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## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### Life and Death

JUDGING from a letter from either a Christian or someone with religious opinions, he appears to have run into something that looks like a puzzle. He has, I fancy, looked at the problem that is puzzling him in a rather one-sided manner, he has been considering what things ought to be without deciding truthfully what they in fact are, and any one who does that is not likely to get a clear idea of things. The question he has put to himself, and then passes on to me, is concerned with the question of immortality. Not by any means a new question, nor yet, in my opinion, very important. Personally, I never found myself seriously disturbed over the question. I could never see much difference between worrying why so much time went on before I was born, than worrying about so much time when I am dead. I am saying this much quite seriously. My interesting writer gives me what he calls "something to consider," that he has taken from a well-known man who, I think, once held a high post in the House of Commons. If that be so, then I had the pleasure of knowing that he was a Christian—of a kind. I believe he was a Minister of Education, a subject on which I had a conversation with him. The question runs thus.

What do we want immortality for? Not surely to go on with the kind of life we are living here; not merely to prolong the somewhat tiresome entity we have here learned to call "myself."

Would it not be a relief to get finally quit of oneself, and be able to say "Thank God I shall never see that fellow again?"

The immortality we pine for is not a continuance of doubt and confusion. It is the triumph of the spirit over the body, and complete unity of purpose and existence with the eternal.

Now the first part of that statement does raise a genuine problem. But the question stated is a fog of words. Much of what is said is not illuminating. For instance, what is meant by the triumph of the spirit over the body? Or by "Complete unity of purpose and existence with the eternal"? Unity of the existence with the eternal would be achieved on the least materialistic theories. Then there is the word "purpose," and one can hardly predicate "purpose" without a continuation of personality. Again, the survival of personality does not mean the triumph of the spirit over the body, but the perpetuation of the body, our appetites, our passions, likes and dislikes, and all that goes to make up what we mean by "personality." For after all, each person is to his fellows, so far as we know that person, a body with all its senses. So the meaning is not quite clear, it is not even clear that he knows what he

means. Furthermore, one of the attractions of immortality is—so runs the argument—that we shall meet in the next world those to whom we have said good-bye in this sphere of existence. This is alleged to be great comfort to all in the face of death. But how is this going to happen unless the "tiresome entity" of each one is prolonged indefinitely? As pure spirits we should not be able to distinguish between Shakespeare and Bill Sykes. I doubt if we should know a "pure spirit" even if we met one. And as to recognising any of our relations, why that becomes a sheer impossibility.

One may readily grant that a prospect beyond the grave, to those who think the matter out, a life beyond the grave does not offer unalloyed attractions. I remember being asked by a troublesome member of the audience whether I believed that when he was dead he was done with, I innocently replied that I hoped so. But honesty of speech was not appreciated by the speaker. After all, most of us know people whose absence we prefer to their presence. Only conceive of Shakespeare being chased round heaven by every petty rhymster and third-rate actor anxious to make his acquaintance. How he would long for annihilation or for the old days on earth.

Our critic asks, "What do we look for in immortality?" and gives a negative with "Not surely the kind of life we are living here." He seems to be getting into a confusion. The kind of life we would like is surely the kind of living we have here. Most people find this life sufficiently full of attractive and pleasant things, too.

In plain truth, most people would find this world sufficiently attractive if they could continue here, and there is all the prospective improvement. The most religious preparation for a flight heavenward is in a "If I must, I must, but I would rather stay where I am." Calm reflection shows that in heaven an angel is nothing in particular, and no one really thinks of the next life as being really different from the present one.

Moreover, unless we do go on living in the next world substantially the same kind of life we are living now, existence would just be simply intolerable. For our whole life has been fashioned for the kind of life we are living now, and it can have no reference to another mode of existence. Our likes and dislikes, our hatreds and affections, our sense of the beautiful, all are expressions of a particular organism living in a particular environment. Place the human organism in a new environment and all becomes chaos.

Man, therefore, not only desires to go on living the same kind of life, but it is the only kind of life that he can retain. Thus, unless the immortality we are destined to is a practical continuation of this life, with death coming in due course, we shall be as much out of place as a fish is out of water. What is the sense or even the use of

immortality? Why could we not continue living where we are? No one really wants a next world, no one is panting for immortality. If God did make living things as they are, it looks as if he made a first-rate muddle of the task.

Of course, it may be said that man's nature points to a larger sphere of existence than this offers, but this statement, when considered, is just nonsense. The only life that will fall into its place is the one to which man belongs. Man's feelings have, mostly, a dual aspect. One to himself as an individual, the other to the species to which he belongs. So long as we study man in his individual aspect only, we are naturally left with an unexplained residuum. Take him in relation to the species to which he belongs, and we have a full explanation of the larger capacity upon which so much is built.

But why should we assume that all our desires and aspirations must be gratified. And what, after all, are these larger aspirations that must be gratified, or declare that all things are awry? And what, after all, are these larger aspirations but an ideal constructions of a more perfect human society based upon a perception of the shortcomings of a society as it exists at present?

The fundamental mistake made by all believers in immortality is their assuming that it adds to the value of life. And that is just nonsense. So far as the belief in immortality affects the value of life at all, the opposite is the case, and the belief in immortality actually detracts from instead of adding to it. I think it was Weisman who showed how the evolution of higher forms of life becomes dependent upon the fact of death. Without it life would have become extinct before any very high stage had been raised. What is true of the physical structure of the organism is equally true of our interests and our feelings. The pursuit of knowledge, the zest for work, even the affection for family and friends would lose even their interest and their force with an existence to which no limit could be placed. All the better aspects of life would atrophy under such conditions, life itself would become too great a burden for anyone to bear.

Our idea of the value of life is built up from life here, with all its limitations and drawbacks. Our imagination may continue this life beyond the grave, while divesting it of all those conditions that make life, as we know it, possible. A more sober and a more restrained outlook recognises the necessary limitations of existence, while also seeing, as an expression of those limitations, all that makes life really worth the living.

Death has its pains, but it also has its compensations. Religion has done much to rob life of its greatness, even of its beauty. Christianity has robbed humanity of much. Let us do what we can to preserve love and tenderness that gathers round the memory of our dead.

• CHAPMAN COHEN.

## PLOTTERS IN THE HOLY SEE

### I.

AS far back as 1944, the Vatican undertook diplomatic measures with a view to saving Hitler Germany. After the defeat of Germany, in his 1945 Christmas message, the Pope betrayed extreme concern regarding the fate of the Nazis.

"There is an erroneous belief abroad," he said, "that persons who belong to a certain society are to be held guilty and account-

able only because of this fact. This is an audacious derogation of God's power . . ." No wonder Pius XII was worried about the Nuremberg Trial since so many princes of the Church are guilty of collaborating with the Fascists.

In the early years of World War II, the Vatican and the Catholic Church in all countries placed high hopes in the victory of the Axis powers. Their most cherished expectation was the destruction of progress all over the world, and foremost the crushing of materialist-minded Russia. But the prognostications and plans of the infallible Church were not to be realised. In view of the new situation, the Vatican and its agencies hastened to readjust their tactics and methods of influencing the masses, guided by the old Jesuit formula: The end justifies the means.

In 1926, Pope Pius XI hailed Mussolini as a "man of Providence." Franco was and is a "beloved son of the Catholic Church." On July 20, 1933, Von Papen, leader of the Catholic Centrum Party in Germany, concluded a concordat with Cardinal Pacelli (now Pope Pius XII) which obligated all German bishops to take an oath of allegiance to Hitler's Third Reich.

No sooner had World War II broken out when, through Dino Alfieri, a secret agreement was concluded between the Pope and Mussolini. Why is the Vatican still keeping this agreement secret? It would not be a bad thing if it were brought out of the archives and its contents divulged to all Catholics and the world generally.

