

# THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

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Vol. LXVIII.—No. 33

[REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL  
POST OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER]

Price Threepence

## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### Man and His God

AMONG the many phrases made to do duty in the religious world, none are harder worked than the one at the head of this article. It assumes various forms, but in substance they are identical. Sometimes it is expressed in a negative form, in the shape of a denial that any such being as an atheist exists. From the pulpit it is a stock saying that the human spirit cannot rest content divorced from God, or humanity is pictured as during the whole of its history painfully groping after the true God. At missionary meetings whole races of savages, although they may have scores of gods of their own, are presented as suffering from a God hunger that only the Christian deity can satisfy. Facts, they say, are stubborn things, and cannot be ignored. Ultimately, this may be true, in other respects, in the sense of their commanding attention, the maxim needs serious qualification. For the statement that "Man desires God" really has little in the shape of fact to support it, and yet the superstition flourishes.

It may be tolerably easy, given fitting opportunities, to impress upon a developing mind the belief in God, but it is a common experience that needs the greatest watchfulness and the most strenuous exertions are required if the belief is to be maintained. Probably about 50,000 men in Great Britain are professionally employed to see that this particular belief does not languish. A much larger number expend amateur energies in supporting the professional endeavours. Newspapers and publishers both live in considerable terror of public opinion—that is, the more stupid section of it, for no decent person ever feared the intelligent portion. Society votes adverse criticism of the belief as "bad form," and the ponderous shortsightedness of judges endorses the decision. And yet, with all this care to keep the belief active, there is no complaint more common than that people need constant stimulation if they are to realise the truth that God exists, while the number that definitely profess themselves to be without either the belief or the desire, steadily increases.

This is the more remarkable from the weight of teaching and tradition in favour of the God idea. If the belief in God represented a late or ultimate stage of mental development, it might be assumed that many had not yet reached the point of believing. But the reverse of this is the case. Belief in gods is nearly as old as human history.

There is no other belief that has received such an amount of extraneous support, and none that has shown less ability to persist in its absence. There is no reason whatever for assuming that man ever had, or has now, apart from education, any desire for God. There is no evidence that man ever wanted a god, and indeed unbelievers in gods are as old as anything in the history of humanity. The belief in gods began because man

assumed that the facts of their experience point to their existence. Primitive man has his gods of health and disease, and desires the goodwill of the one equally with that of the other. He desires their favour because he believes in their existence not because of some innate desire for their being. The work has to be done again for each generation. Belief in God is a part of the environment equally with language, and each generation has to acquire it. What kind of belief in God would a child in a modern environment have if it were not impressed by teachers upon its plastic intelligence? How little would be the belief in, or desire for God, is indicated by the clerical complaint that in the absence of religious instruction, we should develop a nation of Atheists. Granted, but in that case what becomes of the desire for God? Is it any more than a consequence of education? Having been taught to believe in a god, that they need a god, and have a strong desire for a god, the vast majority go through life expressing themselves in accordance with their instruction. The child rules the man, and the past rules the present.

A great deal is said of the pain many people feel in giving up the belief in God. Well, there are many, the majority perhaps, to whom the birth of a new thought is always, more or less, a painful process. But apart from this, it is not the giving up of the belief in God that man finds so painful so much as the sundering of social relations which it often involves. No one finds a change of opinion impossible when there is a sufficient reason for so doing. Place the formation and the rejection of religious opinions upon the same level as other opinions, and there is no reason for assuming that the change would be any more painful in the one direction than in the other.

If man really possesses a desire for God, why so fearful of it being given up. I never yet heard of an Atheist who tried to prevent anyone reading a sermon. Why is it necessary to teach children to repeat formulae about believing in God long before they are old enough to understand what it is they are being taught? Above all, why is it that all over the civilised world the drift is away from the belief in Deity? Men do not need constant supervision and instruction in order to restrain a strong and unconquerable desire. At most it only needs direction. But there is an assumed desire that it not only needs guidance, but elaborate protection for fear it shall disappear altogether. This is a positively unique phenomenon. There may be various degrees of strength in the manifestation of a desire, but so far as it is a human quality, all men possess it. Religion is the one case, apparently, in which a human quality can be absolutely got rid of by a growing number of human beings.

The explanation, we are informed, is that we have allowed our religious natures to atrophy, or alternatively, as the lawyers say, our religious natures have not yet developed. This is quite a comforting theory to the religionist, since it makes every believer a superior person—a kind of superman in the intellectual world. The

only drawback to its acceptance is that it is not true. Atheism cannot represent a case of arrested development for the simple reason that most Atheists have been where the religious man now is. The religious man's yearnings—and squirmings—after God are not strange to the Atheist. He has had them himself; and he has grown out of them, as he hopes the Godite will himself one day outgrow them. Nor is it a case of atrophy; for there is nothing to atrophy. There is no single power or quality of the mind exercised in connection with religion that is not exercised in connection with other matters. Godism does not call into existence new qualities, it merely uses—by perversion—qualities already existing. The Atheist, with no desire for God, is at least as much a man as the person who believes himself consumed by such a desire. Generally, he is more of a man; because he is expressing human qualities in a human relation. He is neither the degraded nor the undeveloped representative of a species that receives complete expression in the Godite, but the representative of a more completely self-conscious human nature. That is why all over the civilised world Atheism is growing. And its growth is an illustration of the truth that having once created the gods, no small portion of human energy is expended in achieving their destruction.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### THE DEITIES OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

IT is frequently asserted that the imperishable glory of Israel consists in its possession of the idea of a single and supreme divinity. All other cults save that of Mohammed, which was itself so deeply indebted to Judaism were, and are, polytheistic or trinitarian in character. In its present form, the Jewish Testament depicts father Abraham as already a monotheist and, superficially, it suggests that montheism was the true faith of Israel from the earliest ages, from which a wayward and misguided people were wantonly breaking away.

Yet Dutch, German, and other students and scholars have clearly shown that the Hebrew monotheism of later centuries was preceded and accompanied by polytheism, and that Yahveh or Jahweh, who ultimately eclipsed all competitors was, for long, among many local gods. As late as the time of Hezekiah, the religion of the Jewish masses was still essentially polytheistic, and local cults were as common as in nearby Egypt. Indeed, in the sixth century B.C., the prophet Jeremiah declares that, "According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah." Moreover, it was not until the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, during which they had been influenced by a superior civilisation, that their theological beliefs had been improved.

Despite the priestly editing, Jewish records and traditions have undergone, modern critical scholars have traced three main aspects of Judaic customs and beliefs. These are the worship of the ancestral deities or teraphim; the adoration of trees and stones, and the supplication and worship of shadowy beings, some of them native, others adopted from neighbouring tribes, while solar and star adoration were not unknown.

Much like the household gods of the Romans, the cult of the teraphim was plainly that of deceased members of the family. As Professor Kuenen avers: "By that name were indicated larger or smaller images which were worshipped as household gods, and upon which the happiness of the family was supposed to depend." In

Genesis we read how Jacob's wife, Rachel, stole her father's gods when that brazen couple decamped, and, that when Laban overtook them, how he indignantly reproved them for their robbery.

