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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Religion is the Opium of the People

ABOUT a century ago, Karl Marx, the founder of modern Communism, proclaimed his now famous definition of the social role of religion. "We quote: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, the soul of soulless conditions, the opium of the people." The last part of this definition has become world-famous, it has been quoted with enthusiasm by Lenin (to whom it is sometimes attributed) and by innumerable communist and socialist writers and speakers.

Let us have a look at this famous definition; what does it mean? Surely this, religion is a soporific drug which gives the poverty-stricken masses some temporarily pleasant illusions that serve to make their drab lives more tolerable. It should be borne in mind that the definition was made at the time when Christian capitalists of the West were forcing the wretched Chinese at the point of the bayonet to buy opium wholesale, and Marx compared the effect of religion upon its devotees to that of opium upon the Chinese coolies, to whom it gave a temporary relief at the ultimate expense of their mental and physical ruin.

The meaning of the famous analogy between religion and opium becomes obvious, both present the patient with a world of illusion, pleasant and self-forgetful whilst its effects last, but finally destructive of his happiness and sanity. And since opium was being sold to the contemporary Chinese by avaricious Christian merchants solely interested in the profit which they could extract from the wretched sufferer, so religion is, similarly, a poisonous, if temporarily pleasant drug sold to their victims by interested profit-makers.

Such was the view expressed by Marx over a century ago. Communism has, however, travelled a long way since that distant date, and the views upon religion put forward by Communism to-day scarcely tally with its founder's definitions. To-day Stalin has "done a deal" with the Russian Orthodox Church which is to-day as loyal to the Soviet as formerly to the Czarist regime. And this change-over from the old days of the governmental advocacy of "militant atheism" is accompanied by a change in attitude towards religion everywhere.

The latest example is Mr. William Gallagher, M.P., leading British Communist, who, writing to that pillar of respectability, "The Times," declares that Church leaders; or at least, those who practise the principles of the New Testament—not quite the same thing—could not possibly defend the Capitalist system. Communism, presumably, started in the New Testament when the Holy Ghost liquidated the first Christian "capitalists," Ananias and Saphira, who insisted on keeping their property instead of handing it over for the upkeep of the "Communist" Apostles.

It is evident that there is a considerable discrepancy between the views of Marx in 1848 upon the subject of religion, and those of his self-styled disciple, Mr. William Gallagher, M.P.

To Marx, religion was a soul-destroying drug, forcibly compared with the terrible opium-traffic, and sold to the deluded workers in order mentally to enfeeble them, and to prevent them from taking action to rise above their mental and physical poverty, whereas to Mr. Gallagher religion, at least in its Christian form, started as an early form of Communism nineteen centuries before Marx. Perhaps Mr. Gallagher rather fancies himself in the role of St. Peter, the first Pope, "liquidating" the spiritual ancestors of, say, that pious millionaire Methodist, Mr. Rank, Amnias and Saphira? Or even as a Medieval Inquisitor? There are modern parallels in present-day totalitarian Russia.

However, the statement that Christianity has as a matter of historical fact ever been hostile to Capitalism or the accumulation of property because of its supposed prohibition in the New Testament, is a monstrous lie, if ever there was one. What are the relevant facts?

During the Middle Ages, when organised Christianity enjoyed its Golden Age, the Catholic Church owned not less than a third, perhaps even half of the land of Europe—including England. And that at a time when land was "real property," that is, the kind of property which in an Agrarian civilisation conferred wealth and power. In modern Spain, the systematic exactions of the Inquisition, which confiscated the property of its victims, ruined the country. The Church of England is an enormously rich organisation, which draws revenues from the foulest slums, and which, whilst the law allowed it to do so, regularly sent poor and pious Christians to gaol because they could not pay its monstrous tithes.

European and English literature, from the time of Chaucer on, is full of the financial exactions and endless greed of the Churches and their clergy.