Writing in connection with fresh revelations regarding the secret subversive activities of the Catholic clergy in Albania, Tuk Jakova, President of the Albanian Trade Union General Council, and himself a Catholic, stated:—

"The reactionary elements among the Catholic clergy have always been Fascist agents who paved the way for the Italian occupation of Albania. They turned the Church into a secret asylum for imperialist agents and into a platform for a campaign against the vital interests of the nation and state . . . Catholic priests . . . conceal Fascist documents and weapons for the arming of criminal bands in their altars, from which they should be preaching only faith in Christ."

It not only has been proved that in a number of countries the clerical hierarchies have connections with the Fascist underground, but the Catholic Churches and monasteries have also become asylums for well-known Fascists. Zucca, the prior of the monastery in Milan, expended 200,000 lire on organising the theft of Mussolini's body. The monks of the Monastery of Saint Angelo arranged for the escape from prison of ex-Minister of Finance, Pellegrini, and for the flight abroad of such arant Fascists as Dongani and Renato Ricci. With the permission of the Pope, war criminals have found refuge in Vatican territory, for instance, Weizsaecker, former Hitler representative, Léon Berard, former Vichy representative, Sidon Durcansky, Minister of Foreign Affairs in that "government" headed by Father Tiso.

The Vatican never has been neutral or indifferent. It has always and everywhere supported the oppressors against the oppressed, the rich against the poor, the Rights against the Lefts and Fascists against Democrats. On this score, Duarte, a Leftist Brazilian bishop, wrote in November, 1946:—

"The Pope, unfortunately, tenaciously clings to Nazi and Fascist methods. He had a hand in paving the way for the Second World War, unleashed by Fascism, headed by the Vatican, and now the Vatican is marching hand in hand with imperialism, itself representing the most dangerous of all imperialisms."

In January, 1944, "Foreign Policy Reports," journal of the American Foreign Policy Association, printed an article by Sherman S. Hayden entitled "Foreign Policy of the Vatican."

with the admission that "the Vatican has shown an inclination toward Fascist governments in the past twenty years. The author attributes, however, this policy to "the hope, long tenaciously held and most reluctantly abandoned, that the Fascist States would defend civilisation against Communism."

As is common knowledge, the threadbare pretext that Communists are taking orders from abroad serves for the staging of witch hunts. An undeniable fact, however, is that the political line of the Catholic clergy and their flock is laid down in orders from the Vatican and the Pope. Jean Boulier, Professor of International Law at the Catholic College in Paris, writing in "Le Monde Illustré" in an article entitled "The Vatican's Policy"—after endeavouring at length to justify and palm off the political line of the princes of the Catholic Church, admits:—

"No modern state makes its influence felt thousands of miles away to the extent that the Holy See does. This influence is exercised through the appointment of ecclesiastical dignitaries in each diocese and through incessant financial and disciplinary control. No act of importance of a subordinate authority can be valid without sanction from Rome . . . Millions of Catholics dispersed throughout the world look towards Rome as the mystic centre whose rays, like an invisible radar, guide them through the storms of the world to an eternal haven."

TOM HILL.

### THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

THE incongruities of life are unending. On pages 166 and 167 of the "Freethinker" are two letters written by the same person yet each as diametrically opposite in thought as they are in position. On the right is a logical and reasoned attack on a man whose thoughts are wild and changeable as the wind; on the left is an example of emotional despair whose equal it would be difficult to find.

A careful perusal of Mr. Wood's letter (p. 166) does not reveal one substantial argument against my case. "Survival of the fittest" is the term he applies to my dictum "Let each man and nation strive to be the best." That is sheer dogmatism. At the risk of being pedantic I would point out that Darwin originated and preached the doctrine of survival of the fittest. "Jungle Law!" cries Mr. Wood. So it is, but only in as far as a jungle is part of life and subscribes to the inalterable laws of life.

Why, Mr. Wood, is it illogical to argue unless we strive to become better, we inevitably become worse? The clarity of your exposition on the necessity and desirability of all men being equals and brothers was sufficient for a schoolboy to comprehend and you may rest assured that even I, "ignorant and thick-skulled" though I am, managed to take in your point.

Along time ago, a famous man, Abraham Lincoln, I believe, stated "All men are born equal before the law." These last three words have most unfortunately been omitted from the quotation so frequently that the slogan has now become "All men are born equal." Nothing is further from the truth. All men are born unequal. They are taller, shorter, fatter, thinner, stronger, weaker, more stupid or more intelligent as fate would determine.

Heaven forbid we ever become "equals!" or "equal"! I view with alarm the dismal prospect of a world full of boring monotonous beings each striving to be the equal of his brother (but not superior!) and committing suicide, I presume, if they fall below or cannot attain the new moral standards of equality!

I should be pleased to see a definition (with proof) of the jungle law to which I (and Hitler!) subscribe. A jungle lives and perforce obeys the laws of life, laws as natural as gravita-

tion and which are incapable of change. Whether or not there is anything good in these laws does not constitute my argument. If a man holds a loaded pistol to his head and pulls the trigger, he will, by physical laws, kill himself. The goodness or badness of the deed is not in question: the point raised would be based on the physical laws governing the transmission of the bullet.

The remarks on England's rise to greatness appear a little one-sided. I postulate that in the subjugation of other peoples there is a great deal of which we may be proud. We have introduced civilisation, governmental systems, education, unification and many other progressive advantages to backward peoples which have been greatly to their benefit and which they would not otherwise have received.

My theory, Mr. Wood, applies to Russia and Rutland, America and Amersham.

The suggestion that we return what we have taken by force (!) to their rightful owners does not bear examination. As Joad would ask: "Who are the rightful owners?" Scotland for the Scottish! Wales for the Welsh! England for the French, Romans or Danes, dependant on how far back in history you are going—and large estates back to the descendants of the old feudal barons. You, Mr. Wood, back to your serfdom, ignorance, servitude and religious dominancy (or have I led up to this point before?). If *this* is moral reasoning, let me be proudly immoral!

The simily of Switzerland and England is, I regret, again based on misleading half-truths. Switzerland, in common with Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and others, lived under the wing of the great powers and depended on them for protection and support exactly as England and Europe are depending on America to-day. To some extent they lived as we now live, on sufferance only.

What exactly has the "blasting of our next-door neighbour's radio" to do with the pleasures of life? A list of life's more depressing events does not call for a description of the sun setting over a summer sea.

In reply to your question, "Yes." I enjoy food and drink which, if palatable, is all *good* to me. The "ever-increasing divine list" you refer to was doubtless included humorously. In similar vein I would suggest that that, too, is due to the love of women!

The conclusion of your article is astonishing. A suggestion that ten pounds a week are needed to enjoy books, music, theatres, and films is simply not in accordance with the facts. The finest of films can be seen for 1s. 9d. A year's subscription to a Public Library costs a penny. The world's music may be had at the turn of a switch and the cost of a coin. Theatres, it is agreed, are more expensive, but since these previous *luxuries* have cost so very little, even a man with £4 a week could afford them all and an occasional theatre.

I, too, regret that I omitted dog tracks, dirt tracks and dance halls from my list of life's delights; unfortunately, I had neither space nor time to list the vast, formidable catalogue of human diversifications. If a man thrills at the speculation of a small sum of money on the superiority of a certain greyhound, why not let him? If his delight is the sight of a man with iron nerves tearing round a sliding, treacherous track on a powerful machine, why, good luck to him! If men and women enjoy each other's company and dance together, why, what more natural? Who will condemn? Not I. In my forest of ignorance, so thick that I am unable to see the Wood for the trees, I yet am well aware, though another war may be creeping upon us, that despair will never help and that a cheerful heart will overcome many difficulties. I feel a strong chord of sympathy and condolence go out to any such as Mr. Wood to whom life is so difficult, so drear, so full of foreboding, dismal, unhappy memories and melancholy anticipation.

