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## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### Man and Morals

It had nothing to do with what a friend and myself had been discussing, but that perhaps matters little, indeed the question put was the more interesting for it having nothing to do with what we had been discussing. The question put was "What do you think is the most interesting aspect of human nature?" Perhaps it was due to the suddenness of the question, and its disconnection with anything we had been saying, that made me burst out with "The way people lump together non-connected subjects." I fancy I had in mind just the way in which my friend had suddenly jumped from what we had been discussing to what appeared a foreign subject. And yet, on reflection, I fancy that the question was not more pertinent than it appeared to be at first glance. Consider, for example, the manner in which the cunning of our religious leaders has managed to bring together as of first rate value the alleged connection between religion and morals, two distinct subjects that have no greater connection than a horse chestnut has with horses. Presumably morals is the only human phase that the defenders of religion claim for their own. No one has said that science or philosophy owes anything to religion for their qualifications. The most that can be said is that certain eminent men were inclined to religion. There are, of course, many stories of eminent men who have had the help of God, but no one takes them very seriously. At least, we may say with certainty that the sciences of geometry, biology or astronomy were developed in far-off times, and in modern ages sciences such as fall under the heads of evolution have never been blessed by our religious teachers. It is true that some well-known present-day scientists have been very busy trying to prove that God animates all that is, but examination shows that the "certainty" amounts to nothing more serious than the Zulus calling their king the master of all the earth. Calling God, as does Professor Jeans, a divine mathematician is mere empty words. Disraeli had a great opinion of the power of flattery, and said that when one came to the throne flattery could be laid on with a bucket. Judging from the nature of "court compliments" we may accept the generalisation to be correct.

If I may cite from one of my own books. "It is generally admitted that man needs no supernatural communications to discover the truth of astronomy or chemistry. Quite unaided, human industry, human curiosity and intelligence have been able to unveil the mystery of the constitution of matter, to trace the action and reaction of chemical elements, to measure the size of the planets, to trace their orbits and to build up the stupendous edifice of modern science. All this man did, not merely without the aid of the gods, but also in the face of what was believed to be their direct prohibition, and

yet when we come to the question of ordinary human conduct we find it held that without supernatural aid man could never have made any advance along the road of moral development. He could, and did, discover everything else, but by himself he would never have found out that it was better to live peaceably with his fellows than for ever to be striving to cut their throats, or have recognised the benefit of treating others with consideration.

That, I think, is actually the most wonderful proposition that anyone could have placed before him.

Without dealing with the beginnings of morality in the higher animal world, from which beginning man takes his start as a rational being just as surely as he inherits an animal structure, we commence with the solid fact that in matters of conduct practice precedes theory. Man is essentially a social animal, and his conduct must, merely to exist, be related to group life. But before we reach a definite human stage there are in operation two forms of adaptation. First, there is the adaptation of the organism to the conditions necessary to secure mere existence, and second, the adaptation of the nature of man to his fellows. Take any of the fundamental qualities of man and they will be found to have their signification and value in group life. Honesty, kindness, etc., all are without meaning apart from social life. In short, all moral teaching implies the group, and always practice precedes understanding.

Morality, then, is derived from the unconscious side of life; the teaching of morality belongs to a later stage of social existence. But religion has a different origin. That arises in the conscious side of life. We are not able to point dogmatically and say it is at this point that morality begins, but we can say with much greater certainty the stage of human existence at which religion begins. I do not mean by this that even here we can say that at a certain point in social evolution man sits down and elaborates religious beliefs, as a modern scientist collects a group of facts and then tries to elaborate a theory that will cover and explain them. All I mean is that religion begins at that stage of mental development where man is capable of wondering why things happen, and finds an answer, mainly in the language of fear. The answer is wrong, as nearly all the first answers that man gives to his "how" or "why" are wrong, but it is that answer which gives us the real nature of religion. Essentially religion consists in an animation of nature. But, again, it must not be taken that the primitive mind proceeds by careful consideration of a definitely stated problem. Until one gets rid of that idea one is not on the right track for an understanding of the origin of religion. Repeated experiences give rise to vague ideas with all men, and it is only after some time we discover that we have convictions on the subject before us. With primitive mankind this process must have been much more evident. It is, how-



ever, beyond reasonable doubt that it was in this state of mind that religion took its rise.

The next step in religious development lies in the formation of an embryonic priesthood—certain people who are believed to have knowledge of these mysterious, or personified forces, and who may, in a semi-magical way, control them. This priesthood is not, no priesthood ever has been, vitally concerned with morals. The evidence for this is plain and incontrovertible; for there is no crime in the calendar, from cannibalism onward, that has not been found consonant with the ethics of a priesthood somewhere or other.

But while religion, as such, is not concerned with morals, as such, religion is concerned with its own preservation. This is something that religion has in common with every institution and with every established interest. It is also concerned with the preservation of a social order, just as every form of government from democracy to fascism is concerned in the maintenance of a social order that is favourable to itself. From a gang of pirates to a society of philosophers this rule holds good. All are interested in the maintenance of a given social order because it is only in and by a social order that it can continue in existence. There is in the case of religion a further corrective and moralising force. Life preserving conduct, whether it be the life of the individual or the life of society is operative before its nature is consciously recognised. Cannibalism, for example, may be practised as a special form of dissipation or as a religious ceremony—as in the eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the god, of which the Christian eucharist is a survival—but neither can become a general and continuous practice. If that were attempted group life would be impossible. Religion develops out of social life that in turn places a limit on religious activities. We have seen that in our own time in the toning down of Christian doctrines that were, during the lifetime of our grandparents, considered essential to Christianity. The doctrine of hell, of the inerrancy of Bible teaching, of the suppression of heresy and disbelief, etc., all were but a few generations ago regarded as indispensable parts of Christianity. These doctrines are still upheld by that unshamed museum of savage beliefs and customs the Roman Catholic Church, and by the less intellectual bodies of Protestants, but with the general civilised communities they are put forward shamefacedly and with hesitation instead of being expressed loudly and authoritatively.

It is, then, not the case that religion moralises life. The truth is that always, everywhere, morality, the forces of social needs, humanises religion. If Germany were to conquer the whole world it would, in the long run, have to behave much as history shows religion to have behaved. Starting with authoritative control, Fascism would be compelled to come to terms with socialised human nature, the more certainly as pressure from without ceased to operate as a coercive factor. So with religion. It is distinct from morality in both origin and aim. But it has to keep in touch with social life and moral rules just as a pickpocket has to keep in a workable proximity to the man whose purse he intends stealing. Religion is forced to assume a passably moral tone, in spite of its essentially non-moral character, in order to maintain its own existence. A predatory animal must live in the neighbourhood of its prey or it would starve to death. For the same reason religion

is bound to emphasise the importance of the maintenance of some form of social order. In this respect it stands on no higher and different level than that which is expressed by any recognised association.

There is or should be to-day no confusion and no mystery about the nature of religion and the nature of morality. And of all the unadulterated nonsense that is now being uttered by responsible men (or by men in responsible positions) and by such organisations as the B.B.C. commend me to such recent publications as "Christianity in Thought and Practice," in which the main purpose is to prove that only by believing in God can we possess a reasonable basis for morals. That booklet is a fine example by an able man of primitive savagery masquerading in a Bond Street suit of clothes.

CHAPMAN COHEN

## ROMANISM AND THE RISE OF COMMERCE

CATHOLIC apologists have striven to father all the alleged blemishes and misdeeds of Capitalism upon the Reformation. It is contended that the Roman Church forbade lending of interest, economic oppression of the poor, and other injustices, while unavoidable social evils were greatly humanised by the benevolent actions of the clergy.