Is there any Communism here? To refresh Mr. Gallagher's memory we quote Marx again: "The Church of England would rather lose the whole of the 39 Articles of religion than one thirty-ninth of its income."

There have, of course, been Christian Communists, mostly amongst the poorer classes, John Ball and the Lollards in Medieval times, the Anabaptists at the Reformation, Count Tolstoy in modern times. And the official Churches have regularly burnt, hanged, imprisoned and excommunicated them. It is in fact only since the majority of the people have had political power that the Church has manifested any interest in their temporal welfare, or that "Christian Socialism" has become respectable in Church circles. Whilst so far from being communistic the most powerful of the Christian Churches is urging a Crusade for Christian civilisation, if necessary, with Atom Bombs, against

Communism. We recommend a study of Church history to Mr. Gallagher and his ilk.

It is on record that Karl Marx once thanked his stars that he was not a "Marxist." If he read the outpourings of some of his present-day disciples he would probably thank them again, even more forcibly.

SOME HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE PAPACY .

"To live is to change; to be perfect is to have changed often."—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

HAVING concluded our brief survey of the evolution of the Papacy, it will now be opportune to conduct a brief investigation, to do, as it were, some historical stock-taking into the nature and more permanent characteristics of that truly extraordinary institution. For one need not be a good Catholic, nor even a believer in revealed, or any other kind of religion, to admit that the Papacy is a truly extraordinary institution.

In point of fact, the Atheistic or non-Christian historian occupies a much better and more effective position from which to pass accurate judgments on the Roman ecclesiastical empire than can ever be the case with Catholic historians, whose own belief in proportion to its intensity precludes them from objective, that is, from scientific judgments in respect of an institution which for them shines with no mortal light.

In the first place it is evident from its entire history that the Papacy, whilst religious in form, belongs essentially to the sociological sphere. In this primary respect the famous definition of old Thomas Hobbes cited at the head of this work, "the Papacy is the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof," remains still, three centuries later, the classical definition of the Roman See; unsurpassed and probably unsurpassable in its trenchant accuracy.

We have alluded above to the remarkable paradox that lies at the heart of the Papacy; a *religious* institution in form, a *political* institution in substance. For Rome has always been that. A shrewd modern observer, himself an ex-Roman cleric, has aptly defined the normal mentality of the Vatican as that of "a great public department." And so it seems always to have been. The Roman Church has, indeed, had its fanatics in plenty, but they have rarely found their way to the throne of the Fisherman. And those few who have done so, have rarely made successful Popes.

In recent times the "saintly" and honest but stupid and bigoted Pius X (1903-14), who remarked before his election that the "Holy Ghost would never make such a mistake as to make him Pope," is a case in point.

The Papacy is thus essentially an institution that belongs to the sphere of sociology rather than to that of religion. Lord Macaulay, in his famous essay, showed not only his usual incomparable verve, but also for him a rather unusual insight into the deeper processes of history when he compared the Papal dynasty, not with other religious institutions, but with the Secular dynasties of Europe.

Indeed, with the doubtful exception of the Japanese God-Emperors, no Secular dynasty has lasted longer than the Papacy; and the scope and influence on world politics exercised by the Mikados is in no respect comparable to that exercised by the Vatican.

The Papacy must, accordingly, be regarded primarily as a political institution. Like its actual predecessors,

the Roman Caesars, only far more so, it used religion as an effective cloak for its own Secular ambitions, but its essence is not religious any more than was that of the Roman Empire which preceded it. The Caesars also called themselves by the title "Pontifex Maximus" ("High Priest"), which, it is diverting to recall, the Christian Roman Emperors refused to use on account of its Pagan associations, but which the Popes still continue to use!

As the eminent Protestant historian, Adolf von Harnack, tersely observed, "It is an Empire which this priestly Caesar rules." And as and when considered as a sociological institution, it cannot be disputed that the Papacy, when objectively considered as such, stands in the very front rank amongst historical social forms. In European history, one could not name its superior—perhaps that microscopic social miracle, the Venetian Republic, comes nearest to being its equal in the Secular history of Europe.