DAVID MOORE.

## A NOTE ON HEINE

IN the vast field of literature, certain figures stand out and remain unmoved by changes of mood and fashion. In a word, they have a perennial appeal that survives the bubble reputation. Other writers like Henry James, or Jane Austin and Anthony Trollope, enjoy a vogue; with the last two, one suspects that serialisation by the B.B.C. has something to do with this popularity. Other writers again, suffer an even more cruel fate that has none the less its compensations, they are suppressed for a particular reason or number of reasons by the Government of their country. It may be, as in the case of D. H. Lawrence, or James Joyce, for alleged immorality, this, in fact is the usual reason for the banning of a book, or it may be that the book is considered as subversive. It is seldom, however, that a book, or books, are banned on account of the author's race.

Seldom as this happens, it was the case in the Third Reich. By some curious mental process best known to those responsible for "culture" in post-1933 Germany, the fact that the author of a book was a Jew completely nullified its value, even though it had long been an established classic. This was Heine's fate, although his first volume, "The Book of Songs," had appeared in 1827, his books were banned and no further editions appeared after 1933.

Bearing this in mind, it is interesting to note that since the end of the war no less than three editions of selections from his works have been published in Germany. In view of the paper shortage in that country, this is a phenomena that can only be partly explained by his personal popularity. There is, of course, insufficient paper to reprint his works entirely, but much of his poetry has been reprinted together with a little of his prose. The largest of the three books is "Heinrich Heine: a Selection from his Works," published by "Merkur Verlag" of Dusseldorf. It contains a critical introduction, a selection of his prose, and extracts from all his published books of verse. To quibble at the selection of prose would be merely captious, as space is so obviously precious, and the two hundred and fifteen pages in this book cannot with the most skilful editing in the world succeed in pleasing everyone. It is perhaps significant that the largest sections of the book contain the poetry and a long extract from "The Harz Journey." This points to the fact that the German reader of to-day is more interested in Heine's lyrical work than in the more serious of his writings. This impression is confirmed by the fact that only in this volume is any prose at all reprinted. A number of illustrations decorate the text, and altogether, this is a fairly satisfactory introduction to Heine's works.

The other two books are concerned with poetry only. An edition of the "Book of Songs" reprinted with a number of other poems is published also by the "Merker Verlag." Finally, there is "The Later Heine", published by P. Kepplar of Baden-Baden, this is the best produced book of the three, and contains the poems written during the last eleven years of his life from the gradual failure of his health in 1845.

As I have previously indicated, this revival of interest in Heine is to be accounted for only in part by his personal popularity. It is also part of a wider trend in German poetry towards a new lyricism. The scraps of contemporary verse that have crept into print during the last few years seem to confirm this, and it is difficult to say whether he is more popular to-day because he is Heine, or because he is regarded as a lyric poet par excellence.

Many will regret that no space has as yet been found to reprint any of the more serious works in the entirety, but quite apart from lack of paper, it may be doubted whether there would be any great demand for them in Germany to-day.

Philosophy does not thrive on hunger and privation, and for the time being, it is sufficient that any of his writings are being published and read. As Dr. Gunther Schab writes in the intro-

duction to "The Book of Songs": "After 1918, Heine's popularity grew considerably. After 1945 it started afresh." It is pleasant to reflect that two of the three editions have been published in the town of Heine's birth, and the poet himself would have been pleased with the sentence on one of the title pages: "A selection made for our times—Dusseldorf, 1946."

V. NEUBURG.

## THE EARLY LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE

## V.

FROM the evidence hereafter adduced it is certain that the house indicated was not the one in which Paine was born, and not the one in which Noah Baker lived. It is certain that this Noah Baker—who was one of the Commonalty of the Borough in 1778, and therefore in a fairly good position—lived in a house which now forms the northern part of Mrs. Tyrrell's residence, and was built with its gable to the street. It is so marked in G. B. Burrell's "Plan of the ancient Town of Thetford" (1807) and in J. O. Browne's "Map of Thetford" (1837). In the former map the houses north of the wall in the middle of the street are coloured blue, indicating that they formed part of St. Cuthbert's parish, and the same parochial boundary is also shown in the latter. That the Paines lived in this parish is shown by the fact that all the entries relating thereto are in St. Cuthbert's registers.

The best evidence as to the authenticity of this house is derived from the annals of the Tyrrell family. Mr. George Tyrrell, who was born towards the end of the eighteenth century, and married when about 44 years of age, purchased this house—then called "The Mansion"—from the representatives of Noah Baker, about 1830. His daughter, the present Mrs. Tyrrell, was born in the house in the very room which was known to her father by tradition as that in which Paine was born, and which was always known among the family as "Tom Paine's room." In 1832 her father pulled down the gable end abutting on the street, leaving the remainder of the house standing, and building a new frontage to the street. In the north gable of this is a tablet inscribed "G. T., 1832." Further alterations were made by Mr. George Tyrrell Tyrrell about 1886-8, and the front part of the house was pulled down; but the back part, and apparently, from the date, the north gable) was preserved and incorporated in the new house. The two houses which adjoined to the southward belonged to the Pisons, and not to Noah Baker, and it was these—including the one indicated by Mr. Holyoake—that Mr. Tyrrell pulled down to make the garden of which Dr. Conway speaks.

The house in which Noah Baker lived was certainly one of some pretensions, but Joseph Paine, from the fact of his marriage with an attorney's daughter, and his position in the Society of Friends, was probably a master, having one or more men and apprentices working for him. He was a leather stayer, now used for gloves and would occupy a position similar to that of a saddler. Being in a somewhat better position than the ordinary workman, he would live in a somewhat larger house and use a portion as a workshop. This house would be in a very suitable position for such a purpose.

The room is now the third from the White Hart-street gable, with a window to the north and a door to the south leading into a passage. In Paine's time the passage formed part of the room, which had a fireplace in the middle of the west side, no window on the north, but a pleasant window on the south with a broad sill on which Paine doubtless spent many of his boyhood's hours, looking down into the garden. The mantel-piece is a typical Georgian specimen of oak, and is probably the one which was there in Paine's childhood.

Thomas Paine appears to have mentioned his boyhood's home but once in his writings. In the "Age of Reason" he

that when he was about seven or eight years of age he heard a sermon read by a relative of his (probably his Aunt Cocks) who was a great devotee of the Church, and after the sermon was ended, he "went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot)" revolted at the recollection of what he had heard. This was written in France in 1793, so that his memory of the little garden in White Hart-street (which from its situation on a double slope would most likely contain steps) was still very keen.

"It arose probably from the tenets of his father and the eccentricity of his mother," says Oldys, "that our author was never baptised, though he was privately named, and never received like true Christians into the bosom of the Church, though he was indeed confirmed by the Bishop of Norwich owing to the orthodox zeal of Mistress Cocks, his aunt, a woman of such goodness that though she lived on a small annuity, she imparted much of this little to his mother, while he neglected his aged parents, amidst his cares for mankind." This is an example of his early biographers' venom and inaccuracy. The idea that he was not baptised arose from the fact that his name did not appear in the register of St. Cuthbert's parish. Not finding an entry relating to him, Oldys falsely assumed that in after life Paine himself had looked through the register, and not finding the record of his birth and baptism, had torn out a page of the register, so as to render reference impossible. An examination of the register shows how absurd is the theory, for it is quite obvious that there has been no mutilation. The necessary entries were, however, neglected by the incumbent in the years 1735-7, doubtless owing to a change of ministry that took place at that time. In a letter to Mr. Millington, Dr. Conway further points out that it is fair to assume that Paine was baptised like his sister, as otherwise the Bishop would not have confirmed him. He continues (under date December 18, 1898):—

"But how did the Church ladies obtain the consent of the Quaker Joseph Paine to his confirmation? It is evident to me that Joseph knew the brightness of his son and wished to give him the best education Thetford could offer. And is it not likely that some connection with the Church was a condition of admission to the Grammar School in the middle of the last century? Paine on arrival in America regarded himself as a member of the Church of England."