Unfortunately for the stability of this claim, the foundations of modern Capitalism were well and truly laid in Catholic Italy, the Netherlands and Germany, long prior to the period of Luther and Calvin, when the previously undivided Roman communion was split in twain.

Usury was anathematised by Protestant and Catholic alike. Yet, loans at interest, though in theory prohibited to the laity, were constantly countenanced as a crying necessity in high places. As Dr. Tawney notes in his scholarly study, "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism": "The distinction between pawnbroking, which is disreputable, and high finance which is eminently honourable, was as familiar in the Age of Faith as in the twentieth century."

The dependants of princes, barons, bishops and abbots were bled white to meet the charges on the loans granted to their social superiors. Protests might be made, but of these little notice was taken. As Tawney continues: "Popes regularly employed the international banking houses of the day with a singular indifference, as was frequently complained, to the morality of their business methods, took them under their special protection and sometimes enforced the payment of debts by the threat of ex-communication. . . . In the fourteenth century, Italy was full of banking houses doing foreign exchange business in every commercial centre from Constantinople to London."

Church Council after Council had fulminated against usury and their decisions certainly operated when lenders took exorbitant interest from the poor. The Council of Lyons (1274) re-enacted and re-inforced the severe penalties of the third Lateran Council (1175) which condemned the usurer to outlawry. Indeed, he was denied confession, absolution and Christian burial until he made restitution, while his will was null and void.

As loans at interest were absolutely indispensable if business was to take place at all, it is noteworthy that the Council of Vienne in 1312 ignored this self-evident fact and decreed the ex-communication of all magistrates who permitted usury within their jurisdiction. Money lenders were compelled to submit their accounts for ecclesiastical examination. Moreover, "any person declaring that usury is not a sin is to be punished as a heretic and inquisitors are to proceed against him."

It is evident that, from the many appeals to Rome in commercial cases, the conciliar decrees were more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Also the lucrative character of



the cases tried, both in the courts Christian as well as in the Crown courts, is shown by the rich revenues they yielded. For the secular courts strove to share the spoils that the courts spiritual strove to monopolise. In Henry II's reign the Constitutions of Clarendon strictly confined cases concerning breach of contract to the King's Courts, and burgesses were liable to fines if they carried their cases to the ecclesiastical courts.

Still, the clergy clung tenaciously to their jurisdictional offices which in an attenuated form survived, even in England for several centuries. But in the Ages of Faith, as Tawney observes:

"The question at issue was not whether the usurer should be punished—a point as to which there was only one opinion—but who should have the lucrative business of punishing him, and in practice he ran the gauntlet of all and of each."

Meanwhile the lower orders were condemned to suffer and obey. Their reward was in the next world. Any independence of thought among the masses, whether in spiritual or temporal affairs, was branded as the most heinous of crimes. And when at times it appeared it was suppressed "with a ferocity as relentless as the most savage of the White Terrors of modern history has shown to the most formidable of insurrections."

The Church frowned on the Free Cities with their commercial and industrial activities which heralded a coming secular civilisation alien to her own. Tawney shrewdly remarks that:

"Practically, the Church was an immense vested interest, implicated to the hilt in the economic fabric, especially on the side of agriculture and land tenure. Itself the greatest of land-owners, it could no more quarrel with the feudal structure than the Ecclesiastical Commission, the largest of mineral owners today, can lead a crusade against royalties."

For centuries the peasantry were sorely oppressed is amply evidenced by their revolts, despite the threats of Church and State. Our own peasants' rebellion, the repeated risings in Germany, and the *Jacquerie* in France, all testify to the appalling conditions of rural life in Christendom.

Sporadic protests were made against serfdom but, officially, the Church never condemned this evil. Canon Law recognised and sustained it. Aquinas apparently regarded it as a penalty for sin, while noting its economic advantages. Mediaeval scribes usually sanctioned it, and although it has been asserted that the Church abolished it, Hallam remarked that among the last serfs to be redeemed were those on the abbey lands.

Tawney, in an elaborate analysis, concludes that: "The disappearance of serfdom—and, after all, it did not disappear from France until late in the eighteenth century, and from Germany till the nineteenth—was part of a general economic movement with which the Church had little to do, and which churchmen as property-owners had sometimes resisted. It owed less to Christianity than to the humanitarian liberalism of the French Revolution."

The geographical discoveries and the recovery of science and letters at the Renaissance, not only transformed the realm of thought but ushered in an economic revolution undreamed of since the downfall of Imperial Rome. Man's increased sovereignty over his surroundings, and his wider outlook on the world, made him familiar with the Far Eastern East as well as the lands beyond the Atlantic.

Yet all this was the outcome of evolution. As already intimated, economic power long established in Italy, spread in all directions throughout Western Europe to flower at the Renaissance. This inevitably led to the practical abandonment of the earlier restrictions on industry and commerce. As our historian states: "The era of Columbus and Da Gama was prepared by the patient labour of Italian cartographers and Portuguese seamen, as certainly as that of Crompton and Watt by the obscure experiments of nameless predecessors."

Trading corporations and other commercial concerns had long resented clerical interference, and now their restrictions were openly disregarded. Naturally, men were dazzled by the rich

stores of precious metals accumulated by Spain and Portugal, and the desire to amass wealth became general.

The economic centre of Europe was soon established in Antwerp with its international money market and exchange. Here gathered the financial magnates who lent money to princes. All the leading European countries were represented in Antwerp and from the accession of Charles V it ranked as the monetary capital of the Spanish Empire. Commerce, now dependent on cheap credit, was soon linked with finance, for a constant supply of capital was essential to furnish the transport of the commodities required for the world's markets.

The Fuggers, who had gained enormous wealth through their traffic with rulers and their control of banks, were among the greatest financiers. As Dr. Tawney avers: "They advanced the money that made Albrecht of Brandenburg Bishop of Mainz; repaid themselves by sending their agents to accompany Tetzelt on his campaign to raise money by indulgences and taking half the proceeds; provided the funds with which Charles V bought the imperial crown, after an election conducted with the publicity of an auction and the morals of a gambling hell; browbeat him when the debt was not paid, in the tone of a pawnbroker rating a necessitous client; and found the money with which Charles raised troops to fight the Protestants in 1552. The head of the firm built a church and endowed an almshouse for the aged poor in his native town of Augsburg. He died in the odour of sanctity, a good Catholic and a Count of the Empire, having seen his firm pay 54 per cent. for the preceding 16 years."

T. F. PALMER.

## "THE DEVIL'S PARADISE"

LIGHT, entertaining reading, with a derisively religious side to it, is provided by D. A. Haselhoff Lich in his book, "The Diary of a Gambler," dealing with the personalities attracted to Monte Carlo, and the fortunes staked and lost there.

"The Devil's Paradise" is one of his variants in his references to Monte Carlo.

With the remark that "this glittering little town, with its ideal surroundings," has been regarded by religious people as "the fortress of Satan," Lich goes on to say:—

"And yet the rock of Francois Blanc has survived the predictions of its certain doom, and still stands as impregnable as that other rock of Gibraltar whose bishop once publicly announced that he would not permit the erection of an English Church in Monte Carlo until the gambling house—that is, the Casino—was demolished.

"Pope Leo XIII. denounced this place of sin with little effect beyond, no doubt, causing pain to the good Madame Blanc, who was herself sincerely religious, and whose husband had endowed a church.

"It was looked upon with severe disapproval by Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, who ignored the existence of the reigning prince when she visited the Principality, and returned unopened the magnificent box of flowers sent to her by the management of the Casino."

At that time the Blancs were, of course, the people principally responsible for the Casino.