If, indeed, one would confirm the judgment of the Papacy as primarily a political, rather than a religious institution, one has only to compare its brilliant feats in the sphere of world history with its mediocre religious results.

In this last sphere, its achievements have certainly been unimpressive. Roman mysticism has been non-existent, her religious literature puerile, her theology crude and unoriginal. Religious opportunism, ecclesiastical diplomacy has been the specifically Roman contribution to religion. Anything deep, fresh, or sincere has withered and died in the crooked atmosphere of the Vatican corridors.

In this last connection, the judgment of history on Rome as a specifically *religious* body may well be that *cri de coeur* of the great Pascal, the ill-fated opponent of the Jesuits, when Rome finally pronounced against him in favour of those wily opportunists, "What I say is condemned in Rome, but what I condemn is condemned in Heaven." The finer types of Catholic Christians—and it would be hopelessly prejudiced to deny the existence of such—have owed little enough to the astute politicians who have sat in St. Peter's Chair.

For astute politicians the Popes have certainly been. That, at least, one must grant them; it stands out in the chequered record of the Papacy. Indeed it is, perhaps, the Papacy rather than the individual Popes whom one ought to characterise in that respect. For the Papacy has always been more remarkable than the individual Popes, only one of whom (Hildebrand—Gregory VII) ranks amongst the world's great figures, and few of them have been individually brilliant or remarkable.

Indeed, routine mediocrity, perhaps as the result of the electoral compromises between stronger candidates, seems to be the usual qualification for election at Papal conclaves. Only when imminent crisis threatens to destroy the Church, does a man of real ability, such as Leo XIII, or the present Pope, manage to secure election.

Considered as it should be, from the sociological angle, the historical record of the Papacy has been brilliant and remarkable. Since the distant date of its foundation by itinerant preachers (who, as the Roman historian Suetonius tells us, roused the fury of the Jewish Ghetto in Rome on "account of Christ") the world has passed through many changes. In particular, three entirely distinct civilisations with radically different economic foundations and mental outlooks have waxed, flourished, and waned during the 1,900 years

which separate "the days of Peter" from those of our contemporary, Pius XII. In historical succession, the classical servile civilisation, the feudal order of medieval times, and our modern capitalistic society have come and either gone or, at present, show every sign of going.

Rome has seen them all come and go and has successively survived these avatars of human culture. Successively she has known how to entangle herself with them in their heyday and how to disentangle herself when their hour struck. Indeed, even in the course of our all too brief "outline of history" we have had many opportunities to note the skill with which Rome knew how to make what we have termed "marriages of convenience" with successive potential allies. And how shrewdly she used these allies from the days of Charlemagne to those of Hitler, to save her from the many perils, both "spiritual" and Secular, that have confronted the Vatican during the course of its long crisis-strewn career.

With regard to these opportune "marriages of convenience"—in which the Vatican has been a polygamist of the first water!—we will only repeat that it is absolutely untrue to affirm that the Papacy has ever been unreservedly "pro" anything except—pro-Catholic. For the successors of St. Peter have always, despite the verbal disclaimers due to their ostensibly religious character, acted upon the assumption that the "end justifies the means", and very queer means they have been on some occasions!

However, Rome's allies exist for Rome's purpose, and not for their own. She never identifies herself with any of them absolutely: again from Charlemagne to Hitler. In that sense it is paradoxical but true to affirm that "Rome has no politics."* For the "Holy" Reich and the Fascist Reich have both gone, but the Vatican still survives in the "Century of the Common Man."

How long, we may ask, can the Papacy continue to exist in the century of Democracy, the "Century of the Common Man"? For ever since the Reformation ended her era of theocratic rule, Rome has been on the defensive, and to-day fights a rearguard action with contemporary history. In this conflict, the political arts which she has mastered, and her vast experience serve her well.