Dr. Conway's surmise is probably correct, as the masters of the school were usually Church of England ministers; in 1660 the new gallery in St. Peter's Church was set apart for the master, usher and scholars; and even at the present day—though the conditions are vastly different—the Church of England Prayer-book is used at the beginning and ending of school each day.

Thomas Paine received his early education at the Thetford Free Grammar School, which was founded by Sir Richard Fulmerston, Master of Horse to the Duke of Norfolk, who benefited largely by the dissolution of the monasteries, and by his will dated 1566, left lands on which a "free Grammar School" was to be erected. In 1610 it was built on the site of Bishop Herfast's cathedral—Thetford being the head of the diocese from 1078 to 1094—the church of the Holy Trinity, a Cluniac priory, and a house of Black Friars. Built into the Grammar School of Paine's day, as of the present, was one of the four basal arches of the tower of the church of the Holy Trinity. At the rear were also ivy-covered walls and fragments of windows, probably of the cathedral. After 1612 the school was divided into two departments, one being in charge of an usher, and the other of a master, the latter alone teaching Latin. Though during the greater part of the seventeenth century it was one of the most important schools in East Anglia, at the beginning of the eighteenth century it was reduced to one scholar—Thomas Martin, F.S.A., the historian of Thetford, who was born in the Preacher's Chamber of the Free School House on March 8, 1696-7. He was educated at the school, "where for a considerable time he was the only scholar; he attended, however, constantly every

morning, stayed the usual hours, and at night locked the door, of which he was entrusted with the key, and returned home, sometimes not seeing the master for several days."

W. G. CLARKE.

### A RECENT LEGAL DECISION

WHEN a testator by his will makes a bequest for charitable purposes, the bequest can be legally challenged by those who, in its absence, would otherwise benefit under the will, on the ground that it is not of a charitable nature.

This happened in a recent case (re Coat's Trusts—Court of Appeal, February 3, 4, 5 and 6, 1948) where a disposition in favour of a Carmelite Convent was under review.

The Convent comprised an association of strictly cloistered and purely contemplative nuns who devoted themselves entirely to worship, prayers and meditation and engaged in no activities for the benefit of anyone outside their own association.

Amongst other contentions (and it must be remembered that the case lasted four days) it was argued for the Convent that in the belief of the Roman Catholic community the prayers of the sisters and the sanctity of their lives are efficacious in drawing down grace from heaven on mankind in general, and Roman Catholics in particular, and that this belief must be accepted by the Court as true for the purpose of establishing public benefit. Further, that the sisters, by the holiness of their lives, afforded such measure of edification by example as to provide the requisite public benefit.

The judgments of the two Lords Justices occupying some fourteen closely printed pages can only be summarised. They decided against the Carmelite Convent, and, in so doing, said that public benefit is a necessary element in religious as in other charitable trusts; that in deciding whether a gift is for the advancement of religion the Court does not concern itself with the truth of the religion, a matter which is not susceptible of proof.

An act of a private character in which the public had no share, otherwise than by supernatural intervention, believed to be obtained by means of its performance, was a private act, and the belief of the Roman Catholic Church that the prayers of the sisters and the sanctity of their lives brought Divine Grace on the public could not be accepted as admissible evidence to entitle the trust to be regarded as charitable.

The edification derived from observing the life of a devout community is not enough to provide the necessary element of public benefit so as to make the trust a good charitable trust.

The reader will perhaps wonder why four days were spent in arguing such a case; he would probably have decided it in the same way in ten minutes. But as a reader of "The Freethinker" he is, of necessity, biased.

He will, of course, be reminded that the Roman Catholic Church goes to law in a big way, particularly where money is concerned.

ANTHONY JAMES.

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## ACID DROPS

There is to be an English Church Pageant in June, representing the history of Christianity in this country. We have not been asked to suggest any of the scenes for the Pageant, and yet without asking someone of our turn of mind to contribute, the show is certain to be incomplete. Still, without waiting for an invitation—for it is churlish to wait to be asked in order to do good—we offer one or two suggestions. Figures could be prepared showing the various methods of finding a Witch with holy men of God running pins into nude women to discover the devil's mark; or ducking them in rivers to determine the degree of their intimacy with Satan. The whole headed with the text "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." A procession of men and women with cropped ears, slit noses and tongues, braided foreheads, and maimed limbs, all for religious offences, would likewise be instructive. And think how impressive would be a procession consisting of the labelled representatives of every Christian sect in England. We do not believe for a moment that these suggestions will be acted upon by the Pageant Committee, but without the introduction of scenes of this kind the pictorial representation of English Christianity will be very incomplete.

It is worth noting that the "Evening Chronicle" of Newcastle-on-Tyne has sufficient courage to say that the recovery of the Churches cannot be secured with advertising and publicity. The only thing which will reinstate the Christian religion is to get people to believe in Christianity. And that is almost an impossibility.

Says the Newcastle journal—"Many hammers have been broken on the anvil of Christianity." True enough, but not quite true in the sense it is intended to be taken. Christianity manages to crush the more progressive, and history has even marked a Christian period as the "Dark Ages"; and we have to thank those who brought about the revival of the ancient and new learning and so put in place of the Christian "Dark Ages," the "Renaissance" which means a "New Birth," and so gave rise to the return to civilisation. The Church struck against the revival with all its might, but science and civilisation has, so far, won. The battle is still on. That should be borne in mind.

Most of us often wish that some well-meaning friends would keep their mouths closed. For example, one of the Sheffield preachers went to see a big show that took place in the Albert Hall, London, and the number of well-known men who did the talking, but not, clergymen. The cat was let out of the bag when the Rev. W. Wallace returned to Sheffield. He told his fellow preachers that if they could have the same exhibition they could also fill the Church. Quite so. What the people wanted was a show—and those who managed the "show" knew that quite well.

For some considerable time, ministers of religion have looked over their places of worship and noted how men and women have stayed away from Church service. The preachers decided that the adults did not attend Church because they cannot leave their children. So a staff of "baby-minders" have been organised to look after young children while their parents go to Church. We think that is an excellent idea. A special room in some Churches is set aside for children, and it is said that they sleep contentedly during the whole of the service. That we should also expect. Plenty of adults go to sleep during church preaching.

Accepting the information published in the London "Evening News," there is just one Christian gathering that can be taken as really successful. This is the Mormons in Canada. Mr. Denis Foley says, through the "Evening News" that each day from their home 24 missionaries, men and women, set out to spread the gospel of Mormonism in the streets of London, paying door to door visits and holding outdoor meetings.

They are seeking more converts to add to their 6,000 British membership. And they are fighting against that old bogey of the Mormons, polygamy, which was stamped out over 50 years ago in the United States.

It is fascinating to meet the Mormons of Nightingale-lane. You will see no clerical robes, no weighty religious dignity. Instead, there is an atmosphere of boyish enthusiasm tempered by a fiery faith in the creed.

The missionaries—men are Elders, women Sisters—are sturdily North Americans, descendants of the pioneers of a century back who trekked to Utah to escape religious persecution. Their average age is only 23. The youngest is 19.

Most of the Christian hymns are not only dull, but foolish. But there is one which is not only dull and foolish but revolting. Here it is:—

There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Emanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that blood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

When we were young that song was still in use. Now, Christians are so ashamed of it that one rarely hears it sung in church.