But all the storms of public protest, Lich points out, failed to disturb the conscience of the gamblers. There was the earthquake of February 23, 1887, which "the leader-writers all the world over" referred to as "the revulsion of 'outraged Nature'" at the Casino. Yet the Casino buildings went comparatively unscathed—suffered ten times less damage, in fact, than the surrounding areas in Mentone, Nice, and Cannes!

Lich says "The London Times" must have voiced a fairly general opinion when it wrote:—

"There is one place of which the earthquake experience will be a matter of special interest—the reprobate but fascinating



Monte Carlo. We can imagine the sensation that would have been caused throughout the world had the Casino fallen a victim to the shock. What so appropriate as that on the first morning of Lent that home of wickedness should have been suddenly destroyed by the forces of outraged Nature—should have shared the fate of Dathan and Abiram, and 'gone down quickly into the pit'? Piety would have regarded the ruin as a judgment on a place that had so long tempted Providence, and sceptics would have remarked that it was a singular coincidence. Fortunately or unfortunately, the Casino still stands, and the course of the roulette ball is unaltered by seismic disturbance."

A comment by Lich is that "The Times" did not mention that "outraged Nature" was cynical enough to destroy several churches while leaving undamaged the Casino's gambling apartments—"the very altar of the temple of wickedness!"

"Fear of the wrath of an indignant God," he proceeds, "did not in any way deter pleasure-seekers from re-visiting this glittering hell. The season following the earthquake was as brilliant as any of its predecessors. That year the profits amounted to £790,000."

A story—typical of the shallowness of religion—is told by Lich of a French baroness whose husband was a director of the Bank of France.

"She was startled out of her sleep," he says, "by the rumblings of the earth, and nearly died of terror, but she managed to reach the Casino, where for a couple of hours she was one of a shivering motley crowd.

"She prayed and wept incessantly, and swore on her knees that, if she escaped, she would build a church in honour of her favourite saint. Those around her heard her confess that the catastrophe was a judgment on herself for her gambling sins, and promise that she would devote the quarter of a million francs she had won that season to charity. Of course she declared she would never set foot in Monte Carlo again, and that the rest of her life would be given up to good works.

"That was on February 23; and on Christmas Day, the same year, she was back in Monaco giving a party at the Hotel de Paris.

"Among her guests was an elderly Jew who had been in the earthquake scare, and he took advantage of the occasion to inquire if she had built the promised church.

"'No, no, my friend,' she answered, with a placid smile. 'It proved such a little earthquake after all that I gave a dozen candles to St. Joseph instead. And now let us go across to the rooms and play.'"

Some conclusions by Lich are:—

"As you cannot stop gambling, why not do as the Principality of Monaco has done, and make it serve some useful purpose? The Casino provides employment for over a thousand people. In fact, it may be said that the whole population of Monaco is dependent upon it.

"There are no rates or taxes in the Principality.

"Everything is provided for by the Casino—public works and road-making, police, schools, churches, charities; and in receipt of subsidies, too, are the opera and museums.

"A striking fact is that all these people who in one way and another indirectly or directly make their living out of gambling very rarely, if ever, gamble themselves."

J. Y. ANDERONEY.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

### THOSE WERE THE DAYS

An advertisement that appeared in the "Leeds Intelligencer," dated January 17, 1758: Charles Brandling proposed to reduce the price of coal. He offers Leeds people coal for a term of 60 years at 4½d. per corf, containing 7,680 cubical inches, and weighing 16 stones and upwards, but if delivered to their dwellings they will be charged *sixpence* per corf.

### CHURCH FUNDS

AN interesting and significant letter appeared in the correspondence columns of the "Manchester Guardian" for December 7, 1946. A Lt.-Col. Grey writes on behalf of the Chester Diocese and, with the episcopal authority behind him, appeals for funds in view of the serious financial position in which the diocese now finds itself. So far, his letter only concerns members of the Church of England who may feel disposed to subscribe and is no more than a purely domestic matter. But the gallant officer goes further and prefaces it with a long statement as to why the Chester diocese should buckle on its armour, seize the sword of the spirit, and seek to battle with the principalities and powers of the present age.

Only a revival of Christian ethics can meet the challenge of today; although the "secularist" may reach certain standards of public and private decency, he does not possess an ethic which enables him to look beyond the tiny period of time which concerns himself. "We shall fight for our own hands, for ease and comfort during the tiny period in which, in the soulless and purposeless infinity, we mean anything at all." Only a belief in the redemption of the world through the revelation of Jesus Christ calls forth the necessary endeavours among men and, of the several rivals for the plan, the Church of England, by virtue of its historic position and state establishment, is in the most suitable situation to promote the active acceptance of the Christian ethic. Dogma does not matter, for the present needs go far beyond the divisions between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals beyond "black gowns and austerity, candles and ritual."

The statement is interesting because it reflects the new approach of orthodoxy within the contemporary world. Argument has been sacrificed for assertion in theological circles during recent years. The liberalised versions of religion have been cast aside and there has been a return to Nicene orthodoxy or to the revived Calvinism of Karl Barth and his friends. When the public are to be approached for funds, dogma does not become a matter for argument. It is assumed that all educated men accept it, an assumption which carefully hides the vast gap between the historic Christian creeds and contemporary culture. The attempt to replace argument by assertion is well reflected in the gallant colonel's confusion of dogma, an intellectual matter, with ceremonial which is, at best, a question of aesthetics. In point of fact, dogma does and must matter. It decides the question whether there is, or is not, an infallible body of religious truth revealed to mankind, the foundation-dogma which Lt. Col. Grey deals in through his remarks about the revelation made by Jesus Christ. Either man can codify the infinite or agnosticism is justified to a very considerable measure. The field of dogma is exactly the point where, upon closer examination, assertion will not stand the test of argument.

Interesting too is the naive manner in which the author of the letter exalts the Church of England. From the Sixteenth century, this particular body has fought with the strong rivalry of dissenting traditions on the one hand and with the Church of Rome on the other. At the present moment it is a minority body even among the church-going public, and both George Orwell and "Christopher Churchmouse" have afforded grounds for considering it to be moribund. Certainly, none of its rivals would give to it the place accorded by Lt.-Col. Grey, and it is very difficult to see where he fits the non-Christian religions into his ethical scheme of things. Yet they must have an important part to play in a world where Christians are in a religious minority. Presumably, he would not cut the Gordian knot by consigning them all to Hell as did some of the Calvinistic sons of the Covenanters! In fact, there is a rather presumptuous insularity about the tone of the whole *apologia* which reduces Christianity in its purest form to the Church of England as by law established and looks forth upon a religious imperialism directed by this body, a point of view which has significant



religio-economic implications. Incidentally, it would be interesting to know how far the author's reflections upon state establishment and its blessings would be acceptable to the group of churchmen who advocate disestablishment in the name of spiritual freedom or to the members of the Liberation Society. Presumably, they would take up a very different point of view.

The slanders concerning the superiority of Christian ethics in their ecclesiastical form have been repeated so often that they are becoming threadbare. Yet they form the usual ecclesiastical stock-in-trade and seem to be put to full use in the diocese of Chester. As Professor Tawney and many other scholars have shown, the Church of England has an extremely black record so far as social ethics are concerned, and the voting record of the last century bishops in the House of Lords was a social disgrace. Joseph Clayton in "The Bishops As Legislators" provides an extremely grim picture of fathers-in-God who voted for the retention of slavery and in favour of the keeping of the death penalty for thefts of over five shillings in value. Periods of moral squalor, such as "the ages of faith" or the Eighteenth Century, were periods of ecclesiastical power and yet the Christians did extremely little to alleviate them ethically. In fact, the vast majority of social reforms were initiated by persons of heretical belief. Slavery was abolished by an heretical, Unitarian and agnostic effort which was later utilised by the Evangelical group. Toleration came about in religious matters despite the efforts of orthodox Christians to prevent its advent. A superstition such as witchcraft, the cause of infinite human misery, found its last bastions of support in clerical circles. Women became socially emancipated through the efforts of unbelievers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Shelley or John Stuart Mill, against the wishes of orthodox Christians. Certainly the moral efforts of the orthodox during the period when they were a controlling influence do not encourage any candid person of to-day to seek their rehabilitation to this position.