But the current odds are against her survival. For the age of science has cut the roots of religion and to re-graft them effectively will not prove an easy task. To-day, Rome's best ally is the fear of change, intellectual and also social change. The international Catholic army now forming around the Vatican for its last stand has many motivating causes but religion and religious zeal are not conspicuous, probably, among them in an age such as ours, of headlong change and consequent threatened vested interests.

However, the final decision of history with regard to the Papacy still lies in the future, and the future cannot correct our proofs. Whatever the nature of Rome's final exit from history, Macaulay's judgment still stands; for nineteen centuries the world has witnessed the unfolding of an authentic political masterpiece.

So much so, in fact, that Catholics have described the Vatican as "God's masterpiece," and Protestants as the equally supernatural creation of the Devil. But the

scientific historian will stick by, and to, history. He will pronounce the Papacy to be of all recorded institutions that which best embodies the human "will-to-power," that which has known best how to erect a lasting dominion upon the credulity, the superstition, and the age-long fears of mankind.

F. A. RIDLEY.

THE DOLLAR PRIESTESS

IN a local newspaper there appeared a Christian Science notice which asked, "Are sin, disease and death real?" In reply, a letter to the Editor stated, "If these 'Scientists' would visit hospitals, prisons and cemeteries, they will see undeniable evidences as answers to their question." This common-sense statement had a reply from a person, as a member of the Christian Science Publication Committee, telling him to read the Bible, Genesis, and know how and why sin, disease and death were inflicted on mankind by Almighty God; and that the prophet Isaiah XLV, 7, confirms the reality of the Almighty's fiat, as:—"I create evil, I the Lord do all things."

The religious arrogance and metaphysical jargon in Christian Science has for its Founder and Leader Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, self-styled "Mother" and "Reverend," the High Priestess of a Boston Church, who in her "Key" declares that, by submerging an infant it is possible to keep the child alive, under water, several minutes.

Mary declares that all things are spirit, there is no such thing as matter; yet, her Church, insured as brick, mortar and stone, cost millions of dollars.

The Trustees, under her will, had the handling of another million dollars and more, so that if her "Way Shower, Christ Jesus," is true to his words, Mrs. Eddy, when she "passed on," could not enter Heaven.

She started a book business in 1898, with a capital of 45,000 dollars, "The Miscellany" says, and according to her teaching, marriage is legalised lust. Howbeit, she had three husbands.

On June 18, 1902, the Priestess is pledged to obtain 8,000,000 dollars, as an expression of the Saviour. Church Members buy dollar shares in the building business, which is all spiritual. These dollars, Mary names "Love Currency." At the ceremony of cornerstone laying, Mrs. Eddy is dubbed "Reverend," on July 6, 1904. She is also called Pastor Emeritus. The Bostonians know her ladyship as the High Priestess of "Greenbacks." In page 134 she states her worldly providence and trust in dollars, and income from investments, properties and deposits; yet on page 138 she writes, "I cannot be a Christian Scientist except I leave all for Christ." Members are told on page 150, to "ask God to enable you to reflect God."

We are told that flowers from Mrs. Eddy's garden, sent to a hospital, healed an aged man the day on which he received the bouquet (page 153). "These flowers," says the Reverend Mrs. Eddy, "were imbued with intrinsic healing qualities from my poor personality."

On January 31, 1898, she gave 100,000 dollars for buildings, and any *Golden Rule* breakers are doomed to Hell which is in the middle of the earth (page 160). How does she know?

And so, here I leave the Dollar Priestess, having shown from her own writing and teaching some particulars for the benefit of Freethinkers, when in argument on the High Person of the Boston First Church of Christ and the Eddyite "Key to the Scriptures."

WM. AUGUSTUS VAUGHAN

* Rome never identifies herself absolutely with any social system. The old chestnut, beloved of Communists in particular, that Rome is a "feudal" institution, just is not true. The Roman Empire which lives on in its ecclesiastical "ghost" was pre-feudal, and in most respects, the antithesis of Feudalism, which was local, whilst Rome is universal.