Readers will have noticed that Sir Stafford Cripps has shown a readiness to use his standing in the House of Commons to advance his religion, although the one has no connection with the other. He says quite bluntly, that we can never hope to have the best in public life until we have God. Note, he does not say that in the House of Commons, but he does not mind using his position as a politician to air his very childish and almost ridiculous religious beliefs; this gives him a standing in any church.

But as Sir Stafford Cripps will drag his religion to the front, we would help him a little. Here are a few notes. His religion begins with "Peace on earth and good will to all men." The mockery of it, in the light of centuries of Christianity! Where and when has that been achieved? When Christianity arose, it meant death of the ancient civilisations. For at least six hundred years, learning was replaced by monkish legends, social life by religious exercises, medical science by miraculous cures, and the duties of life by savagery. In fact, the period of Christianity's ascendancy stands as so much time lost to the world's progress.

It is now generally admitted that the Christian Churches are in a very bad state. There never was a time in the history of Christianity when the prestige of Christian Leaders was less than is the case now. Dean Inge tries to cheer them up by informing them that Christianity began to shrivel with the establishment of the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo. He says, with full truth, that the Christian creed recedes as scientific knowledge is acquired.

The Church of England has held a commission to consider if the atom bombs should be used in war. The Commission has decided that it might be used. The discussions have decided that "The atom bomb is admissible as a means of attack on objectives, in inhabited cities. Its power is such that it will serve neither for precision nor for area bombing. It is an essentially instrument of 'obliteration'." Now we know what to expect. Of course, the "other party" will be the criminal. We shall use, we hope for the "other fellow," not to use the bomb. It upsets the churches—unless we get in first with forgivable first-class bombs. Then God will always be on our side.

Archbishop Downey, R.C., says the peril of the age is peculiar. We agree, and find a system such as the Roman Catholic Church denouncing Communism as being the vilest of organisations. He knows as well as anyone that Communism began with religious belief centuries ago, and that the Roman Church is one of the best samples of Communism that anyone could have. Communism existed in the days of ancient Greece, minus the brutalities practised by the Church when it ruled the roost.

We suggest those who wish to understand the subject should get, if possible, "Ancient Society," published in New York, 1877, and "The Communists," New York, 1876. They give all the ancient history of Communism up to 1876.

# "THE FREETHINKER"

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS

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## SUGAR PLUMS

Just a last word on the National Secular Society Annual Conference at Manchester. A reception of delegates and friends will be held in the Grosvenor Hotel, Deansgate, Manchester, on Saturday, May 15, at 7-30 p.m. Business meetings on Whit-Sunday in the same hotel will begin at 10-30 a.m. and 2-30 p.m., only members of the N.S.S. with current card of membership can attend and take part. Lunch will be served in the same hotel at 1 p.m., and a public demonstration will be held in the Chorlton Town Hall at 7 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free, with some reserved seats at 1s. each. There is every promise of a well attended Conference, with the opportunity of meeting old and new friends.

Yet another number (No. 18) has been added to that useful series "Pamphlets for the People" by Chapman Cohen. "Christianity and Ethics" is the title, 16 pages, price 2d. The typically Christian assertion that its "ethics" are on such a high level, is effectively and adequately debunked by the author, who shows, indeed, the actual narrowing influence of so-called Christian morality, particularly when compared with the morality of the preceding age. Copies may be ordered from the Pioneer Press, post free 3d.

If anyone wishes to read the kind of tosh handed out to Roman Catholics, here is a sample from the "Litany of the Blessed Virgin":

"Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us, Holy Virgin of Virgins. Mother of Christ. Mother of Divine Grace. Mother most Pure. Mother most Chaste. Mother inviolate. Mother undefiled. Mother most amiable. Mother most Admirable. Mother of good council. Mother of our Creator. Mother of our Saviour. Mother most prudent. Mother most venerable. Virgin most renowned. Virgin most powerful. Virgin most merciful. Virgin most faithful. Mirror of justice. Spiritual vessel. Vessel of honour. Mystic Rose. Tower of Ivory. House of Gold. Ark of the Covenant. Morning star. Help of the Christians. Queen of Angels. Refuge of sinners. Queen of all Saints. Who conceived without original sin, pray for us."

We feel sure that the above is enough for any sensible person, and it should be remembered that this sort of rubbish is given to children and adults all the time. We can appreciate the great effort being made by the Roman Catholics to keep their hold on the schools, for without a doubt the R.C.'s realise that once the hold is loosened, there will be fewer believers in their ranks.

## WORLD GOVERNMENT OR—MR. P.!

Said Mr. P. to Mr. Wood—  
 Would you deny me, if you could,  
 The right to breathe more air than you?  
 Is that your *Equal Sharing* view?

Says Mr. Wood to Mr. P.—  
 If you can use more air than me  
 I'll masticate my pre-war Straw—  
*I'm six-feet-two; chest—forty-four!*

BUT joking apart, surely Mr. Phillips is going out of his way to be singularly un-funny in his article "Two plus Two equals Four." For some strange reason he seems to imagine I am some inhuman monster living only to devour the poor, helpless worker—a bloated capitalist and plutocrat. And all because I contend that a One-Government World is the only recipe for World Peace.

Methinks Mr. Phillips must have an axe of his own to grind—an axe with a very blunted blade! He asks me if I have ever read a book called "Money Must Go!" by "Philoren." No, sir, I have never heard of it; but is the striking similarity between "Philoren" and Phillips merely coincidental?

According to Mr. Phillips, a Moneyless World Government would solve all our difficulties—hey presto! If Mr. Phillips had journeyed to some of the remoter parts of this globe, as I have done, he would surely know that in savage communities money is quite unknown, even if *cannibalism* is not. He should take a trip to some of the lesser known islands of the Western Pacific or to Central New Guinea and see how it works out for himself. I am afraid he would find conditions of life there decidedly unpeaceful, in spite of the fact that they have no use for money!

In Mr. Phillips' Moneyless World apparently "all would work according to their ability and all would take, without payment of any kind, according to their need." But *who* is to decide each man's need? And would Manual Ability take precedence over Mental Ability? According to him we could do without our Einsteins and Churchills—but not without our drain-diggers. I am sorry, Mr. Phillips, but I do not agree. Had we to rely on a road-mender to lead us to victory in the last war I am afraid Mr. Phillips would now be enjoying life under Hitler! But there is no accounting for tastes.

Much of Mr. Phillips' argument I am quite unable to follow; but then I am no Master Mind—nor a mathematician. Is that why he accuses me of making two and two total five? My argument for one Universal World Government is based on the old axiom that it takes two to make a quarrel. So long as we have the world politically divided by a number of different governments with varying ideologies and policies we cannot hope for any settled peace.

Perhaps Mr. Phillips is unaware that I am not alone in reaching this conclusion. There is already in existence a very live organisation known as The Crusade for World Government, under the able leadership of Henry Osborne, M.P., and supported by some fifty Members of Parliament.

Dr. Kurt Lehmman in his book "The Renaissance of the Individual" (Skilton), also outlines a plan for a World Court of Justice—"a body which will by its universality avoid all rivalries of class and state." Even Tennyson dreamed in *Locksley Hall* of "the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World."

Finally, we have the greatest Thinker of the day, Bertrand Russell, famous philosopher and mathematician, pronouncing—"World Government is certain to come—but probably not in time."

Somehow I am more impressed by a Bertrand Russell than by Mr. Phillips—or should I say "Philoren's"?—scheme for a Moneyless World; but no doubt that is because I am itching

to play with all those hundred pound notes which, with Mr. Phillips' permission, I could cram into Buckingham Palace!

I have no doubt that others, less sordid-minded than myself, would readily welcome a world in which goods will be produced just for the fun of the thing and distributed free to all-comers, so that everyone will then know that two and two make four! At least, that is the amazing conclusion of Mr. Phillips.

Curiously enough, I was under the impression that children in the kindergarten already knew that.