Yet the old assertions continue to be made and the episcopal appeals for funds still rely for their justification upon the lack of knowledge and education possessed by those whom they may reach. Intellectual ignorance is always the refuge of priestcraft, and it may well be that the best response which could be given to the appeal from the diocese of Chester would be a rapid extension of Rationalistic propaganda in that particular geographical area.

"JULIAN."

## KEEP SMILING

### I

DEEP in the secrets of our subconscious we British must be a melancholy race. Evidence of it can be produced in abundance: from the gloom of our churches, the dreariness of their services and dismal sermons; from the stodginess of much literature—it is nearly axiomatic that to be a classic a book must be sad, make us miserable—tragedy being the subject of most novels and plays; from art; from the intense seriousness of our education and politics.

Those are not conclusive proofs. Among the mass of people one finds a love of gazing at corpses, watching funerals, weeping over pathetic films, listening to crooners wailing funereally, anticipating the worst eventualities in all contingencies; a lachrymose attitude toward life generally.

Up will start a host of people to contradict, crying: where is more humour and gaiety, spontaneous jollity and pleasure seeking than in Britain?

That helps to prove the case. Like the preacher who denounces from the pulpit his own besetting sins, so the Briton's hearty and determined, sometimes strained and hectic, often self-conscious searching for a blithesome outlook upon existence betrays he is a dull depressed fellow, loth to admit as Doctor Johnson did that the black dog often keeps him company.

An Irish poet puts it:—

"And the years like great black oxen  
Have trodden o'er my head."

Glyn Jones, discussing literature from the mining valleys, admits Welsh humour starts with a joke and ends with death in a pit. This he ascribes to the latter circumstance being always so near, but the mental state is not confined to South Wales.

So desperately we rush to and fro in pursuit of humour as an anodyne, shouting as people do when frightened or children will in the dark to keep our courage up. Hence one can hardly move amongst one's fellows without being told to Keep Smiling. That is the prevailing cliché of Britain, the war cry of the ordinary man and woman, itself an admission of pessimism.

Early our elders started to dope us. As small children teachers taught us to sing:—

"There was a lad, a cheerful lad,  
Whose face was always bright.  
When any trouble crossed his path,  
Alright: said he: Alright."

In corporeal existence such a boy would be a monster of imbecility, annoying to the degree of necessitating our throwing stones at him. Whom did we dislike more than the youth with a perpetual grin? Grown up we dubbed him "Silly Ass"!

### II

But uplift is considered vital, so by attaining adulthood we delude ourselves and others, or try to, by the parrot cry, Keep Smiling. On occasions, which are departures from the norm, some would-be optimist says, Keep Smiling, often when a smile is the most unsuitable grimace for the moment, or we feel incapable of it.

Such a one was the prisoner who after his discharge was found to have written across Lamentations, "Cheer up, Jeremiah"!

The parade of cheerfulness must be sustained, so school children are taught to sing:—

"On foot I gaily trudge my way;  
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!  
A merry heart goes all the way;"

with the addendum that the last line is quoted from Shakespeare, thereby fostering the illusion that Shakespeare had a hearty-sporty philosophy. Nothing is farther from the truth. He was a supreme pessimist. His clowns are saddest of wights, and his comedies satires upon human vanity.

The hunt for ways of escape from the horrors of sentient life continues indefatigably. So people crowd to theatres, cinemas, music halls, dances and public houses, twiddle the controls of radio and buy comic journals; anything to avoid solitude, which induces thought, cheerless and bleak.

Infected by the same will-o'-the-wisp pursuit religious leaders attempt to lighten instead of enlighten believers. Nonconformist chapel notice boards break out in a rash of wayside pulpits exhorting us to be not only good but gay; as the Salvation Army advertises its services as bright; and the Franciscans say they are cheerful because followers of Saint Francis. Every morning the B.B.C. inflicts upon listeners five minutes of "Lift Up Your Hearts," although "Cast Down Your Minds" would be more appropriate for its effect. The Anglican Church solemnly goes into conclave to discuss how its Liturgy may be pepped up.

In varying tones they all are shouting Keep Smiling.

Soldiers on the march, their purpose to kill and be killed, perpetuate the Keep Smiling dictum by singing, lustily:—

"What's the use of worrying?  
It never was worth while.  
So pack all your troubles in your old kitbag,  
And smile, smile, smile."

Of no effect. The cemeteries are full of optimists. So while we live we Grin and Bear It.

A. R. WILLIAMS.



## ACID DROPS

The representatives of the Church of England are very much disturbed by the fall in value of many gilt-edged investments. Circulars are being issued to call to the mind of the people that the nationalising of the mines, the railways, etc., etc., will cut down the income of the established Church. It also complains of the money lost to the Church by the abolition of all tithe payments. In all these instances the Church of England gave away nothing. It merely changed the direction of its income. Moreover, there are privileges of which most people appear to be ignorant, such as relief from rates and taxes, etc. Altogether, if the facts of income and expenditure were laid quite bare to the public there would be many eyes opened. The cry of poverty-stricken will not wash. The Church is very, very wealthy, and some of the salaries are very, very good.

What the "common man"—which includes the common woman—needs is an up-to-date issue of the famous "Extraordinary Black Book," the last issue of which appears to have been the one that lies before me and is dated 1831. It is a book that covers 565 pages of closely printed type. It covers all pensions and the large sums paid to the nobility, to friends of the Crown, etc., etc., and above all, the incomes of the higher dignitaries of the Church and the dishonest ways in which the heads of the Church behaved. Two archbishops took annually £26,465 each. The Bishop of Ely held "patronages" amounting to £27,000 per year, which were liberally distributed among his friends and relations. So the game went on, until Parliament was compelled to create a body of men who would at least act with an appearance of decency. We sadly need similar exposures and corrections to-day. The trouble is that so many of the "advanced" politicians to-day are over-impressed with the necessity of being thought very respectable, and when reformers become "respectable" a great deal of their utility disappears. No real reformer should be "respectable." It should be enough for him to be honest and fearless.

On behalf of the "Sunday Graphic" the Rev. W. H. Elliott is trying to find out what is happening in our great cities on Sunday night, and he writes as if what he has found out has come as a great shock. For example, he has discovered that in Liverpool there are 87 cinemas to which on an average about 130,000 people go on Sunday evenings—most of them young people. This makes Mr. Elliott conclude that "We are going pagan, though it is not the youngsters that I blame." Yet in the same breath he is forced to admit that "Liverpool can show a remarkable decrease in drunkenness—taking the week through." In 1938 there were 3,435 proceedings, while in 1915 there were only 1,079. Faced with this very uncomfortable fact, Mr. Elliott finds it very difficult to explain away; he knows quite well that it is not religion that has decreased drunkenness. But it would never do to agree that the "secularising" of life in general may at least have led some of the way to real progress.