ACID DROPS

The Tory "Recorder" every now and then gets "religion"—one of its principal contributors, for example, recently prescribed a course of Jesus as the complete cure for everything that is wrong with the world. How Jesus is going to increase the food supply for a world the population of which is growing at the rate of several millions or tens of millions a year, he did not condescend to tell us. Not being able to think of a better one, the "Recorder" published for Christmas a portrait of Jesus painted in the 16th century as the nearest approach to the truth—and it need hardly be said that it would do for any God-Saviour or Saviour-God; and if Jesus ever lived (which is very doubtful) it could be no more like him than like an African pigmy.

However, as even the Christian mentality may kick at this portrait, the "Recorder" quotes a letter from "one, Publius Lentulus" describing what Jesus looked like to a Roman Pro-Consul—which is one of the most impudent forgeries extant. It is even too much for the Catholic Encyclopedia—that perfect well of holiness—for it describes Lentulus as a "fictitious personage," and the letter as "apocryphal." Still, the readers of the "Recorder" are not likely to go to the Catholic Encyclopedia so everything will be all right in heaven.

In Belfast about 2,000 people grovelled on their knees in the rain to start a perpetual novena in honour of the Mother of Sorrows. It would have been better for the world if the Mother of Sorrows and the Man of Sorrows (or is it the Man of Perpetual Gloom?) both had indulged in some hearty laughter now and then. Possibly if only they could have seen each other grovelling they would indeed have roared with laughter. What misery their followers would have saved the world if they too had only seen the funny side of things!

Bishop Beck, A.A., wants "more vocations"—in other words, he wants more men to be priests and give up the rights of manhood to follow Christ. Praying to God Almighty to help the existing priests is not enough, adds the Bishop; we ought to pray that God will raise up many young men for this divine work. But what will happen to the growing populations if priests do not come in in sufficient numbers? Horrid thought—they might become "indifferent" to the beauty of the Catholic religion; they might even become, what is far more horrid, practising Atheists! Perhaps—who knows?—Bishop Beck may even live to see his own sheep far from the fold. And it will be all due to young men who simply won't be priests.

According to the "Church Times," there can be no doubt that Christ will come again—though exactly when no one can possibly know. Jesus said in the Gospels that he would come again, and that is good enough for the "Church Times" and "Catholics"—and "Protestants," if they only believe like Catholics. The actual narrative where Jesus is shown prophesying is a little confused for "at one time it seems that the second coming must immediately follow the fall of Jerusalem; at another it seems to be reserved for a distant date when the Gospel has been proclaimed throughout the world." You pays your money and you takes your choice. In any case, Jesus is coming "like a thief at night" so look out all who have not surrendered entirely to him. The consequences of unbelief will be truly terrible.

The son of the Archbishop of Canterbury has married a Roman Catholic, and the newspapers report that the Archbishop was not present at the ceremony. We are wondering if this is professional jealousy, or perhaps anger at the loss of potential members of the Anglican Church. One of the conditions imposed by the Roman Catholic Church on mixed marriages is that the children shall be brought up as Roman Catholics, and the Catholic party shall do all in his or her power to convert the non-Catholic. Dr. Lehmann in his pamphlet "Mixed Marriages" gives some interesting information, including copies of the forms that American Catholics are expected to sign before the occasion of a mixed marriage. Mother Church knows only too well that to control the children through marriage is to be able to control the lives of her adherents.

Hundreds of "secular" priests are going on a mission to non-Catholics; their task will be to explain "the Church's doctrinal teachings." We would like to be present when they meet the "secular" priests of the Protestant Alliance, or the Protestant Truth Society, or an earnest Calvinist. Both sides will of course depend as much on prayer as on argument. In any case, there will be, we hope, a fair field and no quarter. A really good battle royal between the rival claimants for Jesus Christ will do a world of good and prove how well Christians love one another.