As Grant Allen states in his fine anthropological study, *The Evolution of the Idea of God*: "Of Micah, we learn that he made images of his teraphim, and consecrated one of his own sons to be his family priest: such a domestic and private priesthood being exactly what we are accustomed to find in ancestral *manes* everywhere. Even through the mist of the later Jehovistic recession, we catch in passing, frequent glimpses of the early worship of these family gods, one of which is described as belonging to Michal, the daughter of Saul and the wife of David; while Hosea speaks of them as stocks of wood and Zechariah as idols that tell lies to the people. It is clear that the teraphim were preserved in each household with reverential care, that they were sacrificed to by the family at stated intervals, and that they were consulted on all occasions of doubt and difficulty by a domestic priest clad in an ephod." As Grant Allen justly claims, these and kindred evidences compel the conclusion that ancestor worship was the original cult of the tribes of Israel.

Although all the rewards and punishments accorded by Jahweh to his chosen people are mundane in character, and there is no Jehovistic recognition of an after life, yet, traces of a primitive cult have been preserved by the Scriptural revisors and redactors of a lingering belief in survival. That the Jews should have escaped the world-wide belief in a land of shades seems incredible, when we consider their veneration of burial caves and mounds. Then again, "the common phrase that such and such a patriarch 'was gathered to his people' or 'slept with his fathers,' the embalming of Joseph and the carrying up of his bones from Egypt to Palestine; the episode of Saul and the ghost of Samuel; and indeed the whole conception of Sheol, the place of the departed—all alike show that the Hebrew belief in this respect did not differ largely in essentials from the general belief of surrounding peoples." Moreover, adoration of the dead at their graves or monuments was a regular feature of Semitic faith. As Dr. Robertson Smith avers: "The whole North Semitic area was dotted over with sacred tombs . . . and at every such spot a god or demigod had his subterranean abode."

Sacred stones played a conspicuous part in Semitic cults and, even in the monotheistic creed of Mohammed, the Prophet was compelled to include the holy black stone of the Kaaba at Mecca among the most sacred possessions of the faithful.

Among the Hebrews, sacred monoliths were known as Bethels and the abodes of gods and spirits. References to them constantly recur in the Old Testament and popular devotion to them was indignantly denounced by the later prophets of Israel who dismissed them as idolatrous images. Also, the sacred stone is frequently associated with a sacred tree. As Grant Allen points out: "In the neighbourhood of Sichem was an oak—the 'oak of the prophets' or 'the oak of the soothsayers'—by which lay a stone, whose holiness is variously accounted for by describing it as, in one place, an altar of Abraham, in another as an altar of Jacob, and in a third a memorial to Joshua. . . . Near Hebron stood 'the oak of Mamre' and under it a sacred stone, accounted for as an altar of Abraham, to which in David's time sacrifices were offered." Then there is the tamarisk near Beersheba, planted by Abraham, and a stone altar ascribed to Isaac, with trees planted by others. All these stones and trees

## MARXISM AND MR. ROWLAND

had their indwelling deities to whom sacrifices were offered and petitions addressed.

The primitive divinities of the Semites are only dimly discernible amid the emendations and glosses that the records and folklore of Israel have undergone at the hands of priestly scribes and redactors. Each trile appears to have possessed its Baal or Lord who was worshipped as the tribal ancestor. Molech, which merely means king, apparently meant any defunct ruler who had been deified. Indeed, as our author reminds us: "Dr. Robertson Smith does not hesitate to hold that the particular Molech to whom human sacrifices of children were offered by the Jews before the captivity, was Jahweh himself; it is to the national god he believes, that these fiery rites were performed at the Tophet or Pyre in the ravine just below the temple."

Eminent Semitic authorities express the opinion that sacred bulls were part of the Jahweh cult and Kuenen roundly asserts that Jahweh himself "was worshipped in the shape of a young bull. It cannot be doubted," he declares, "that the cult of the bull-calf was really the cult of Jahweh in person." But be this as it may, both bull and snake—the brazen serpent—were venerated, if not worshipped by the people. And in any case, the adoration of the serpent continued until the reign of Hezekiah, when its sacred metal image was destroyed as an emblem of idolatry.

All things considered, it seems that at last Jahweh emerged from a pantheon of minor divinities as the supreme god of Israel. For despite the glosses of the Jehovahist editors it is evident that Jahweh's cult and various others persisted side by side for centuries with little conscious antagonism.

Yet, among Israel's many divinities, Jahweh apparently occupied a prominent position even in early times. In his earliest recorded association with the patriarchs, Jahweh appears as a fertility god who is ever ready to furnish fruitfulness to his devotees. When Abraham deplores his wife's barrenness he is promised an heir and his descendants are to be as multitudinous as the sands on the sea shore. Again and again, Jahweh showers fruitfulness on his favoured people. Also, as Allen observes, he "was the god to whom sterile women prayed, and from whom they expected the special blessing of a son, to keep up the cult of the family ancestors." "He maketh the barren woman to keep house," says the Psalmist about Jahweh, "and to be a joyful mother of children."

Phallic gods are everywhere petitioned for fertility, and deities of generation are almost invariably represented by upright stones. In India the phallic emblem is embraced by childless women, nor is this custom extinct in Europe, sacred stones crowned with a cross are supplicated by barren women in the name of God, the Madonna or some local saint for the blessings of fecundity.

From the time of the Exodus at least, the wandering Jews carried a stone in an ark or box drawn by oxen in which Jahweh resided. Human and animal sacrifices were devoted to this deity until the former were mitigated by circumcision, itself a religious mutilation, which thus replaced the burnt offering of the male child with a rite that served as a ransom. The humanisation of an earlier human sacrifice by circumcision is clearly suggested in the legend of Isaac's release from death at his father's hand, by the substitution of the ram entangled in the thicket.

T. F. PALMER.

THE real trouble between Mr. Rowland and me is the paper shortage. The fact is, I began "Man His Own Master" just at the end of the war and finished it in 1946. Had it appeared then, Mr. Rowland might have disagreed with it in detail, but I do not think that he or any other Freethinker would have seen Red propaganda in my very harmless remarks on causality and fatalism. I did not foresee in 1946 that my book would be published in the middle of a witch-hunt and perhaps within a few months of a new war to save "Christian civilisation." If I had, I might have expanded it, but not moderated it!

As Mr. Rowland rightly says, causality for most scientists is now an affair of statistical aggregates. For example, if I spin a coin a hundred times, I can predict (provided it is a good coin) that the proportion of heads to tails will be moderately near 50-50. The chances are rather against its being exactly 50-50. By increasing the number of throws I can increase the exactitude of prediction, but I can never make it perfectly exact. In physical science we are dealing not with hundreds, but with millions of millions of particles, so the physicist or the chemist is able to make his predictions practically exact. They are never perfect; but the margin of error is so small that it does not matter—the odd hundreds or thousands, maybe, of particles affected are too few for observation.