W. H. WOOD.

## THE HEART OF MAN

IF the power of God were to be gauged by the effrontery of believers, we would be justified in attaching the indeterminate adjective "omniscient" to it. It is wonderful how the divinity idea has monopolised everything of any real value to man. The good is direct authenticated evidence, so it is said, of God's indwelling; the bad is but a means to that end. Genius is Deity's human climax; perhaps, then, the fool is Deity's human anti-climax. Beauty, it is claimed, is God's sweet smile, the effulgence of his love; while ugliness is the shadow of his sorrow, the dim despair of his suffering heart. Why a being, who can see the glorious redemption of every human, who knows that every sorrow is a purification, and that a step only is required to reach the gate to everlasting happiness, should possess a suffering heart, is one of those innumerable theological contradictions that shine as paste jewels in the Christian's tin crown. One may assail it on all sides, and reduce it to rank absurdity, without producing any effect upon the man or woman whose mind still slumbers in the cradle of divinity.

The God idea has touched the finer influences over us with a supersense of possessorship. It has closed its misty arms around every good impulse and every elevating circumstance. The far reaching power of it is a pulpit-popularism, rarely questioned in seriousness, and seldom mentioned without modulated voice. Nothing, nowadays, intrinsically of service in raising the standard of individual well-being, escapes the suffusiveness of the God idea. Permeating, by suggestion, all things that tend to subdue the animal within us, and invoke the human, it has sought and obtained entrance into the very holy of holies of nature—man's heart.

The greatest and purest characters are Godlike or Christlike. The heart of man, we are told, is the house of God. In our long journey up the rough way of life there has been gradually garnered a great store of noble impulses, rare pearls of incomputable price. They lie deep within our hearts, covered by the incubus of common triviality, but ready to respond immediately to the appeal. A kind deed, a sympathetic word, a look, a smile, a strong pressure of the hand, given with no conscious mental stimulation, but seemingly free from all thought control; these are a few of the pearls we have gathered on the way. The Atheist possesses them as does the Christian. They belong to no distinct set of ideas. They are of our natures, the purities of it, the essence of it. We Atheists bestow them as unconsciously as the Christian. Being without God is not being without humanity. A good deed is as commendable in the Atheist as it is in the Christian. The Atheist's sympathy is as valuable to a suffering one as is the Christian's. Tenderness comes from the heart of the Atheist with the same beauty as from the heart of the Christian, with the same rich recompense, with the same human thanksgiving.

In the stress of labouring hours the kind word is dropped from the lips, while the mind is closed to God or no God, and the reaping is not lessened because of it. The receiving Christian takes the look, the word, or the smile from the Atheist, with no mental acknowledgment to God, with no divine irradiation, but just with human thankfulness. When the bitterness of mis-

fortune rends the heart of the Christian and forces the restrained tears to the sad eyes, the human solace is not less sweet and comforting because it comes from lips that have ridiculed the existence of God; nor is it refused. Iniquity, torturing and confining and cruelly lacerating our desires, is not made more acceptable than the relief that may be given by an Atheist. Sorrow, however deep and enduring, does not recoil from the kindness proffered by the man who lives knowing not any God.

In everyday life, the Christian does not raise his eyes skywards in thanksgiving to God when he witnesses a charitable action done by an Atheist; nor does he insist that the prompting was due to the presence of a supernatural power within the man's heart. On the contrary, the human righteousness of the deed is all that is recognised and honoured. During the busy hours of life we are nearer to our natural selves, and farther from Deity, than the Christian will readily admit. Yet it is so; and solely from the mental excitation caused by emphasising that fact comes the Christian's feeble endeavour to introduce his beliefs in contradiction to the Atheist's information. Were it not for the simple remark, these beliefs would never be awakened from their sound sleep in the mind of the Christian.

The heart of man is—the heart of man. God no more lodges permanently there than the love for dolls dwells persistently in the girl's mind. As the years increase the number of her passed birthdays bring new thoughts, new emotions, new lives to her, the old love that she once imagined could never change, disappears. Stronger life demands stronger nourishment. The things we thought indispensable yesterday we see to be unneeded to-day. And so, too, with the heart of man. It grows with the growth of his knowledge, and sees farther with his sharper vision.

If once it were true his heart was the house of God, the old tenant has been evicted to homeless wandering. The new has cast out the old, and the dusty, long unswept corners are being cleaned, and the home refurnished and washed, and the musty hangings on the walls removed to show the beautiful frescoes that lay hidden behind them. For nature, the decorator of hearts, was busy beneath the heavy hangings, carving and painting with no lazy hand. On the covered walls she was engaged in making ineffaceable the pictures of purity, goodness, mercy, and truth, and was filling the nooks and crannies with the immortal statuary of righteousness and its sister, justice. She was preparing for the day when the hangings would be torn down and flung on the dust-heap of the past, preparing to give the lie to him who would say they were too valuable to be destroyed.

Underneath all its religious adornments and its time-stricken trappings, the heart of man still beats true to its natural humanity. The lights of gladness and the shadows of sorrow play upon the silver surface of a love born, not from the spirit of God, not from the nebulous something uncaused and incomprehensible, not from the sad soul of a lonely being that lived no one knows where, or when, or how; but from the travail of things that were, from the very necessities of life, as they became larger and clearer and clearer.

Belief in God does not make human love grander. Friendship receives no ennobling impetus from the worship of Deity. The woman's consciousness of the calm and steadfast security of a man's pure respect and admiration and love for her, is not heightened nor developed nor made firm because she loves, or thinks she loves, the Lord Jesus Christ. The priest may twist the truth and twine corded falsehood around her mind for a time, but the truth straightens out and the falsehood flees when companionship surrounds her with its happiness. It is easy to fill the space between the two poles of love and leave out God and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Human affection endures, and will endure, without the intrusion of that trio of mental triumphs.

Priestly dishonesty may discredit the humanness of joy, may tamper with the beautiful structure of life, may cause the long-lost echoes to reawake and resound, may fling a pleasing perfume



into the air, and dim, temporarily, the hardship that grips and grinds; but the heart of man returns to the hearts of men for the comforts that cling more closely and the consolations that come nearer and fuller and more fruitful. One hour on bended knees—how can anyone endure the penance for that protracted time and enjoy it?—in the imagined presence of God, is an ill substitute for the kindly word or the strong pressure of the hand—and the Christian knows it.

Not all the wordy enchantments ever uttered, or yet to be uttered, can robe the heart of man in the flimsy raiment of supernaturalism heavily enough to hide successfully its innate humanity, its naturalness, its truth and beauty, from all eyes. In the past, in the present, in the days to come, there were, and are, and will be found, men and women to raise the drapery and to tell of what it covers. To them nature's holy of holies is not to be draped, but to be shown forth, to be revealed, to be gloried in and rejoiced over; not to be worshipped on bended knees, but to be honoured uprightly; not to be held inaccessible and remote, but to be companionable and constantly with them. For these men and women nature is sufficient, for nature is all, and what they see they will tell, for it is not ugly and wicked, nor debased and vile, nor sinful and evil: it is heroic and noble, and good, and sublime. In time the last rag will be torn from the last wall of the last room, and men will alternate the shout of joy with the silence of surprise, and those who dared destroy the dusty hangings on the heart of man, who were despised and rejected, and suffered and sorrowed, will be sung in the songs of freedom, and empanelled in the lays of liberty. They will be recognised as the renovators, the revealers, of the heart of man in which they will be enshrined as in the immortality of memory.

E.S.

## ECCLESIASTICAL SURNAMES

### I.

FIRST names taken from religion are plentiful. Called Christian names because often bestowed upon children at their Christening they can be numbered in hundreds, if not thousands. Many are saints' names and from the Bible. Setting aside such reputed and disputed nomenclatures as Praise God Barebones and Hew Agag In Pieces Before The Lord Tomkins, the Christian virtues as Faith, Hope, Charity, Mercy, Patience were formerly much in use for girls. They still please us with a lavender-like tenderness, suggesting demure Puritan damsels.