The Rev. Fred Sparrow, in the "Torquay Times," is rather concerned over people whose ideas on the existence of God are that there "must be some sort of a something," and asserts that such reasoning will "get us nowhere." Quite true, but does the idea of God—"without body, parts or passions"—get us anywhere? Judging by the childish reasoning of the article, we are afraid that the Rev. Mr. Sparrow would get quite a shock to know that there are people who actually say "there ain't no sich thing." Perhaps our Torquay readers will enlighten him.

Apparently the "Catholic Times" views with envy the status of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Baltic States. It appears that the non-Orthodox parishes have to pay high rents, taxes and electricity rates, and the clergy receive no State emoluments. The "Times" is careful to point out that "it is reported that the Moscow Patriarch is a State Official and is paid by the State." A cautious smile or two is surely permissible; one for the Roman Catholics who are so quick to condemn "injustice" in others, another for an "Atheist" State that has an official Archbishop, serving "opium."

When Sir Stafford Cripps addresses a religious assembly, his remedy for our economic misfortunes is Christianity; when he addresses the House of Commons his remedy is increased production; most people have a word—not a pleasant one—for such a policy. Addressing Indian students, who were being entertained with carols, Sir Stafford thought that if carols had been sung at the recent UNO Assembly at Paris the results might have been more hopeful. Has our Chancellor of the Exchequer forgotten that during the two World Wars carols were sung during each Christmas season, and those wars were in turn the cruellest and bloodiest in human history, with the carol-singing countries making the pace.

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SUGAR PLUMS

There is every prospect of a full house for the Annual Dinner on January 29. Tickets are going well and many are recalling the very enjoyable pre-war annual dinners. Naturally conditions are more difficult to-day, but everything possible is being done to make the first post-war re-union one to be remembered. Tickets are 12s. 6d. each and cash should be included with application for tickets from the General Secretary, N.S.S., 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. 1.

The following resolution, passed by the Executive of the N.S.S., has been sent to the Home Secretary:—

"That the Executive of the National Secular Society considers the prominence given by the Government to the Churches in the proposed national campaign against crime is unjustified and misleading.

The Executive of the National Secular Society affirms that: (a) the present increase in crime is due largely to the war and its aftermath, (b) that the Churches have no effective remedy, and (c) that any attempt at dealing with the state of affairs should be made along secular lines, and all branches of secular opinion should be given equal representation on any body set up to deal with the situation."

After mapping out for us a real burning, baking and boiling Hell, Mr. Frank Biggart C.R., tells us the vital truths about Purgatory. Obviously there must be a Purgatory in which a long queue of unbelievers must await their turn to be judged by the Lord. If worthy, they are shot up into Heaven; if not, down they go to Hell. It is a real, genuine, authentic, and lovely place, for in it penitents can talk over their sins to one another, or spend the whole time praying. Mr. Biggart doesn't talk quite like this but it is what he means. Yet for Protestants in general, Purgatory is what may be called a "scream" or, in more sober language, a myth. They simply ridicule it.

Speaking at a sale of work of the St. Mary's Parish Church Woman's Guild, Banff, Lady Aberdeen is reported as saying, "You can do anything with a child before it is seven, and whatever happens see that they go to church and Sunday school. If you do not catch them, the Communists will get them." Lady Aberdeen evidently remembers the creed of those Catholics who made capturing a child before seven their essential policy. Poor children!

THE PSYCHE

II

WITH the alphabet came abstract thinking; verbal definition and generalisation. And with mathematical mensuration came notions of accuracy, but myth and analogy continued. Faced with a world of illusion, even doubting their own existence, the old Greek sceptics put the question: How can we be sure of anything? The answer was, calculable necessity and physical or natural law. But with physical science, the absurdity of a physical analogy remained to confuse the maxim "know thyself."