Now this is just what I say about fatalism. Fatalism rests on an old, discarded view of causality according to which anyone who knew the exact state of the universe at one moment could infer its exact state at any other moment. That was Laplace's view. From what I have read of modern physics I gather it is no longer generally held. We no longer deal in such ideas as exact knowledge of the universe and exact prediction, but only in limited knowledge and predictions subject to a margin of error, which we try to make as small as we can. Once that is admitted, we need no longer bother about fatalism. It is theoretically conceivable that the whole series of events is rigidly determined from the beginning; in fact on the Theistic theory it is unavoidable. But we have no reason to believe it true and no possible means of knowing it if it were. We have to deal, not with the foreknowledge which an omniscient God (who doesn't exist anyway) might have, but with such foreknowledge as we tool-using animals can attain in given situations; and that never amounts to the fatalist's claim.

I hope Mr. Rowland does not detect an "emotional urge" in this very sober and factual analysis. Plenty of people who are not Marxists have held my view. Epicurus seems to have been feeling after something of the sort when he rejected the fatalism of his time and posited an unpredictable swerve in his atoms to account for the variety of phenomena. Modern physics seems to have got back to Epicurus in its "principle of uncertainty." If I had derived from Marxism what so many learned scientists, not Marxists at all, have derived from independent research, that would not discredit Marxism or me. How I *did* derive it I have already told my readers, and I cannot help it if Mr. Rowland still smells a rat.

I am sorry if Mr. Rowland detects in me a tendency to anathematise those who differ from me and what-have-you. I do not think I show any such tendency in "Man His Own Master." The strongest language I use there is about the Roman Catholic Church. I presume Mr. Rowland does not take exception to that.

I am also rather nasty, perhaps, about Dr. Joad, but the worst thing I call him is a thimblerrigger. Well, isn't he? I really don't know why my book should have drawn down on me these extraordinary imputations of conspiracy against the freedom of Mr. Rowland and other worthy people. So far as I am concerned, Mr. Rowland is free even to believe, if he likes, that nobody is free. The only people I anathematise are those who are trying like the devil at this moment to involve us in a Third World War. I would bump off the lot of them, if I could, with real, persecuting, intolerant pleasure!

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON.

## MONKEY GLANDS

### Suggestion for Film Scenario

THE Continent of America is once more convulsed by the controversy which seems fated never to be definitely settled, but this time the eyes of the world are focussed on New York where a great scientist is reputed to be able to turn monkeys into men.

Billy Lever, the great fundamentalist preacher, had thundered forth his denunciation of modern science, pouring scorn and contumely upon the theory of Evolution. "They talk of millions of centuries of years," he declared, "but not one tittle of evidence has been brought forward to prove Darwin's theory. Let these men make Science take the Apes and train them until they develop before our eyes and *then* we will believe them," he added mockingly, but his jeering words were heard by two great scientists who looked knowingly at each other and winked.

Dr. Carr-Wynne, a Scotsman, and Professor Symianski, a Russian Jew, are the two scientists. Although each has his own laboratory they have been working for years on parallel lines, exchanging notes, consulting each other, and generally experimenting together on similar lines. There is a tacit understanding that if their work has any practical recognition both names will share the honours. They are certainly occupied with a unique problem, and there can be little doubt that the results will cause a profound sensation in the civilised world. Both convinced Evolutionists, they recognise that it is well nigh impossible for the lay mind to grasp the significance of vast periods of time; they agree with Lever that if *Evolution could be demonstrated*, all controversy would be ended. Partial but encouraging successes thrill them with wild enthusiasms. They are working on sound scientific ground. Accepting the view (Haskell's bio-genetic law) that the embryo epitomises in a brief period the race experience and evolution of all the ages, they merely seek to hasten post-natal aspects of this growth with the Simian species. In plain words, they believe it is scientifically possible to turn monkeys into men. Many and varied are their methods, Carr-Wynne favouring a treatment of the glands by inoculation, the Russian inclining towards drugs and special food. They come very near to success, faces and tails always presenting difficulties. Eventually Carr-Wynne triumphs with *Evolvitum*. He gets a perfect little man from a little monkey with this serum—perfect, all but the tail, which is as long and as useful as that of any tree dweller. Symianski and Carr-Wynne quarrel, and the Russian is chagrined to find that announcements are now being made in the Press regarding momentous disclosures and epoch making scientific research, the whole credit going to the Scotsman.

When the news was first wirelessly round the world that a doctor of science in America had discovered a means of turning monkeys into men the subject was treated as a joke. But when men whose credentials were beyond reproach spoke of the marvellous things they had seen in the laboratory the matter became one of tremendous importance. A world wide sensation resulted when the now famous investigator announced that he contemplated putting on exhibition a large ape which he would transform into an erect intelligent man with the faculty of speech and all the ordinary functions of the genus homo, in short, indistinguishable from an ordinary person. The time required was three months, and a large committee of unimpeachable men and women of all nationalities were to be permitted to appoint watchers, day and night.

It was a glorious three months for Carr-Wynne, every day having a new triumph. Never had the Press such a wonderful long-sustained stunt: it rivalled a great war. Never did journalist and photographer find such unique matter and never had such prices been paid for concessions.

And it was also a time of the blackest soul torment for poor despised Symianski. How bitterly he reviled his former confrère and how earnestly he hoped that failure would yet creep in before the expiry of the twelve weeks. But triumph succeeded triumph, and when at the eleventh week it was made known that the new man had actually said—they got it through the microphone—"I'm sure an American citizen" public enthusiasm knew no bounds.

The new man was still kept in strict seclusion despite fabulous offers, for his creator was working for the supreme triumph which would crown his great work. The Scientific Association of the United States had called an extraordinary meeting, delegates being expected from every part of the world. Dr. Carr-Wynne was to read a paper on "Evolution and Time," and Monk Newman (he had been christened) himself was to speak for five minutes.

Symianski's experiments were now going all wrong, in fact he could get nothing but negative results. So much so that in doping poor wretches with whom he fraternised in the underworld he found that, if Evolution had escaped him, he was now master of a potent—and tasteless—drug which could turn men back into monkeys. This he named *Atavisca*. It was reported about this time that in the Bowery three men had disappeared and three horrible apes had been captured, and speculation was rife as to some nefarious work. These stories were circumstantial and vague; it was felt that they were founded on sinister jealousies to discredit Carr-Wynne's position. Little importance was attached to these rumours, a universal policy of "wait and see" being the attitude towards the great scientific conference.

Foiled and embittered, Symianski now feigned friendship with his one-time colleague, but Carr-Wynne, now master of the situation, refused his advances. But Symianski—the only man on earth who knows the difficulties—hazards a bluff, and then blackmails the Scotsman, threatening to expose him, about the tail. There is a truce, but Symianski is a real villain and works for revenge.

Comes the great Conference. Everything has been beautifully rehearsed and is working to plan. Dr. Carr-Wynne has just finished his speech and the lithe debonair figure of Monk Newman, in immaculate morning dress, rises to address the gathering. True to every detail of a showmanship, his master has coached him to stand for a

few seconds, then slowly to drink a glass of water before speaking. But the water contains *Atavisca* and no sooner is it swallowed than terrible paroxysms convulse the frame of the man monkey. His face becomes horribly contorted, his eyes appear to recede, and hair is seen to cover his hands and face. Horrible sounds come from his mouth, which seems now all teeth, and he frantically tears off his clothes revealing a very furry body. There is frightful commotion in the hall, as the huge hairy ape, displaying a very long tail, leaps on the chairman's table, knocks ink over papers, snatches the wig from the head of the now humiliated Carr-Wynne, jumps on the electrolier on which he swings by his tail, scratching himself with one paw and waving the wig with the other.