Corresponding surnames have a more definitely ecclesiastical flavour about them, implying that the first bearers of such patronyms, mostly originating in the medieval ages of strong belief, had closer connections with the Church than being mere lay adherents or attendants at services.

Those which come from the names of sacred buildings or parts of them are notable: Church, Kirk, Towers, Spires or Spiers, Bell, Arch, Yard, Graves, Tombs, Wall, Gates, Organ, Parrish; and connected with employment about them, Sexton or Saxton, Clark, Singer, Bass, Treble, Ringer, Mason, Carver and Bury.

Variations in spelling simply arise from the fact that before printing, and long after its invention, men spelled how they liked. To spell the same word in diverse ways was anciently an indication of learning and culture, taken to show a mind well stocked with ideas and lingual knowledge, or full of pleasing fancies.

That some of these, as Mason, Carver and others may have come from secular life is admissible, but the Church figured so prominently in those middle centuries when surnames were forming that the canonical rather than civil origin is the more likely. In numerous cases it may be both. Many of the above list were common to church and town, but the dominance of the former over people's behaviour and ideas must be remembered.

A few derived directly from church ornaments or priestly vestments, as Cope, Hood, Crook, Crozier, Staffs, Cross and Banner. The smallest number is of those with abstract religious connotation, like Hope, Love, Christian, Christie, Fidoc, Creed and Laud. A group exists compounded from Holy, some being Holyland, Holywood, Holyrood, Holywell, alternatively under the influence of varying spelling and pronunciation and the passage of time becoming Holly, Hollywood, Hollyhead and so forth. Goodman and Godman, Goodhead and Godhead, Goodwin and Godwin, Goodson and Godson, Saint and Sant, also appear interchangeable by the same tendencies during the lapse of centuries.

### II.

Most noticeable are surnames which preserve ecclesiastical titles. Common to-day are Bishop, Priest, Monk, Deacon, Pope, Friar, Prior and Dean. Slight variants upon the originals are Vicars, Vickers and Vicarŷ, Nunn, Fryer, Abbott, Priestly, Parsons, Chaplin, Cannon, Deane and Beller.

Various explanations of their derivation are offered. Pope may be the river fish of that name, and two or three others have a possibly secular beginning, as Cannon, Deane, and Fryer.

A fanciful suggestion is that the first people so named were players who bore the name parts in medieval Mysteries when those were played by the Church and in the churches, and later by the Craft Guilds on public holidays.

Or they may have been orphans or foundlings brought up by the Church, or nephews of dignitaries. The latter seemed always to have been numerous, much loved by their uncles, and preferred for comfortable appointments, hence the cogency of the term nepotism for family graft and jobbery.

In this connection it should be observed that Vicars or Vickers, Towers, Spires or Spiers, Graves, Tombs, Walls, Gates, Staffs, Parsons, have acquired a terminal "s". This is not likely to be the sign of the possessive case, and hardly more so the indication of plural number. Rather it may be taken as the shortened form of son, as Christianson and Clarkson still are in full use.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

## CHRISTIANITY AND MARXISM

MANY people of varying point of view have for long expressed the idea that one of the weaknesses of Freethought and Rationalist literature is that it is too exclusively concerned with theoretical issues. Arguments about minor items of theological belief, or even about the major problems, such as Free Will versus Determinism, we are sometimes told, cut little ice in an age when the practical matters of nationalisation or of the managerial state are engaging the attention of many thoughtful people of all schools of religious and political thought. It would, indeed, appear necessary for all of us to make up our minds on these important affairs, and to relate them to the many aspects of our philosophy of life which we have already considered.

For that reason I am going to take the unusual step of recommending in these columns a book published by the Student Christian Movement Press. Entitled "Scrutiny of Marxism," and written by Mr. J. M. Cameron, it is priced, extremely reasonably, at half-a-crown, and is one of a series entitled "Viewpoints," which seem to be intended to be the orthodox counterblast to the Rationalist Press Association's "Thinker's Library." At all events, whether or not such an idea was in the head of the editor of the series, there can be no doubt that Mr. Cameron's book is something which deserves the closest consideration, both by those who believe Marxism to be a sensible, coherent philosophy, and by those who think it to be a farrago of nonsense.

Mr. Cameron has clearly been a Marxist, though he now holds that there are flaws in the Marxist approach, which no orthodox Marxist will for a moment admit to be there. For one thing, he has noticed something which others have frequently pointed out—the intensely religious attitude of some Marxists. He quotes Dimitrov's outburst: "The wheel of history moves slowly on to the ultimate, inevitable, irrepressible goal of Communism," and adds: "That is the language and sentiment of religion"—a comment which can scarcely be gainsaid, since its equivalent in purely religious terms might be easily found among the sayings of the adherents of many Churches and many religious bodies.

It is, however, in the sphere of applied morals, during the course of a section of his book entitled "Marxism and Ethics," that Mr. Cameron is most interesting and, inevitably, most directly controversial. Here he considers the Marxist idea of the relativity of morals and ethics, though he points out that the idea that morals vary from one place to another and from one period to another, is in no way peculiar to Marxists. The idea that "right" and "good" are terms which can really be translated as meaning "in the interest of the community and/or class," is, as he points out, one which is extremely prevalent in our time, and one which is not at all easy to gainsay. Probably the majority of the readers of these columns would be in general agreement with the idea. But Mr. Cameron's objection—that, on these grounds, there can be no logical dislike of the enslavement of some of the population except on the grounds that slavery is wrong—is not at all easy to counter. He makes, too, the point that if pure Marxist determinism on economic lines be accepted it is difficult to understand the highly emotional language with which Mr. Vishinsky attacked the supposed traitors during the Russian trials of pre-war days. One really cannot have it both ways. If the attitude of a man towards revolution or political reform is decided, as the Marxists would have it, by purely economic interests, one cannot attack an opponent as a "beast," a "Trotskyist conspirator," or a "mad dog," for doing what one holds to be more or less an economic reason.

I am not, I hope, giving the impression that I am writing in any way an attack on the Soviet Union. I have the greatest respect for the way in which Russia has tackled perhaps the most difficult task that has faced any country in the twentieth century; but to say that is not to hold that the philosophy on which the rulers of that country have proceeded is necessarily entirely correct. Most Freethinkers, I feel, would hold that dogma is a bad thing. Politics have not become an exact science, whatever the hundred per cent. orthodox Marxists may say. And until that is so, there will be some people who are Conservatives, some who are Liberals, and some who are Socialists. And if any of those schools of thought reserve the right to "liquidate" their opponents, they will inevitably be opposed by true Freethinkers of all schools of religious thought.

Mr. Cameron is, certainly, less convincing when he turns from his destructive treatment of Marxism to his more constructive task of building up a religious alternative. This may be, as he says, because Christianity and Marxism speak such wholly different languages that they can scarcely communicate. Or it may be because, in our day and age, it is more difficult to make the case for Christianity convincing than it was in previous ages. But at all events readers who are not already converted to his point of view will not find him so satisfactory in this part of his work. Of course, those of us who have an intense mistrust of the Roman Catholic Church will find him less convincing because he has apparently exchanged the dictatorship of Marx, Lenin and Stalin for the dictatorship of the Pope. I am judging merely from internal evidence in his book when I say that Mr. Cameron is apparently a Roman Catholic. If he had accepted the theological attitude of a less dictatorial Church—say, the Church of England—I feel that he would have been far more impressive in his attacks on the Marxist attitude and (especially) in his attempt to provide, from the religious point

of view, a satisfactory alternative to it. But, whatever we feel about Mr. Cameron's own personal point of view, there can be no doubt at all that he has provided everyone, Christians and Freethinkers alike, with a stimulating volume which has considerable value in the controversies of our day.