To the question: How are we aware of objects at a distance? Democritus gave his theory of vision (Greek idea). These visions or ideas proceed from the observer to make contact with the object; were capable of extension in space; of expansion and contraction. Thus, to Marcus Aurelius, to think was to "withdraw within thyself." Plato used the theory to include abstract ideas; and, in his doctrine of reminiscence, to explain memory. These ideas or visions are prenatal, continue through life, and survive death; implying the transmigration of souls. They are Reality: the material world, a world of shadows.

Aristotle invented metaphysics to consider questions beyond physics. Although seeing is believing, he distinguished between reality and actuality, with the actuating principle, motive or will, as reason. A problem that puzzled the Greeks was, how can the immaterial soul affect the material body? and, following the discovery of the nerves, Plotinus invented consciousness, an intermediate substance, as mediator between body and soul. The social aspect is obscured, for Plotinus mystical philosophy is communion with an Ultimate Reality. But this involves a Manichean conflict with the evil of the flesh.

The mysteries of incarnation and communion are problems created by the separation of body and soul. To Marcus Aurelius, death was as natural as birth; there was no fear. But he was still troubled by "the god within me." Seeing his problem as a social one, though head of the State, like the slave Epictetus he felt himself to be "a little soul imprisoned in a corpse." Lost in meditation, his stoic philosophy of physics, ethics and rhetoric, was a poor physik for his malady. A physical obsession is a hindrance in a psychological problem.

Theoretical confusion, and pragmatic efficiency of practice in custom, gives confusion of feeling. Loyalty in military masquerade, or identification with the elect of the ecclesia, is both personal and social. Glorification of the State, or of God, is vicarious self-glorification; the noble virtue of an heroic age is as illusory as a land of unfulfilled desire. In the discipline of duty, or the fear of Hell, sublimation of repressed and inhibited feeling, easuistical self-condemnation, may be delirious and dangerous.

Intellectual and emotional confusion arises in methods of cultivating ecstasy; fasting, sexual abstinence; mystically "bearing the cross" in "imitation of Christ." The mystical illusion of the astrology and occultism of the Cabalists; the affinity and communion in the magic of Alchemy; metaphysical "pure being"; mystical "astral light" and "astral body"; lead on to the "alkalhest" of Paracelsus, and in physics, Descartes' "ether." The development of the cult of

mysticism accompanied that of metaphysical controversy.

With the science of optics, light is reflected from the object to the eye of the observer. This reverses the theory of vision, and leads to an inversion of the question. From, how are we aware of objects? it becomes an introspective: how do *we* know? Following his work on the theory of vision Berkeley formed a new Idealism. We, the perceiving selves, exist as ideas in the mind of God, as cause; just as the objective world exists as ideas in our minds. In understanding and reason, we live in a world of ideas. Hume replied that there is no self but sense-impressions in habitual association; and causation is simply invariable sequence; there is no innate reason.

Considering reason, pro and con, Kant concluded that we cannot know the *Ding an sich*, the matter of oneself. Metaphysical bankruptcy is further shown in Schopenhauer. Reason has a fourfold root. In the world as will; in escape from pain; the unconscious will sees what it wants. The dream is a short insanity, insanity is a long dream. And also in Nietzsche's Superman, the doctrine of live dangerously, genius is madness. So we come from an age of reason to one of unreason in rationalisation; in suicidal contradiction in Hegelian dialectic conflict, and Marx's personification of economic categories.

This inversion also appears in the case of mysticism. From being a method of cultivating illusion, it becomes a practical method of psychotherapy, and an objective study of dream psychology. The bedside manner and magnetic analogy of Paracelsus led to the cult of animal magnetism; Mesmer's "magnetic fluid." The external Ultimate Reality of Plotinus becomes an equally mysterious "influence." The study of hypnotism, the term coined by James Braid the neurologist, and its use in abnormal psychology by Charcot and Janet, led on to Freudian psychoanalysis, psychopathology in everyday life, and dream psychology; to suggestion, and the auto-suggestion of Coue and the New Nancy school.