J. EFFEL.

### A STRANGE FIGURE

ONE of the curious facts about English literature is that some of the figures who are, at any rate potentially, among the greatest of all, are comparatively unappreciated; there are, indeed, writers of genuine genius, like M. P. Shiel, of whom I recently wrote here, who remain known only to a small minority. Others achieve a certain notoriety in their lifetime, but only for some reason almost totally unconnected with their excellence as writers. Among this latter group must almost certainly be included Ford Madox Ford, whose work is known, I am afraid, to a very small minority of readers, but whose life and love affairs are known to many more.

Penguin Books have done a great service to Ford and to all who admire good literature, by issuing his "The Good Soldier" (a few months ago) and now by following this up with "Some Do Not" and "No More Parades," two volumes of a quadrilogy (if that is the word for a four-volume novel) dealing with a man called Tietjens during the war of 1914-1918. The two latter books are introduced by Mr. R. A. Scott-James in a laudatory manner. Mr. Scott-James, indeed, suggests that the Tietjens' novels will ultimately be regarded by historians of literature as being more valuable than Galsworthy's "Forsyte Saga." To some critics this will seem higher praise than they deserve; but I am not at all sure that it is so. Indeed, the books are extremely good, both as historical reconstructions of a period and as studies of character.

But why, in that case, has Ford not been taken more seriously as a novelist by the people who matter in English literature? Many a comparative nonentity (Trollope, for example) has been boosted into prominence. Why should a conscientious man, who works carefully in his chosen medium and who has a genuine mastery of style and of character—as Ford Madox Ford undoubtedly had—be regarded as a comparatively important figure, valuable only for the sake of the influence which he exerted on Conrad, long his friend? I do not think that Freethinkers will be surprised at the explanation. It is that Ford painted Tietjens largely as a typical Tory. The old-fashioned Tory gentleman, who regarded war as something which he naturally had to support, doing his duty by God and the King, is a figure extremely difficult to paint convincingly without becoming more or less directly comic. And here and there Tietjens does become comic. But on the whole he is observed sympathetically, and he is a character who can be understood and to some extent admired even by those who would not for a moment accept his political and religious beliefs.

But a man who sets out to portray either a dying culture or a class which is rapidly sinking into oblivion risks, as Ford quite deliberately risked, being lost as an artist for a generation. He was, we are told by Mr. Douglas Goldring, who was a personal friend, very hurt at the bad reception accorded to "No More Parades" when it first made its appearance in this country in 1925. He was, in fact, a war novelist who wrote his book too soon. If it had appeared in 1930 it would no doubt have been one of the great successes of the boom which included the work of Remarque and such-like commentators on the folly of modern war. As it was, he did not benefit from that, but his book, like A. P. Herbert's almost equally fine "The Secret Battle," was received in chilly fashion by the critics, though in the intervening years it has never failed to have appreciative readers.

Yet there can be little doubt that when he died in 1939 he was a disappointed man. He published many books, many of his fellow-writers recognised him as an author of genius. But he never achieved anything like general recognition, and it has remained for the war-weary generation of 1948 to see him as the artists that he certainly was.

The history of English literature, as I have said, is full of such examples of men who never, somehow, achieve the success that would have been expected—and the explanation is nearly always that they have made no attempt to trim their sails to meet the prejudices of their day. M. P. Shiel, Arthur Machen, Ford Madox Ford—they are all examples of the same kind of thing. Even though they may not be read by the thousands who find mental "dope" in the pages of lesser writers, they have the satisfaction of having produced genuine works of art, and they will enjoy readers for many years to come. Even though commercially they have never quite, in the current phrase, "made the grade," they have always given of their best, and have devoted themselves to the cause of literature. They deserve the salute of every thoughtful reader.

JOHN ROWLAND.

### DIRTY WATER!

If God made all the Universe  
From empty void—or so we hear—  
I hope I am not too perverse  
In asking "Who made God?" old dear!

And how came Man? Did God create  
Him out of dust or earthy clay?  
Or to the Apes shall we relate  
Him in Professor Darwin's way?

Nature's changeling through the ages  
Since the early Dawn of Time,  
Rising by successive stages  
From primeval sludge and slime.

What is Life? And why Creation  
If we all must pass away?  
Whence the Life-force or pulsation  
Animating human clay?

What is Death? And where the going?  
Maybe back to slime again—  
Nature's pretty way of throwing  
Dirty Water down the Drain!

W. H. WOOD.

## ACID DROPS

Princess Elizabeth, who is always ready to speak on any subject under the sun, recently gave an inspiring address to leaders of voluntary youth organisations on Christianity. Its greatest enemies were, she declared, "apathy, misunderstanding and diffidence," and of course nobody knew this better than she. She—more or less—laughed away any challenge to Christianity, especially any coming from an "easy-going materialism"—for who indeed could know more about easy-going materialism than the heir to the throne? Faith alone, she added, was what the people needed for the security for which they longed, though she did not tell her delighted hearers how faith would give them a good job and good food.

Miss Barbara Ward, who does her utmost to keep the flag flying for Roman Catholicism whenever she speaks for the B.B.C., must be a very sad and disappointed woman. She is almost horrified that films have now taken the place the Bible once held in people's hearts. She finds nothing in them to suggest real happiness, she declared the other week, and "if someone had told St. Paul about Communism he would have shivered." The doleful picture of a shivering St. Paul must have gone straight to the hearts of her hearers especially when Miss Ward implored them to do their utmost to bring women in particular back to Christ. We often wonder whether Miss Ward's "intenseness" has ever given her even a single convert?

Something seems to have gone wrong with Lourdes. Instead of coming home completely cured some pilgrims are dishonouring the Divine Shrine by actually dying on the return journey. A Mrs. Burns fell ill at Lourdes recently, and died when she got back home; and Bailie Connor, who had a heart attack in Lourdes, had another at home which proved fatal. We know the Lord moves in mysterious ways but even Catholics must begin to ask themselves whether this is not too much. Perhaps "our Lady" has had a row up there and the Lord in revenge has deprived her of all miraculous powers?

We are not sure how to describe the clergy's attempt to standardise fees for wedding banns, nationalisation, monopoly, or a cartel, but the Rev. M. Saberton wants all country parsons to comply with the 1947 agreement to charge 10s. 6d. for wedding banns, and he deplores the attitude of some parsons' "unworthy bit of free enterprise" and undercutting. On second thoughts, we do not think we can accurately describe the move as a monopoly, for a Registrar will conduct a dignified ceremony without any insulting references to procreation, or ridiculous postures of kneeling, or harangues on how to avoid "sin." It also has the advantage of being the only legal ceremony.

Psychologists who tried to vary repetitive jobs in woollen mills found that the girl workers did not want a change and "preferred work that did not involve thinking." We hope that Dr. C. B. Frisby is wrong, but hundreds of years of religion is not conducive to independence of thought. This attitude is symptomatic of the age, and although organised religion may be on the decline, "religion" of a political nature is very much in the ascendant, and to Freethinkers generally the task is to attack the unthinking "party line" as much as the theological line.