JOHN ROWLAND.

## BALMY UTOPIA

AT last the Millennium has come!

I know a lot of you have been waiting for it—so you may now relax and eat your peanujuts.

Utopia—Plan 606 has been released. Dear good Prof. Pizzle finally agreed to have the Plans revised just once more, loose ends tucked in, and the By-Laws and Blue Prints bound in buckram. Price, 1.98—postage included.

"Utopia," Heaven on Earth, New Jerusalem, Kingdom Come—all one and the same . . . in other words, The Promised Land, I can promise you that.

Naturally 606 can't be explained *too* much; the book must be read to be believed. It's really colossal, stupendous, super-magorical.

Utopias abound; in books however, not in actuality. No one in No country Nowhere seems at all satisfied with the living conditions. (In driving home a fact as I would hit you over the head with a mallet I often eschew grammar. For after all, one need not be choicy in language intended for morons. Need one?)

Indeed there are plenty of Utopias. A recent Omnibus entitled "Four Famous Utopias" was sent me by a Lady Friend, and I believe the book cheap at half the price marked. You owe it to yourselves to carefully peruse this "Four Utopias"—the one by Sir Thomas More especially, because shortly after his work was published the King ordered him beheaded.

One of the other Utopias is called the "City Under the Sun," written by a celebrated no-good of the time, who was eventually drowned in a sack with a 100-pound stone tied to it.

I forget what happened to the other two authors, who wrote in different centuries. They were ill-bred fellows more or less. Anyway, they came to some bad end which escapes me at the moment.

One of them, I believe, was so lazy that he starved to death sitting on the curb in front of a baker's shop.

So much for dreamers, and in general, Utopians. But let me warn you that no such accusations may be levelled at Prof. Pizzle, no indeed! There is a close, *very* close affinity between the Professor and myself. Of course, I will admit; he is not a hard-headed practical sort like myself, but too much the imaginist, the dreamer, idealist, seer; entirely too much the pipe-dreaming, castle building, fancy-monger; I call him "Mopus" for short.

What Professor Pizzle can't think up, I can easily imagine. And after these few phantasmagorical remarks it would perhaps behove me to explain the basic pattern of our greatest of all known Utopias.

Back some 80 or 90 years ago when I attended the little red school house in the lane as a child prodigy, I confess I was a bigger liar at six than all my relations put together; yet then it was children, where I first read the Story of Society—or the first group of monkeys on a Coconut Isle who decided they needed a self-administered government of Law and Order.

Twenty-five monkeys with their 25 wives and brats gathered together. The limits of their country were set. A certain number of coconuts, bananas, paw paws, etc., were needed for daily consumption; and winter must be arranged for. There were huts to be built; and all must be co-operative.

All progressed nicely until, after a time, one of the boy monks grew up and, sad to relate, turned out to be a weakling, physically defective. "Poor lad!" said the monks. "Poor lad!" echoed the rest of the tribe, instead of wringing his neck in infancy. Pity covers a multitude of sins, sometimes. Well, time passed; the weakling monk didn't have to work; he spent his time accepting choice tit-bits from mama and from the neighbours, and in studying people.

In the meantime the King Monkey and his Cabinet began devising Prohibitions, that is Rules and Regulations, settling disputes and occasionally handing out sentences of words, "Five days on the Rock pile!"

The the Cabinet had to be excused from daily toil on account of New Business coming up.

Eventually this little Utopia needed a police force to handle wayward souls and repel invading simians from nearby islands. Jack, the weakling, had grown up. His mental faculties increased in ratio to the defects of his physical body.

One day he heard the wind in a grotto making a strange "whishy" sound through the dry winds—and Ghosts were born. Jack became the Medicine Man. He invented a gibberish of his own. All feared him and brought him presents from then on; and he lived twice as long as any monk in the world ever thought of living!

Such is an old story written by someone many years ago; an explanation of what should have been an Utopia and upon which such simple tale Professor Piffzle and I have based our own foolproof Land of Perpetual Happiness.

It remains to be seen whether the world scorns us, or locks us up for life in a quiet, perfumed boudoir with padded walls.

EARLE CORNWALL.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE MEPHITICAL ARGUMENT.

Sir,—I am sure we are all deeply grateful to Mr. L. W. Smith for his most lucid thesis on "The Cosmological Argument." His masterly exposition of the Thomist philosophy—Analogia Entis—is just too, too thrilling. And how those dear, dinky little essences kept popping up all over the place! As an "ill-informed critic displaying his complete ignorance," I read it both backwards and upside down with precisely the same result.

However, I would like to draw Mr. Smith's attention for a moment to the unassailable argument of St. Agnes Apoplecticus (*Philosophica Mephitica*, Vol. III), who posited a First Cause in which Existence is entirely dependent upon non-Existence, and *vice-versa*: so that *necessary being* becomes entirely *un-necessary*. Without a fascinating theory proving beyond any reasonable doubt that the *ens realissimum* not only implies existence prior to existence, *ad infinitum*; but also *non-existence* prior to *non-existence*—*q.e.d.* Thus, *ipso facto*, Existentialism becomes non-Existentialism within the meaning of the Act. Or does it?

Surely, then, Mr. Smith will concede that the totality of contingent existences can only be *analogical* with contingent non-being, and *prior to essence*; otherwise we are referred back to *non-existence*, in which case the Cosmological Argument is inconclusive.

I am sorry if we have now relapsed into *irrationalism* but unfortunately I have run out of Aspirins—or essences—or something!—Yours, etc.,

W. H. WOOD.

The poor physicists, appalled at the desert that their formulae have revealed, call upon God to give them comfort, but God must share the ghostliness of His creation, and the answer that the physicists think they hear to their cry is only the frightened beating of their own hearts.—Prof. Bertrand Russell: ("The Scientific Outlook" p. 272).

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Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints, Manchester

A FREETHOUGHT DEMONSTRATION

On WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 16, 1948

CHAIRMAN—

Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN

President National Secular Society, Editor of "The Freethinker"

SPEAKERS—

J. T. BRIGHTON J. CLAYTON L. EBURY  
T. M. MOSLEY C. McCALL R. H. ROSETTI  
F. A. RIDLEY Mrs. M. WHITEFIELD

Doors Open 6.30 p.m.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

Report of Executive Meeting held May 4, 1948

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the Chair.

Also present: Messrs. Rosetti (A.C.), Seibert, Bryant, Griffiths, Ebury, Lupton, Woodley, Morris, Barker, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Financial statement presented. New members were admitted to Birmingham Branch and to The Parent Society. The annual balance sheet was before the meeting, questions asked and answered, and then moved, seconded and carried. The conference agenda in its final form was accepted.

Fraternal greetings to German Freethinkers were ordered to be forwarded with wishes for success in their forthcoming conference for reorganisation. A grant was made to the Glasgow Branch N.S.S.

Final arrangements for the Manchester Conference were announced, and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI, General Secretary.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

COUNTRY—OUTDOOR

Cornholme (Fodmorden Valley).—Wednesday, May 19, 7-30 p.m.:

Mr. J. CLAYTON.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints).—Freethought Demonstration; see advertisement on this page.

Scoutbottom (Rosendale).—Friday, May 14, 7-30 p.m.: Mr. J. CLAYTON.

Whalley.—Thursday, May 20, 7-30 p.m.: Mr. J. CLAYTON.

"The apologetic attitude so prevalent in science to-day is not a logical outcome of new concepts. It is based upon the hope of reinstating traditional beliefs with which science was at one time in open conflict."—Prof. L. Hogben: ("The Nature of Living Matter" p. 28).



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