Anyone who imagines that the Vatican, in Rome, wields untouched power, should note a recent admission of the Catholic "Tablet" regarding the Italian paper "Don Basilio." This journal was rigorously put "out of bounds" by the Pope—the Holy Office issuing a decree excommunicating everybody connected with the paper, and declaring that even buyers were committing a grievous sin. The result of this was a great increase in the circulation of the journal from 150,000 to 250,000 copies, and only three stalls out of 400 declined to sell the paper.

The Rector of Barnsley regrets that cinemas will be open on Sundays. He thinks that those who have not made up their minds whether it is cinema or church, the majority will decide in favour of the cinema. That is sad for the churches, particularly when the churches are free and the cinemas demand money. God versus cinema—and the cinema wins.

Almost from the beginning of Christianity Rome has been the headquarters of the Catholic Church. It was a famous German-

French writer who claimed it as "The great lying Church," and surely enough the Church lived up to it. But it was a still more striking condemnation that one of our English writers—noted for his fearlessness of speech when occasion called for it—Lord Acton who said: "A man's opinion of the Papacy is regulated by his opinion of religious assignation. Secondly, he can only accept the Papacy with precautions, suspicions and aversions. Thirdly, if he accepted the Papacy with confidence, admiration and obedience, he must have made terms with murder." That is a rather tasty description of the Roman Church to carry about in one's memory.

In any case no one will be surprised that the appointment of Dr. Julian Huxley as Chairman of "Unesco" has disturbed him who sitteth as one who is in constant touch with God. The Catholic Church has been very adept in fixing its tools all over the globe and in key positions. If a list were published of the men and women who are so placed it would be a very lengthy one. Granted that Catholics should have their share in having appointments, it is curious that such a long string of agents are planted. The position needs watching.

Another bitter pill for the Papacy was when, after war had commenced, an alliance was formed between England and Russia. The Papacy tried to lighten the blow by saying that the alliance was for the war. Another lie, because there followed a twenty-year alliance with Russia. A bad day for Roman Catholics. Lately a new card has been placed, this time that Russian Atheists were returning to Christianity. Another lie. The fact is that the Russian people were never prevented asserting their belief, but revolting Russia put an end to the priests being acting agents for one of the vile dominations of Tsarism. The people were oppressed, ignorant and treated as cattle. There was no Tsarism from the pulpit.

If anyone takes the trouble to refer to three volumes published by Chapman & Hall, who were very correct publishers and issued three books the titles being "Moscow Dialogues" (1933), "Religion and Communism" (1933), and "The Communist's Reply to the World's Needs" (1935), he will be able to see what the aims of Russians were. To these books we may add a very fine book, "Russia To-day and Yesterday," by that high authority, Dr. E. J. Dillon—they will realise what the revolution has done for the Russian people. It should be added that Dillon was not a Communist, but he was an authority on Russia, and a man of standing in England. A further and final blow at the religious lie that Russia is turning back to Christianity comes from Mr. Eugene Lyon (United States of America), who says authoritatively that "Atheism is still the State 'religion' in Russia." The wording is curious, but it will serve. And the lie of the Church is patent.

Many an old housewife of the district claims to have actually seen the ghost of a woman who haunted a green lane, called Petty Lane, at the village of Glowrowram, near Chester-le-Street, County Durham, in years long gone by. If approached, this mysterious figure would collapse and spread out like a sheet, or perhaps assume the form of a large pack of white wool. Yet when the observer hurried forward to pick it up it would suddenly disappear. A farmer's horse saw the apparition, coming home with its master late one night, causing the animal to take fright, arriving at its stable door "all of a tremble," although the farmer himself saw nothing. This ghost seems to have become visible to the girls who went out at night to milk the cows, which made them so frightened that invariably the milk got spilled. But never a drop was to be seen on the ground when daylight appeared. Cartmen driving up this lane with coals would meet the wench, who so frightened the horses that the carts became upset. Years later, workmen employed upon digging up some ground to improve the road came upon the skeleton of a woman and her ladyship the ghost never walked after that.



# "THE FREETHINKER"

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## SUGAR PLUMS

We are pleased to report that the new edition of Mr. Cohen's "God and the Universe," now in its third edition, is selling readily. The book contains a criticism of Professors Eddington, Jeans, Huxley and Einstein, and a special article written for the book by Professor Eddington. The work is lively from beginning to end. The price is (cloth bound) 3s. 6d.; postage 2d. A present to an intelligent friend would be found interesting and instructive.

We are pleased to hear that Mr. Hornbrook's visit to Newcastle was a complete success. The hall was full, the lecture pleased the audience, and there were requests to come again. The only people who have been displeased would be a few Roman Catholics who had wandered in. But they were discreet and remained silent when question time arrived. Thanks must also be given to Mr. Brighton, who had worked hard to make the meeting a success, and in doing such excellent work in his area. He is well known and very much respected for his quality. The only thing we have against him is his modesty which prevents his sending reports for publication, and is really a mistake. Perhaps he will take the hint.

It was a saying of Bradlaugh's that the final issue between Atheism and Christianity would be fought over the Catholic Church. From the laments of Protestantism the forecast of Bradlaugh gains strength, and the number of books against Rome grows more and more numerous—and the writers are in dead earnest. We have space for only two. The first is by Mr. Joseph McCabe, who began his life under the control of the Catholic Church. Since he reached manhood he has been one of the most deadly enemies of the Catholic Church. His last effort, "The Testament of Christian Civilisation," covers the Church draw its own indictment. Naturally, the Catholics will not be pleased with this method, but the non-Catholics will thank him for his industry and the quality of his indictment. The book is published by Watts & Co., price 10s. 6d.

Another book, covering 90 pages, comes from the pen of Dr. L. H. Lehman, and he gives deadly, carefully arranged charges against the Papacy, and particularly illustrates the

relationship that existed between the Papacy and Nazism. It is a damning indictment of the Roman Church both from the religious and the social side. The booklet is something to be read and to be remembered. The essay comes from Auckland, but it can be obtained from the Pioneer Press, price 2s. 6d.; postage 1½d.

In the Kings Hall Cinema, Accrington, today, Mr. J. Clayton takes the negative side in a debate on "Is Religion Necessary to Social Progress." His opponent is Councillor Eastwood, who affirms the question. The debate begins at 6-30 p.m. and we can assure Councillor Eastwood that he will have a capable opponent. We understand that admission is free.

With reference to Mr. W. Kent's article on another page, some of our readers will be interested to know that he has just published, through the Cricket Book Society, "Fifty Years a Cricket Watcher." The price is 2s. 6d., and copies can be obtained, post free, of the author at 71, Union Road, London, S.W. 4.

## APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

### II

THE way Apollonius disappeared after his trial in Rome before Domitian, after being acquitted, and then appeared to his friends about 100 miles away reminds one of the miracle of Jesus who, the day of the Resurrection, appeared to two of the apostles at Emmaus, about seven miles away. It is true that they did not at once recognise him—but this appears to have almost always happened to Jesus, for Judas had to kiss him to show that he was the real culprit and not any of the other apostles, and Mary, who saw him with no clothes on after the Resurrection, thought he was the gardener. On the other hand, Apollonius was at once recognised by his friends, though it is true they were wondering whether they would ever see him again.

Later, Apollonius returned to Ephesus, and when Domitian was being murdered by Stephanus he was talking to some friends. Suddenly he interrupted himself, called out: "Strike the tyrant, strike!" and immediately added that it was just then that Domitian was being killed. It was a striking piece of clairvoyance—or a miracle—or it never happened. The reader can take his choice.

Somewhere between 96 and 98 A.D., Apollonius died, or finally disappeared, though the manner of his dying is not known. All the same quite a number of accounts of his disappearance have come down to us, and they certainly make interesting reading, particularly for those who study the various adventures of God-like beings, or Man-like gods, on this old earth of ours.