The Lord's Day Observance Society has scored another brilliant victory for its God. They have secured an arrangement by which bathing in the Serpentine, Hyde Park, is prohibited on Sundays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. A true Christian would, of course, prohibit all forms of bathing—for example, the medieval Christian was not noted for his cleanliness at any time. The "Lords Day" type of Christian must be finding the modern world ideas of cleanliness increasingly difficult, and it is time that sabbatarians of this type were relegated to a museum of fossils.

We move, albeit slowly. The L.C.C. is advocating the rescinding of the 1914 resolution banning Sex education in schools. Prophets are usually without honour, etc., but we feel fairly safe in saying there will be an enraged outcry from Roman Catholics, even though the L.C.C. provides a "conscious clause" which will enable Catholics to withdraw their children from sex education classes. Some parents will no doubt prefer children to get their knowledge of sex from the gutter rather than in a scientific manner in schools. "Conscience"—"the still small voice of God"—has a lot to answer for.

The "South London Press" reports that over 400 people clapped and cheered when the Rev. R. Hood publicly burned a copy of the "New Canon Law of England." As the book was burning, another parson said that if the book became law "it would destroy the whole foundation of civilisation." The assertion that Christianity is the foundation of our civilisation will not bear examination, but how fond these Christians are of burning, in this world, and the "world to come."

And so the Massachusetts (U.S.A.) film censors have at long last decided not to delete lines from the film of Sir Laurence Olivier's "Hamlet." What tender susceptibilities that can recoil from Shakespeare's lines that refer to "adulterous beds" yet can tolerate, and even teach children lines from the Holy Bible that contain more obscenity (in the modern sense) than most other books. We could give examples, but not being of the stuff of martyrs, we content ourselves with commending to our readers the "Bible Handbook," by G. W. Foote for references.

The Lord Chancellor may be the highest legal official in this country, and we would hesitate to challenge him on any points of law, but when he states (in connection with the Criminal Justice Bill) that "We believe that life was given us from God" and "I doubt if anyone would doubt that" (c.f. the "Universe"), we feel that either the Lord Chancellor is out of touch, or he is speaking with his tongue in his cheek. He of all people should know of the many Atheists who have been in conflict with the law, who do not believe life came from God.

Although religious education is now definitely part of the schools' curriculum, one correspondent to a religious paper rightly points out that so many of the teachers are not only without any "Christian conviction" themselves but are "openly anti-Christian." Thus, the religious framers of the new Education Act are beaten before they start—if the teachers have the backbone to stand by their own convictions. If people want their children to become Christians they should teach religion out of school. The only fair solution to this problem of religious education is Secular Education, as we have said time after time in these columns.

# "THE FREETHINKER"

Telephone No.: Holborn 2601.

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London, W.C.1.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

**JOHANNA DE TOIT** (South Africa).—The present South African Government may be decidedly more religious than the previous one. We trust, however, that there will be no difficulty in getting "The Freethinker."

**Mr. E. PARKER** (Worksop).—Thanks for your compliments "The Freethinker" has earned its position in the world of Freethought.

**Mr. R. MASON** (Wirral).—Glad you have found our leaflets useful. To be able to introduce them to the schoolroom is an idea that can be followed by others.

**BENEVOLENT FUND N.S.S.**—The General Secretary gratefully acknowledges a donation of 14s. 3d. from Mrs. M. Beesley (Notts), and Mr. C. McRobert, £2.

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## SUGAR PLUMS

Every now and then "John Bull" comes out with a regular slap-up boost of Christianity—no doubt to placate its religious readers. Its latest example is an account of how the Bible is the "World's Best Seller"—it is a best seller though, we are assured, the publishers are always losing money. Needless to say, they proudly point out that they never have any paper shortage; in fact, by the end of the year they will have in reserve 1,750,000 Bibles and 2,500,000 Testaments. In spite of this the British and Foreign Bible Society actually are complaining about America—"It would help a great deal if America could produce more Bibles, they have the paper and the facilities."

The Society are working to provide every living person with a Bible—the Authorised Version—in his own language, and out of the 2,000 languages in the world, they have already used 1,076, ancient and modern. It is all done out of a burning desire to bring everybody to God through His Divine Word, and so we are not surprised that the article in "John Bull" never even hints that some of the greatest Christian scholars have completely wrecked the credibility and authenticity of the Bible. But it would not do to let the poor dupes of the Bible Society know this. Why, it might even put a stop to their ridiculous activities—and incidentally relieve the paper shortage. But that would never do in Christian England.

Freethinkers in the Woolwich area can obtain "The Freethinker" and all Pioneer Press publications from Mr. J. Hill, Beresford Square Market, Woolwich.

An effort is being made to revive the Bristol Branch N.S.S. into an active unit for propaganda. Will those willing to help please communicate with Mr. W. H. Prytherch, 5, Hemmings Parade, Lawrence Hill, Bristol, 5. Our work is educational, important, and interesting, and we hope that Bristol Freethinkers will come in and help put that area on the Freethought map.

## FREETHOUGHT AND RELIGION

ONE of my greatest surprises in the course of over 40 years of Freethought is the pathetic way some people who have given up Christianity still cling to some religion.

Some years ago, our contemporary, "The Literary Guide," published a series of articles from living Rationalists detailing why and how they gave up religion; and the thing that struck me most about these articles was the way so many of the writers described their sufferings, and the mental tortures they endured, when at last science or reason or commonsense or the three combined compelled them to give up Christianity. I felt, when reading their experiences and the titles of the books which finally convinced them, that for two pins they could easily go back again so heart-rending was the break. With the best will in the world, I find it difficult to account for all this misery. Either religion is true or it is not; and (of course, speaking for myself only) I fail to see any side of religion to be true. Religion is a huge delusion based on primitive credulity, superstition and ignorance. And the only answer that can be made to that dogmatic statement is—it all depends on what you mean by religion.

Well, I do not intend here trying to explain the word for I am convinced that most people know perfectly well what I mean by religion; and if there are any readers of this journal who have any doubt, I can only say that our writers must have miserably failed in their criticisms. When I say that I am, therefore, against *all* religion, I mean exactly that. I mean that I oppose it in all its various forms, in all its subtle distinctions; and I refuse once for all to connote religion with certain lines of ethical conduct.

I refuse to believe a religion is a "philosophy" when it is obviously a religion. Take, for example, Buddhism—I wrote recently about it, and at the outset I showed its extraordinary likeness to Roman Catholicism. When I say that I showed this, I mean that I quoted a leading authority, Rhys Davids, who gave, point by point, Buddhism's similarity to Roman Catholic sacerdotalism. You can no more get away from the "holiness" of a Buddhist monk than you can get away from the "holiness" of a Christian priest. Buddhist monk or Christian priest suffers from the same idiotic delusion—that he is a special brand of person appointed by God Almighty to lead men to do his will. I am sure that lots of them are quite sincere and really believe this—but I do not, and it is a fact that the Freethought I learned from the great Freethinkers scotched that idea at the outset.

