the insistence on political action resuscitates Machiavellian technology; the methods of Aristotle which led to the Dark Ages. The Marxian personification of "categories" is as barren as Kant's categorical imperative. It is projection, it is anthropomorphism. It is not scientific, it is metaphysical. To be scientific we should be more concerned with the consequences than the causes of our actions. The slaves have only their chains to lose, but these mystical chains are both social and ideological. We may smile at Japanese Shintoism, the divinity of the Mikado, or the idea of Hitler as an incarnation of the "Volk," but these ideas are not uncommon—they are enshrined in the common idiom in our language and customs.

Magic and religion have been dispelled by physical science and to some extent by psychology, but we are still a long way yet from a social science. "I must because I ought, but

ought I" has given place to, we can if we want, but why don't we? We still live in a world of make-believe, with the mystical magic of money, and the pantomimic panegyrics of political pandrums pander to popular prejudices, and perpetuate the illusion of the masquerade. The social dynamic is still the "mystery."

H. H. PREECE.

GLORY ALLELUIA !

We are a non-productive crowd—
 Glory Alleluia!
 We're in no hurry for a shroud—
 Glory Alleluia!
 You never know what we are worth
 Until we're underneath the earth,
 We always book a first-class berth—
 Glory Alleluia!
 We are the social go-betweens—
 Glory Alleluia!
 You understand just what that means—
 Glory Alleluia!
 Give to us and help the poor,
 We'll ask you when we want some more,
 It won't be long—you may be sure—
 Glory Alleluia!
 We pray to heaven, and talk of Hell—
 Glory Alleluia!
 But where they are we cannot tell—
 Glory Alleluia!
 We think that one's above the skies,
 But where the Hell the other lies,
 The opposite is our surmise—
 Glory Alleluia!
 We're certain we are Heaven-inspired—
 Glory Alleluia!
 We hope we do not make you tired—
 Glory Alleluia!
 It seems so very strange to me
 In this the twentieth century
 Our congregations fail to see—
 Glory Alleluia!

Some are certain Hell's below—
 Glory Alleluia!
 But how the devil do they know—
 Glory Alleluia!
 Thoughtful people of to-day
 Do not mention it—or pray,
 Goodbye, Friends, I've had my say—
 Glory Alleluia!

E. W. JAMES.

**A DELECTABLE SYMPOSIUM DEDICATED TO
 PIOUS MEMBERS OF THE LABOUR PARTY**

(1) Poverty divinely instituted. "The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Maker of them all" (Prov. xxii. 2). "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich" (1 Sam. ii. 7). "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker" (1 Sam. xiv. 31).

- (2) Poverty everlasting. "The poor shall never cease out of the land" (Deut. xv. 11). "Ye have the poor always with you" (Mark xiv. 7).
- (3) Poverty beatific. "Blessed are ye poor" (Luke vi. 11).
- (4) Riches a divine reward. "The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord is riches and honour and life" (Prov. xxii. 4).
- (5) All authority is sacred. "Meddle not with them that are given to change" (Prov. xxiv. 21). "Let not the rebellious exalt themselves" (Ps. 66, 7). "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (1 Sam. xv. 22). "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no powers but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the powers, withstandeth the ordinance of God" (Rom. xiii. 1, 2). "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him" (1 Peter ii. 13, 14).
- (6) Alms giving secures against poverty, and makes the Lord indebted. "He that giveth to the poor shall not lack" (Prov. xxviii. 29). "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and his good deed he will pay him again" (Prov. xix. 17).

By way of comment on the above passages let me quote these lovely lines from a hymn for the instruction of tender youth:—

The rich man in his castle,
 The poor man at his gate,
 God made them high and lowly,
 God gave them their estate!

and also this eloquent passage from the Rev. F. W. Faber, a famous member of the Oxford Movement:—

"The poor man can be made no higher, and no happier by powers and rights. . . But tell him . . . that angels are ministering to him, yea, and evil spirits troubling themselves to fight against him; tell him the eye, the unsleeping eye of heaven, is open on his cottage by the moorside, by the mouth of the mine, or in the dull, close, sunless town, as widely and as wakefully as on the great queen upon her golden throne."

("A Churchman's Politics in Disturbed Times, London, 1840")

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

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