Apollonius may have died at Ephesus, or at Lindus in the temple of Minerva; but one of the most detailed accounts of his death claims that he went to Crete and entered the temple of Dictyia which was guarded by some savage dogs. Naturally, they received him with fawning affection instead of barking, but the priests took hold of him and, thinking he was a robber or a magician, bound him with chains. This was a small matter for Apollonius who threw them off as if he were a veritable Harry Houdini; he went again into the temple and, with many virgins singing, "Leave earth, come to heaven, come, come!" he left the earth.

Needless to say, Apollonius was seen again after his death. He met a young man at Tyana and they had a long conversation on the immortality of the soul; after which the young man, who had hitherto been rather sceptical about the matter, cried out, "I believe you now."



But this is only one of the many miracles which were attributed to the great wonder-working philosopher—miracles which earned him many statues and temples. Yet the surprising thing is that he was actually never deified and worshipped like Jesus was. No one appears to have doubted his power to work miracles—least of all the Christian Fathers—and this, according to his biographers, led him to be worshipped here and there over many centuries without much success in the matter of numbers. Apollonius was looked upon as a god by some of his worshippers, by others something more than a philosopher, and by others as something between a God and a man. But it must be admitted that it was the Christian religion which eventually triumphed in the matter of both success and power.

All his biographers claim strongly his greatness as a man—his frugality, his disdain for riches, his love of science, his uprightness. Sidonius Apollinaris (475 A.D.) closed a striking eulogy with, "In one word, to say the truth, I do not know that there is, in all antiquity, the life of a philosopher equal to this one; and I am very certain that such a one cannot be found in this age."

Like Jesus, Apollonius could eject devils quite easily from men and send them helter-skelter into other animals. He raised a young girl from death at her funeral procession—in fact, Hierocles, who wrote against Christianity somewhere at the close of the second century, insisted that Apollonius had performed far more miracles than had Jesus. Eusebius, who reports this, never denied the fact but, as will be surmised, attributed them entirely to sorcery.

But for us, as Freethinkers, the most remarkable point about Apollonius is the fact that nowhere in his life do his biographers report that he had any contact with Jesus or Christianity. This seems to me more than extraordinary.

So like are many of the miracles of Apollonius to those of Jesus, that some of his 19th century critics claimed that his biography by Philostratus was really a kind of parody of the Gospels. It was an elaborate joke on the so-called biographies of Jesus. But this view has been vigorously contested and, by most Christian critics, rejected; so that what remains is to account for the fact that Apollonius appears never to have met the other "wonder-worker"—Jesus—nor Peter, Paul, nor any of the apostles, nor even any believers in the new religion. It seems incredible.

If the story related in the book of Acts is true, if the Epistles of Paul were in general circulation, if the Gospels, canonical and apocryphal, were in the process of being written and published while Apollonius was alive, how is it we never get even a mention of them? If Philostratus was writing in the third century surely he must have known that the Christian religion was not only beating all rivals, but that any worship of Apollonius was as a mere nothing in comparison with the worship of Jesus?

If there had been a Jesus, a Paul, a Peter, and a dozen or so of apostles, if they were propagating the new faith with all the ardour of fiery converts, if success was crowning their efforts as is claimed by Christian historians, then it seems to me almost a miracle in itself to account for the complete silence about Christianity in the life of Apollonius and in his biography by Philostratus.

On the other hand, if there had never been a Jesus, if most of the early history of Christianity as related by Church historians is a myth—or, more bluntly, just lies—then it does seem to me that the silence of Philostratus is as understandable as that of Josephus who equally knew nothing of Jesus nor the tremendous events related in Acts which were contemporaneous with him and which, in his long, tedious and minute history, are never even hinted at.

How much of the work of Philostratus (apart from the miracles) is fiction and how much is fact is a problem which may never be solved. As for the miracles, one feels instinctively that they are just as true as those related of Jesus. And there is not a single Christian theologian or apologist who can give any argument in favour of the one which cannot be applied to the other.

Perhaps this is one of the chief reasons why it is not easy (and it never was) to get hold of a translation of the life of Apollonius by Philostratus.

H. CUTNER

## THE WORLD, THE FLESH—AND THE MISSION HALL

ON August Bank Holiday 1896 I entered Kennington Oval for the first time. How happy I should have been if life outside had brought pleasures as undiluted as life within! Of course cricket-watching had its trials. One's favourite batsman would get a "duck"; Surrey would be beaten; the spoil-sport rain would send you home prematurely. These, however, were but the minor ills of life against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune in the world at large.

It has struck me as an odd reflection that I became a disciple of Cricket at about the same time as I became a disciple of Christ. The becoming was formal in the latter respect. I was the elder of a Methodist local preacher and class-leader, and Christianity was compulsory. Yet there was joy in my father's heart when one Sunday in my twelfth year I was inveigled into the "inquiry room" of a Methodist Chapel which—badly blitzed—still stands close to where I am writing. At so tender an age I could hardly have been "a soul returning from the wilds," I quote the line of a hymn, but my father notwithstanding hallowed the news of my salvation into the ears of a pious and devoted brother who shared our hospitable board.

I fear the adage that the course of true love never runs smoothly did apply to my religion. It ran smoothly for a few years only. Then doubts came creeping in. Once they came about cricket, but following the dictum of Tennyson as regards the other, I fought them and gathered strength! For a short time my conscience was troubled. Was it right to support professional sport—devoting a whole life to games? What would Jesus do? Would he have gone to the Oval? What would be my position if the "end of the world" found me there? Whatever the answers to those questions I never failed to go—when opportunity offered. Moreover, I must admit that the prospect of going to the Oval or Lord's sometimes disturbed my devotion on what the hardy pious Pepys called the "Lord's Day."

If I was going on the Monday how apprehensive I was about the weather on Sunday! If, as I entered our mission hall in the evening, there was a cloud bigger than a man's hand, I was nervous about its progress. This was difficult to follow, what I may call our clerestory windows were opaque and the dreaded raindrops—infamously likened at times to "showers of blessing"—not easily detected. Then there was the opening meeting to follow. We might sing: "When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there." The song in my heart was: "When the Oval gates are open I'll be there." At night I watched and prayed—quite literally. If I awoke I left my bed to desert the clouds. When I rose I prayed for a fine day—if it was the Lord's will! Sheer conventional courtesy towards "the throne of grace." If the Devil had come offering it I fear, like Dr Faustus, I might have made a pact with him for a day of sunshine!



Of course, we had our cricket club. It was "a clean sport." Perchance some sinful and lusty fellow would be brought to Christ through cricket. I never heard that one was. In truth, half the eleven cared much for the one and were indifferent to the other. What of the women? They, of course, had a very superficial interest in the game. A few would watch, particularly Married v. Single (to back the former, no doubt!), but generally their attitude was that of a lady who said that cricket meant fifteen men being too far away to be of any use!

They had their counterpart in the "socials." Of course, they were never only for one sex. Whereas, however, it was conceivable that a man should despise them, it was hardly believable that a woman would. I can only recall one who did. She was an austere enthusiastic evangelical who talked much of "The Dear Lord." Once she groaned exceedingly to find a well-attended "social" in the large hall when she was on the way to a meagrely-attended prayer meeting in the small one. Every society had to justify itself by having a social. One enthusiastic brother—hungry for souls, as the phrase went—started a Bible class for male adolescents. It had some success and he reported to me—of one of our cricket eleven—that he "had nearly got him," meaning that he had almost angled his soul into his net of salvation. Alas, even here, the world would come creeping in. These young fellows pressed for a "social." Alas, the poor pious brother had to yield. So embarrassed was he at being called upon to be a channel of earthly pleasure rather than of divine grace that he co-opted me to be master of the ceremonies, and I was hardly a gay Tom-tit at these affairs! But there must be a pill in this forced ration of jam. After about an hour's frivolity youths and maidens had to sit down and listen to a most solemn address from a young brother in black frock coat. Why do I say the socials were more to the mind of the women? Because there they met—at close quarters—the men. We often sang a hymn, some lines of which ran:—

"The bride eyes not her garment,  
But her dear bridegroom's face.  
I will not gaze at glory,  
But on my King of Grace."