When, therefore, I speak, very irreverently, about Buddhism, I find it more than amusing to see the reaction of lots of Freethinkers who have still got a sneaking regard for the "founders" of religions. Instead of taking me up on *Buddhism*, I am lectured on Buddha—the gentle, the perfect, the peaceful Buddha the Atheist; or I am told that I am hopelessly ignorant of Buddhism, or of what Sir Edwin Arnold or some noble Lord said about it. I am even told that I know nothing about Yoga or Yoga practices; and that it would do the West immeasurable good if everybody took up Yoga "meditation," especially as it would enable us to perform all sorts of things, meaning many things which my gross materialist mind would call miracles.

Let me confess that I am quite unable to appreciate Yogi (or Yoga) meditation. By working hard at it, I understand that one may eventually lie naked on a nail-studded door, walk bare foot on red coals (for miles?), or be shut up in a sealed coffin 20 feet underground and yet come out alive after six months. Such delectable experiences may be all right for the Holy Men of the

East, but they bore me. I much prefer to see one of the despised Hollywood films, and so unabashed am I, that I frankly confess that I prefer Bing Crosby as a typical modern Roman Catholic priest. In fact, Bing seems to me to be easily more *healthy* than the most obsessed Yogi Mystic.

I am not quite clear why I should put Buddha on a pedestal. Is it because he would have nothing to do with a God? Is it because he believed in honesty, in truth, in kindness, in love and mercy? Surely of millions of people we can say the same. I do not think that the West can learn much in any case from the East, but supposing it can—is that a reason why we Freethinkers should be ready to take over a religion packed with so much ignorant superstition as Buddhism?

It is, of course, possible to present Buddha and Buddhism in such a way that Freethinkers could accept them—just as you can “modernise” Christianity; in fact, I am prepared to show that Freethinkers can swallow even the Salvation Army in this way. But the Freethought I am fighting for requires no Saviour, no Great Man to worship, no organised religion however purged. We need no Sacred Book of Rules and Regulations, no Holy Temple, no Miraculous Shrines, no grovelling, no obsequiousness. We have no “beliefs” except in the integrity of Science and in reason as the result of objectively studying Science. And our ethical conduct must be that based as far as possible on the old Utilitarianism—the greatest good for the greatest number.

Those Freethinkers who still have an urge for some kind of religion have a perfect right to satisfy their need. They have a perfect right to claim that “no true Rationalist will assert dogmatically that the fundamental religious ideas are mere relics of superstition” or to appeal for a United Front against those benighted unbelievers who still contend that Jesus Christ is a myth—a United Front to maintain that, if Jesus Christ was not a God, he was at least a Person or a Man who actually lived. And I have a perfect right to oppose them.

Do Freethinkers need a religion? Are they, as Christians maintain, miserable without some sort of a belief even if it is a belief in Buddha and in the grand spiritual truths emanating from the East? Have we poor misguided Westerns lost a tremendous lot in not succumbing to the wiles of Yoga? Should Western “materialism,” gross and unpalatable for all highly sensitive and spiritual beings, now swallow Karma, Reincarnation, Avatars, Buddhist relics, Divine Egos, Esoteric Teachings, and Exalted Ones? Do Freethinkers really yearn for these things?

It is useless for us to deny that crowds of people do yearn for some belief born, I suspect, of their hating to think that death ends all. It is not easy to convert them. But surely it is the duty of those who have no religious beliefs to say so, to shout it from the house-tops if necessary, to assert the dignity of Man in the only life we know anything about, and never to cease our war against wrong-thinking, wrong and useless beliefs?

Whether we like it or not, the battle against credulity and superstition is always on; it may appear to be a long fight against odds; but some of us at least will never despair and never give in.

H. CUTNER.

We do not get to any heaven by renouncing the mother we spring from; and when there is an eternal secret for us, it is best to believe that Earth knows, to keep near her, even in our utmost aspirations.—GEORGE MEREDITH.

## EARLY ENGLISH FREETHOUGHT

### IV

BURNET, in his often inaccurate *Annals of the Reformation*, calls William Sawtre, who was burnt early in 1401, almost immediately after the passing of the statute, the first English martyr; and the statement has been frequently repeated. This is certainly incorrect. Fitz-herbert, an old law writer, tells us that burning was previously the punishment for heresy by the common law; and Blackstone says it is thought by some to be as ancient as the common law itself. Popes had long before commended the putting to death of heretics. The fourth Lateran Council, 1216, had ordained their being handed over to the secular power to be burnt, and where the Church had full sway these instructions were carried out. There is reason to believe there was burning for heresy in England before the twelfth century. At the beginning of the thirteenth century several Albigenses came into England, and were burnt to death as heretics (see Lechler's *John Wiclif and his English Precursors*, p. 52).

Bracton records that in his time apostates from Christianity were burnt to death. Mr. C. H. Pearson, the most competent historian of that period, in his little book on *English History in the Fourteenth Century* (p. 265), mentions a renegade deacon killed with the sword in 1223, and some Franciscans who were burned alive in 1330. Possibly these participated in the heresies of the celebrated *Everlasting Gospel*, a work which declared there were three dispensations—that of the Father, which ended at the coming of Christ; that of the Son, which had now ended; and that of the Spirit, which was to begin, and of which the religious ideal of the Franciscans was the embodiment. We have seen how the Bishop of Norwich had threatened death to any heretic who preached in his diocese; and Fox considers that William Swynderby was probably burnt to death in 1399. William Sawtre had recanted, but repented of his recantation. Of sterner stuff than this was John Badby, blacksmith, brought to the stake in 1409, for declaring in rough English fashion that John Bates (or Jack Raker), of Bristol, had as much power to make the body of Christ as any priest had. The host, he maintained, was in no sense the body of Christ, and, as something inanimate, was less worthy of reverence than a toad or a spider, which had at least the gift of life. If the host on all the altars were God, then would there be twenty thousand gods in England. Such outspoken heresy ensured his condemnation by the Bishop of Worcester, confirmed by Archbishop Arundel. Badby was delivered to the secular power for execution, and met his fate on March 1, 1410, at Smithfield. He was placed in a barrel, and burning fuel was heaped around him. Prince Henry was present, and offered him a pardon if he recanted. Badby remained firm; but a piteous cry, when the fire was lighted again, excited Henry's hopes of conversion. He caused the fuel to be cleared from around him, and again offered the half-dead victim pardon, and even a pension. With unflinching constancy the martyr refused. The fire was rekindled, and he was burnt to ashes as a hopeless heretic. Badby's case seems to have excited sympathy for the Lollards on the part of the Commons. They shortly afterwards prayed that persons arrested under the obnoxious statute might be bailed and make their purgation, and that they might be arrested only by the civil power. The petition did not secure the king's assent. Still less did he approve the attempt to disendow the Church, which, first made in 1404, was

fiercely met by Archbishop Arundel. The attempt was renewed in 1410, when the Commons represented that the revenues of the bishops and abbots would maintain, to the king's honour, full fifteen earls and fifteen hundred knights, six thousand and two hundred good esquires, and one hundred hospitals for care of the infirm. The king peremptorily dismissed the bold petition, commanding that from thenceforth they should not presume to move any such matter. The support of the Church would have been lost to the usurper had he listened to the bold wishes of his Commons.

The beginning of Henry V's reign was signalized by a new triumph of the Church. The king surrendered his friend, Sir John Oldcastle, the chief protector of the Lollards, to the machinations of his persecutors, and a new statute was passed (2 Henry V, 7) ordering all magistrates, from the chancellor to the sheriffs, mayors, and bailiffs, to take an oath "to put their whole power and diligence to put out, cease, and destroy all manner of heresies and errors, commonly called Lollardries," and declaring the lands and tenements, goods and chattels of all persons convicted forfeit to the king. The terror inspired by these executions and enactments drove many into exile. "They fled," says Fox, "into Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, and into the wilds of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, working there many marvels against their false kingdom, too long to write." It was, of course, the ablest who had most to fear, and were the first to fly.

Besides the thirty-nine who were put to death after Oldcastle's rising in 1414, twenty-eight suffered death in succeeding years. The great majority of the accused wisely recanted and did penance. Oldcastle himself having been taken by treachery in Wales, the Church had the satisfaction of hanging him in chains over a slow fire till he was roasted to death. These severe proceedings served their purpose of checking the open dissemination of Lollard doctrines. The itinerant priests no longer preached openly, though the tracts of Wiclif continued to be read and passed in manuscript from hand to hand until the invention of printing, when they were amongst the first of heretical books to appear in type. Nine years after the ascent of Henry VI, the Duke of Gloucester was traversing England with men-at-arms for the purpose of repressing the rising of Lollards and hindering the circulation of their invectives against the clergy. The fire of heresy was smothered, but continued to smoulder until the outburst of the Protestant Reformation. During the troubled times of the Wars of the Roses foreign and domestic strife left both the Church and the heretics undisturbed, the very storm proving their shelter. The decay of feudalism and the development of the parliamentary system were, however, making for the cause of liberty. A striking instance occurs in the case of Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, who, in defending the Church from the Lollards, declared that the interpretation of Scripture must in all cases be accommodated to "the doom of reason." He criticised the fathers as well as quoted them, and even ventured to doubt the genuineness of the Apostles' Creed, and to question the article of the descent into hell. In 1457 he was himself accused of heresy, forced to recant for fear of martyrdom, and was deprived of his bishopric, and immured in a monastery at Canterbury under circumstances of great humiliation. Whether this in any way modified his opinions seems very questionable from the verses which he used to repeat to those who made him a visit:—

Wit hath wonder, that reason cannot skan.

How a Moder is Mayd, and God is Man.

Pecock was a man of vastly superior intelligence to the age in which he lived; but already Oxford was affected

with the new movement which in Italy was reviving the arts, literature, and philosophy of ancient Greece and Rome. The Canary Isles had been discovered, and stimulated the desire for maritime adventure. Paper mills were becoming the means of breaking down the monopoly of knowledge. Above all, the invention of printing opened the way of spreading far and wide the new learning. Everywhere might be discerned the coming of that great movement of the Renaissance of which the religious revolt, shaping itself into the Protestant Reformation, was only the most eruptive symptom.

J. M. WHEELER.

## THE MISSING MANSIONS

"IN my father's house," Jesus is reported to have said, "are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you"; which promise, if in fact performed, has presumably been of signal benefit to the innumerable company of the Christian dead, for to travel to a distant country, and having got there, to find no living accommodation, would be so disheartening an experience that even a saint might become irritable, and sigh for the earth he had left. Jesus has, however, according to the record, obviated the possibility of any saint having to conduct himself in an unsaintly or indecorous manner. He has made arrangements, or promised to make them, so that all who, immediately prior to their death, believe in him, shall receive a celestial dwelling-place.

It is a lovely story, but, in truth, all we know about Jesus and this promise is that if he did indeed live, and speak as alleged, it is certain that he also died or went away, and has not returned to earth, nor has any other who has died come back among the living to report on the progress of the heavenly house-occupation scheme.

Now the father of Jesus, that is to say, Jesus himself for he and his father are one—has, it is reported, not only mansions in the sky, but houses on earth, and in the fine, but too often rainy, windy and chilly seaside resort of Ormesville, where I am writing, he has sixty houses. These houses are mostly strongly built, as if to resist the strong breath from the divine nostrils, which sometimes threatens to blow the dwelling-places of mere mortals to Hades or somewhere equally off the usual traffic route. Now they, that is those whose statements must not be lightly scorned or rejected, and who are often deemed the guardians of morality and the preservers of ancient wisdom, they say, that Jesus loves us all so much that he invites us, more than nineteen hundred years after the death which failed to obliterate him, to visit him here in any one of his sixty houses, at least once every Sunday. He will then be there in each of his sixty houses at one and the same time, and they say that to make it easier for us to meet him, he has, through them, issued an order for all the cinemas and taverns in the town to be closed on that particular day.

Now it is as easy to believe this as to have faith in the promise about the mansions being prepared for the dead who died believing, but it is no easier, for when you enter the said houses you do not see Jesus, but a number of other people. Besides, although Jesus and his father had been once in the carpentry trade, they do not appear to have assisted in the construction of the houses, and even the design of these is attributed only to human architects. Also the expenses of the buildings are believed, on sound authority, to have been defrayed out of the pounds of the rich and the pence of the poor. There is also this to be remembered, that the invitations issued by the Lord are in the form of advertisements, on hoardings or in the local papers, and a human painter

has been paid for setting-out the one kind and a human editor for the other. The addition of another fact, that is that during week-days the houses are kept locked by God's ministers, lest ill-conditioned persons break in and steal, which no-one would dare to do if God were inside, compels us to assert that there is no proof that these houses really belong to God. If, however, anyone will bring to our notice further evidence, such as, for example, a deed of conveyance purporting to have been signed, sealed and delivered by the Almighty, whereby he became the legal owner of the sites of the aforesaid houses, we shall most carefully reconsider the question.

Now the father-son, owner of the heavenly mansions, once fell into a melancholy mood regarding his own position in respect of the housing situation of Palestine. It is true that at no time was he much addicted to laughter, his habit inclining to weeping and vehement denouncing of vipers, warned to flee from the wrath to come; such wrath having been prepared by himself for all who received him coldly and asked too persistently for his credentials. But on the subject of homes he made a most moving remark, reminding his followers that foxes had holes and the birds of the air their nests, but he, the man-god, had nowhere to lay his head.

Now, if the case was as bad as that, Jesus was in the position of the lady in the law court, of whom the judge said: "She has come here to make an appeal against —. Well, I do not know what she is appealing against, but she wants some form of relief. She elected, in her dealings with the defendants, to follow a certain course of action, but now her situation has changed, and she wishes she had chosen a different course, for, as things have turned out, that would have been to her benefit. To this the defendants may reply that they are extremely sorry for the lady, but they do not understand why having made a choice, which might have been to her advantage, she may now change it, certainly to their detriment; and I would have to agree with them." Similarly, we could be sorry for Jesus, but he also had made a choice. He had chosen the life of a wandering teacher, which precluded his having a fixed abode, rather than that of following the steady trade of his foster father, which would have enabled him to construct for himself a simple dwelling. He could not have it both ways.