Bless my innocence! It never once crossed my mind that no young woman would sing that without thinking—not of the bridegroom of the hymn book—but of a prospective and earthly one, possibly in that congregation. What an eye-opener would such a book as the Editor's admirable work: *Religion and Sex* have been to me!

So the world and the flesh always swamp the Church and the Mission Hall. There is a delicious passage in a beloved writer, Mark Rutherford, in which he refers to an heretical grocer: "I often wondered that Mr. Lane retained his business, and, indeed, he would have lost it if he had not established a reputation for honesty which drew customers to him, who, notwithstanding the denunciations of the parson, preferred tea with some taste in it from a Unitarian to the insipid wood-flavoured stuff which was sold by the grocer who believed in the Trinity." It is that merely humanistic zest for the pleasures of this life that brings religious organisations even the few they now have. Sociability not spirituality is the desideratum. I pick up the *City Press* and find the Vicar of St. Dunstan-in-the-East has a plan that a "hall might be put up on the site of the burnt-out nave of his church and so designed that it would not destroy the character of the building and yet be capable of use as a social hall. Sir Herbert Baker . . . had drawn up a plan to include lecture hall, club rooms, stage, restaurant, offices." What an inventory of the invading world! It is added: "This had as background the shrine and altar." Very much back I am sure, because for long the "Sea of Faith" has been heard only in—

W. KENT.

## A STUDY IN MYSTICISM

### II

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S position in regard to mysticism seemed somewhat strange in "Ends and Means," but in "Grey Eminence," easier to understand. He appears to conceive the sub-conscious as a sort of life-force, a ghost of a god; and to accept the theological interpretation of mysticism; but in place of god, puts reality with a small "r." Mystics are by no means uncommon; Huxley himself is a mystic, for in contemplating a reality separate and distinct from the self, he annihilates himself; for the self is thus unreal, and his sense of it unreal. He is living in the blissful oblivion of unreality; unaware that he is inextricably and insolubly part of reality; in constant communion with reality. He can only become at one with reality by becoming conscious of it.

His investigations into the development of mysticism do not go far enough. That he stops where he does may be permissible if his object is that stated in the second chapter, but in view of his later moralising a better understanding is required. In reference to the ambiguity of mystical language, he says that scientific classifications are "absurd" in view of "the continuity of nature." But science is not only "Analysis and isolation" but also definition and generalisation. Not so, religion, which deals in incomprehensibles. Science endeavours to explain the unknown in terms of the known. If mysticism is to be explained it must be in terms of our experience, and not of an undefined reality. It is not a question whether or not "words are the sign of things," but what they refer to. In surveying a field of reference we are establishing a relationship of things. In appreciating the general character of knowledge, we might, in trying to understand Father Joseph's mysticism, get some idea of Aldous Huxley's.

In tracing mysticism back, Huxley finds that "the mystical tradition makes its first appearance in the Upanishads." Among the early Buddhists "the metaphysical theory was neither affirmed nor denied." Concerning mysticism in the "Early Church, we know very little," but there appears to have been "much corybantie revivalism and a little mystical contemplation." But "By the fourth century—a well-defined mystical philosophy and discipline had been developed among the solitaries and cenobites of the Egyptian desert." Augustine had been "a student of Plotinus." The "Ultimate Reality" of Plotinus "bears a close resemblance to the Brahman, which is also Atman, the That which is at the same time Thou." But more important than this philosophical mysticism were the writings "under the name of Dionysius and Areopagite." In these works "the mystical tradition" is seen in its "most austere Vedantic form."

Translated by Scotus Erigena, in the ninth century, "these books were widely read during the whole of the Middle Ages" and had "an extraordinary influence." An anonymous 14th century work, "The Cloud of Unknowing," is "profoundly original." It is the "handbook of mystical practice." Benet of Canfield was acquainted with the Areopagite, "The Cloud of Unknowing" and "all the important mediæval and 16th century mystics." His work, "The Rule of Perfection" had "considerable contemporary success." It dealt with both passive and active mysticism, and "Father Benet departs from traditional mysticism by insisting on the practice of the passion." These doctrines were reproduced by Father Joseph "in a simpler and more systematic form," and they were further developed by Pierre de Berulle. "For Berulle, as for the earlier mystics, the end and purpose of orison—is self-abandonment to the divine will."

Then, says Huxley, came the decline of mysticism. But is it to be assumed that all this had no sociological or psychological consequence? It seems obvious enough that there had been psychological development. Besides, there is an abundance of



evidence in Huxley's pages, if not in these quotations, to show that we have here something more than unique personalities. Rather was it a definite and widespread cult which left its mark. "The decline of mysticism" was not due to the "over-orthodoxy of Berulle," nor to the "persecution of mystics at the hands of ecclesiastics," although no doubt these were factors. It was part of the general social and intellectual development; it demonstrates a change in men's attitude towards psychology. The change in the attitude towards mysticism, shown by Huxley, in Benet, Father Joseph and Berulle, is itself an indication of it. If mysticism declined, the psychological development continued.

Mysticism was a characteristic of the age, and though there was a change, it was by no means sudden. The cult of animal magnetism which followed the cult of mysticism was no less mystical. So much so that it is almost impossible to decide whether such men as Paracelsus or Mesmer were quacks or cranks. Paracelsus' magnetic analogy gave psychology a peculiar twist. A volume could be filled with examples, many quaintly amusing, some fantastic, others even horrifying; for it was from these that the discovery of hypnotism came, and its use in treating mental disorders. The cult of mysticism continued in the cult of animal magnetism. The mysterious "Ultimate Reality" became an equally mysterious influence. The persistence of "the mystical tradition" produced an intellectual tangle. Even now, with the use of hypnotism and suggestion in a definite technique by the alienist and psycho-analyst, we still find men like Aldous Huxley saying that mysticism is "the only proved method of transforming personality." And the mysterious self is still a mystical sub-conscious.

In connecting modern psychology with mysticism through animal magnetism, we can go further in a comparison of method. The alienist or psycho-analyst gets his patient to concentrate his attention, e.g., upon a pin-point of light; in order to induce hypnosis. This is the same as the "one pointedness" of the mystic; and of the monomaniac. But the alienist or psycho-analyst uses the hypnosis, by question and suggestion, to stimulate memory; whereas the mystic remains in the cloud of unknowing. The patient is brought out of the land of forgetting. The mystic is still in the Lotus Land of oblivion. From one point of view, it is a terrible thing to be oblivious of the consequences of one's actions; but from another point of view it is intensely desirable, and the intensity of feeling may be expressed in delirium or hysteria. The restless striving arises in that the wish-fulfilment satisfaction of sublimated cravings is no substitute for genuine satisfaction.

The difference between the abnormal and the normal is one of degree; the abnormal is the type of the normal. Whereas Father Joseph consciously developed a method of self-hypnosis, in order to indulge sublimated cravings as the will of God; the average man is blissfully oblivious, either of hypnosis or auto-suggestion, with or without a religious sanction. To moralise mysticism is to rationalise a primitive, pre-scientific psychology.