It is, however, doubtful whether Jesus' predicament was so bad as he painted it. So popular a preacher and healer must have had many houses open to him, and this appears the more probable, since we do not find him complaining that he had nothing to eat. Indeed, we find him once at a marriage feast, and on another occasion referred to as a wine-bibber, so that friends undoubtedly furnished him with food and drink. Then he certainly did not walk about naked, for there was one who "touched the hem of his garment." It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that friends supplied also shelter.

No doubt the meaning could be read into the text that Jesus yearned, of course, only in an unguarded moment, for a home of his own, perhaps complete with wife and children. That would be very human, but the more human Jesus is made, the less supernatural does he appear.

Jesus was, however, a God, and by definition superior to the human failing of vacillation. He was on earth for a certain purpose and knew so very well what that entailed, that his pathetic comparison of his situation with that of foxes and birds appears as an inconsistency of the gospel writer, like that other story of his agonised cry upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" a cry copied from the 22nd Psalm.

Inconsistency is, however, to be expected of men, and in certain of them, the Franciscan monks, it operated to initiate in England that great institution of jurisprudence, the trust; for these holy men had made a vow of poverty, and accordingly regarded themselves as forbidden to own houses. Nevertheless, they had to have at least dormitories, so the device was resorted to of conveying land to lay individuals who were to hold it to the use of the friars. Thus were wedded poverty and property.

So foxes have holes, the birds their nests, and holy friars dormitories, and, in these days, much more than dormitories, and the dwelling places of holy men are usually far better than the wretched dwellings of the labouring poor in many parts of the world. For the latter class there may be mansions in the sky, but they are missing from the earth.

J. G. LUPTON.

## RIGHT AND LEFT

IN his "The Domain of Ideologies," Harold Walsby (MacLellans, 10s. 6d.) asserts that his subject has never been treated scientifically and there is a desperate need for this. His own "humble endeavour" is a step that way. One wonders what his idea of science is, for it seems strange that he should apologise for giving so much space to quotations. As these are both subject matter and evidence, he could hardly discuss the subject without.

The contradictions in the modern world, poverty in the midst of plenty; organised scarcity, subsidised export, search for world markets; the tempo of technological development leading to frustration, risks and uncertainty, and the power for war and destruction, also involves administration by men elected by "undiscriminating and unscientifically-minded masses." Science is non-political and politics is controversial and unscientific. In a scientific world, science must not "meddle in politics."

Tracing ideology back, through Marx' and Engels to Hegel, he is not concerned with relative merits, the rights and wrongs, but with a comparison of right and left, in the economic and political relationships. He sees, in social relationships, ideological layers merging and blending between the two extremes, with psychological and intellectual differences. Carefully selected and marshalled quotations show distinctive characteristics. There are vital differences between fascist and communist ideologies. But there is confusion in the paradoxical considerations involved.

On the one hand, we have "economic individualism" in combination with the "political collectivism of democratic majority rule, and on the other, "economic collectivism" combined with the "political individualism" of a minority rule; in the one case, an emotional appeal to the masses, and in the other, an intellectual appeal to the individual. In view of the characteristically conservative mental attitude of the masses, the psychological aspect of the case is interesting.

Although noticeable in normal conservative utterances, the position is most clearly seen with the Nazis. Here we see, not only renunciation of, and denunciation of, intellectualism; with logic and reason giving place to instinct and intuition; but also with verbal dialectic replaced by shiboleths, slogans, symbols; with action taking the place of words. The emotional mass-appeal takes the place of the intellectual appeal to the individual in the most blatant manner and in complete disregard of the most ridiculous illogicality.

All this is shown to be in accord with the mob-psychology of Lebon, Freudian psycho-analysis, and Pavlov's reflexology. The psychology shows that Fascism or Nazism was not imposed upon, but arises from the masses, expressing the herd instinct; the mass hysteria having the same characteristics as that of the lynch mob. The position of leader and followers is reciprocal. There is compensation in the social unification. Just as it is fear that inspires the average man to renounce responsibility, so also does it inspire the leader to withdraw from the group, to stand alone. There is no ideological difference, though leader is active and followers are passive. The leader accepts the renounced responsibility.

Not only is the inhibition of the followers reciprocal with the exhibition of the leader, but also, with the Nazis, just as the follower identifies himself with the leader, so is there identification of the leader with the masses. It is this renunciation and acceptance of responsibility that explains the identification of "economic individualism" with the "highly collectivist political modes." Our author remarks "this curious paradox was well expressed by Goebbels when he said the Nazis regime was more democratic than democracy."

But intellectual development involves ideological separation. Intellectualism is "emancipation from bondage to the group," from "mass suggestion." From groups of the mass type range smaller and smaller groups of a more intellectual type. There is ideological difference between individual and masses; though he is unaware of this; there is no identification with mass modes of thought; the individual loses touch with, and understanding of, the masses. Though the individual identifies himself with the masses there is no reciprocity. This explains the combination of "economic collectivism" with "political individualism."

No party or group, except perhaps the Nazis, ever claimed to act in its own sectional interests, and the individual is aware only of his own way of thinking. What he thinks, should be, ought to be, must be. By projection he reads his own mental attitude into the masses; calling on them to think for themselves while trying to bring them to his way of thinking; failing to see both his own, and their, irrationality. With the habit of critical logic, the Left are always squabbling among themselves; but it is illogical to seek logic in the ideological masses, for there is no evidence of "mass rationality."

Lack of psychological understanding and the failure of the intellectual appeal, and its defeat in Germany by the Nazi slogan-symbol technique, is well illustrated by quotation from Chakotin's "Rape of the Masses." Chakotin's suggested adoption of the "senso-propaganda" technique (the three arrows, the clenched fist, the shout of Freedom) was met with the argument "we shall make ourselves ridiculous with all this nonsense"; although it had been successfully demonstrated.

With remarks on the persistence of characteristic modes of mass thinking in Russia, our author says we are warranted in a "new scepticism of the scientific intellectual's assumption" of evolution "towards the analytic, objective and independent mode of thought." And the reader is left to reflect on Herbert Spencer's progressive integration accompanying evolution from homogeneity to heterogeneity; with a vague suggestion of functions of different ideological groups.

Our author seems to think the second part of the book the more important, but this seems to distract attention

from problems and questions put in the first. After dealing with definition of such terms as ideology and assumption, he goes on to consider the function of the nervous system, "the psycho-biological basis," arguing that all this is more than mechanical, physiological, biological, but also ideological; losing sight of cultural evolutionary, historical, religious, educational, political, economic and other social aspects. World problems seem relegated to the limbo of oblivion.

Roaming into the realm of introspective metaphysics, he considers how we read our thoughts and feelings into a Pavlov dog. The same method is used considering the developing of the individual from the child, which is paralleled by that from the savage through superstition and primitive religion to scientific modes of thought. Leading on to a consideration of identification and repression, frustration and projection, he is lost in a maze of psycho-analytic metaphysics. One wonders what is the practical value of such metaphysical explanations against mass suggestion and irrationality.

His contemplation of his own nervous system thoughts and feelings, is somewhat reminiscent of a Yogi contemplating his navel. In his study of psychology he seems not to have heard of rationalisation, nor of escapism. One is still left wondering what his idea of science is, particularly social science.

The book is published on behalf of the Social Science Association.

H. H. PREECE.

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