H. H. PREECE.

## NUREMBERG

BY the time this appears, the Nuremberg sentences will certainly have been carried out. An interval will also have elapsed during which the British public, still under the histrionic spell of the final broadcasts, may have reached something like a settled attitude towards the whole sad business. To the vast majority, the long drawn out drama with its logical and expected conclusion, will bring nothing but satisfaction. Justice has been done. We are avenged.

It seems clear, however, from various letters to the Press, and pronouncements by certain clerical dignitaries such as Dean Inge and others, that a considerable minority opinion on the subject already exists. This might best be summed up as

"uneasiness" in its present phase, though bearing the characteristics of a provisional and uncertain school, likely to harden with the passage of time.

One wonders, for example, what was the effect on innumerable young and sensitive children, when over the Light Programme wavelength there came the unsteady voice of the Judge—pronouncing a twelve-fold sentence of death; a terrible accompaniment indeed to issue amongst light entertainment in the privacy of a million homes.

If, in fact, the trial and ultimate sentences on the Nazi leaders represent, as in some senses they undoubtedly do, the inexorable judgment of all Nations on a group of international bandits there are things which have taken place since the verdicts which seem strangely incompatible with that view.

It seems unlikely, for instance, that any actual witnesses of the trial of what Bernard Shaw has called "this rather pitiable group of very ordinary middle-aged people" would be particularly amused by a cartoon in a recent issue of an evening paper, depicting Goering with horns and a tail, gaily exhibiting his medals in Hell. And it is to the credit of this journal that they subsequently published a number of letters on the subject. Several ordinary readers expressed themselves in no uncertain language, roundly condemning the cartoon as brutal and un-English. But it must be assumed that to others, perhaps the majority of readers, this disgusting travesty of humour at the expense of a man awaiting death, amply fulfilled its passing function in providing an evening laugh for the tired business man in the train.

Whatever may or may not be the political and practical difficulties, it seems certain that the consciences of a considerable number of thoughtful Englishmen would stand protesting in years to come, if the criminals could have been treated to some form of penal exile after the manner of Napoleon, at least until such time as international passions and feeling had a further chance to cool. Perhaps, for instance, until a large number of students of recent history have had time to compare the horrors of the gas chambers with what sickened and shocked correspondents found in and around Hiroshima, the effects of which will be apparent amongst the victims' descendants a hundred years from now.

I am well aware that all this represents a distinctly unpopular view, and will read more easily ten or more years from now. In the meantime, perhaps albeit, devoid of any clear-cut casuistic assessment, those of us who share the haunting uneasiness in the matter, must presumably accept as inevitable the spectacle of the street corner news poster scrawled in chalk and seventy year-old Admiral Raeder is pleading to be shot.

J. STURGE-WHITING.

## H'ARK!—OR NOAH'S HEADACHE

Old Noah he was a farmer chap;  
His age—*six hundred years!*  
In honest toil he ploughed the soil,  
But what brought him to tears  
Was when the Lord said: "Hi'yer, Chum!  
I've got a job for you;  
It's quite a snip—just build a ship—  
A simple thing to do.  
I think I'd like to drown the world  
And all that it contains;  
But *you* I'll save—if you behave—  
In payment for your pains.  
It's got to be of mighty size,  
A sort of floating Zoo;  
Of ev'ry kind you'll have to find  
The male and female—*two*."



Then in the Ark you all will rise  
When I shall flood the land—  
And laugh like hell to hear 'em yell  
While drowning! Ain't that grand?"

Old Noah he spat a juicy gob  
And looked completely floored;—  
Then scratched his head and sadly said:  
"Why pick on me, O Lord?  
I ain't a carpenter by trade,  
I'm just a farmer-lad.  
I knows a goat—but wot's a *boat*?  
I'll 'ave to ask me Dad!"

But all the same it came to pass  
The Ark was duly built;  
A giant task—so do not ask  
How many tears were spilt.  
And how the timber and the tools,  
The blinking whole job lot  
Was found or made—it is not said—  
No doubt some one forgot!  
And don't ask why the Lord chose Noah,  
Who hadn't any *cash*;  
Why couldn't *He* say: "One, two, three!"  
And build it in a flash?

And why expect a poor old man  
To tramp from Pole to Pole;  
To seek and find each living kind  
From mammoth to a mole;  
To cross the seas and scour each land  
For insect, beast and bird;  
To hunt and track and bring 'em back?  
It's really too absurd!

Yet it was done; and in the Ark  
The lot was safely stored.  
How was the food kept fresh and good  
Without a Frig., O Lord?  
With tigers, lions, fighting mad—  
It must have been a sight;  
And what a stink! *It makes you think*  
Well—maybe you are right!

Then came the rains for forty days  
And forty nights, they tell;  
Though as to dates, the Book relates  
It was *ten months*, as well!  
The highest mountains were submerged—  
No man can live that high—  
Yet all survived and even thrived  
While floating in the sky!

Well, that's the story as it's told;  
*The Bible never lies.*  
So Christians view it all as *true*—  
And take the Fool's First Prize!

W. H. WOOD.

A sound mind in a sound body is a short but full description  
of a happy state in this world; he that has these two has little  
more to wish for, and he that wants either of them will be but  
little the better for anything else.—LOCKE.

## DEVIL'S WORK

The City of Newcastle upon Tyne, was, during days now long passed away, highly privileged with the presence, on many an occasion, of that bold, earnest, courageous and indefatigable preacher of the Lord's gospels, John Knox, and such was the success of his efforts, that there seemed clear prospects of the majority of the city's inhabitants becoming extremely religious, and therefore *honest and fair in all their dealings*, so the devil, we learn, made a bold effort to ruin the place. He therefore proceeded to block up the entrance to the River Tyne by flinging great aprons of stones, lifted from a quarry near Whitby, into the main channel. One day, as it fell out, when he was coming along the bank top, heavily laden, as usual, he came face to face with an old hag. This encounter gave him a terrific fright, the wicked wretch that he was, so he dropped his burden there and then, fled away, and never returned to finish his labours. Ever since those stones, which he had managed to throw in before then, have been known and charted on all maps as the "Black Middens."—E. H. S.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### PIETY IN PRISON

SIR,—I fear Mr. Bertram Calcutt is barking up the wrong tree in his article "Piety in Prison." I am of the opinion that morality is a necessary product of human society. I believe that once outside the church door the Catholic relies upon human society for his morals. I do not think the nonsensical prattle of the clergy creates delinquents. I do not think it affects morals one "jot or tittle."

The majority of delinquents are cases for the psychiatrist. The psychological make-up of the individual plus his environment form the delinquent. A Catholic, a Protestant and an Atheist all of the same character and all under the same conditions would act in exactly the same way.

The Church would have us believe that its effect upon morality is a benevolent one. I submit that in the modern world it has no effect at all.—Yours, etc.,  
K. EASTAUGH.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

### LONDON—OUTDOOR

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—12 noon: Mr. L. EBRURY.

### LONDON—INDOOR

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Tuesday, January 21, 7 p.m.: "The Meaning of Man's History," Mr. JOHN KATZ, B.A.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "Evolution and Ethics," Mr. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON, M.A.

West London Branch N.S.S. (The National Trade Union Club, Great Newport Street, W.C. 1).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: "Euthanasia," Mr. E. PAGE.

### COUNTRY—INDOOR

Accrington (Kings Hall Cinema).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m. Debate: "Is Religion Necessary to Social Progress." Aff.: Councillor EASTWOOD (Manchester). Neg.: Mr. J. CLAYTON.

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room Mechanics Institute).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m., a lecture.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: "Religion in the Forces," Mr. C. DRAPER.

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: "The Present Age in History," Mr. B. HAYLETT.



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