Against the bankruptcy of metaphysical analogy and introspection we can set the achievement of modern psychology. Whether we are concerned with abnormal psychology, dreams, fantasies, superstition or sorcery, we find "picture language" repeated in all mythologies, fairy-tales, religious traditions and mysteries. As Jung said: "This social symbolism has the same general character as the personal and dream symbolism." The heritage of metaphysics, theology, and old customs, are like childhood memories and family influence to the individual. But tradition and custom are as deceptive as personal memory. The mode of expression is illusion.

Intellectual confusion persists in modern psychology: body and soul, good and evil, the Old Adam, the two worlds. Freudian theory is marred by metaphysics. Jung's analytic psychology is more empirical but mystical. The autosuggestion of the New Nancy school is less visionary, more verbal. Little wonder that men still try to see the unseen, with the absurdity of a physical analogy, still try to apply the laws of physics. But we might appreciate what Freud meant when he said that superstition is psychologically true, but physically false; and what Jung meant when he said that what is possible in psychology is impossible in physics, and what is possible in physics is impossible in psychology. We need to understand the relationship between the two worlds.

H. H. PREECE.

A CORNISH AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I DO not know if it is because I am a Cornishman that I am inclined to think that the autobiographies of Cornishmen are more interesting than most books of the sort. There was, for instance, the unfinished scrap by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch which made its appearance a few years back, and which led all admirers of that great man to lament afresh the untimely accident which put an end to his life; and then there was Mr. A. L. Rowse's "A Cornish Childhood," which was at once a fascinating picture of an almost forgotten period in the history of the West Country, and a self-study by a most interesting man. Now there comes Mr. J. C. Trewin's "Up from the Lizard" (Carroll and Nicholson; 12s. 6d.), which, while its author disclaims any desire to write a formal autobiography, is nevertheless the picture of a young Cornishman whose enthusiasm for the theatre has brought him into real prominence as a dramatic critic, and has enabled him to acquire an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of things theatrical which may before long put him in the same class with James Agate and his present chief, Ivor Brown.

The book is a rambling causerie, including studies of the lovely country where he lived when young — the country indicated by the title—and much gossip about journalism in the West of England and in London. The theatre naturally features prominently, as does the school—Plymouth College—where Mr. Trewin spent some happy years. And the volume as a whole presents a picture of a man who is happy because he has done precisely what he wanted to do. Only those who have spent some time in a job which they genuinely dislike can realise how lucky is a man who has found his vocation early in life, and has not allowed himself to be in any way deflected from that aim by anything which may have intervened.

And why, the reader may well ask, do I go out of my way to recommend such a book to those who read these columns? Well, first of all because I hold that the most valuable thing that literature brings to us is insight into the characters of human beings. And nothing provides such an insight into character as a well-conceived autobiography. But there is another point which will make "Up from the Lizard" a fascinating book for any reader sensitive to the niceties of style—the fact that Mr. Trewin has a gift for the phrase which hits off a person or a piece of scenery exactly. "Eastward the beam of the Lizard (lighthouse) licks the sky like a glittering tongue." "If I could slide back in time, it would be, assuredly, to those nights of 25 years ago when we changed at Gwinear Road for Helston, at Helston in triumph for The Lizard and at The Lizard for Paradise Regained." Those sentences, torn from their context as they are, should be enough to show the perceptive reader that Mr. Trewin has, indeed, the gift of the precise phrase, and that not in any Flaubertian fashion.

But this is not merely a success story, though it is that well enough. The fact that Mr. Trewin feels a certain lingering nostalgia for the Cornwall of his youth is something which will be shared to a greater or lesser extent by all who spent their early years in a delightful district, and have been compelled, by the necessity of making a living, to spend later years in the walls of towns.

Naturally, there are points at which readers will feel impelled to disagree with Mr. Trewin's philosophical wanderings. Some, for instance, will think that he is a little too inclined to be a backward-looking person, and not looking enough to the future. Though, when we

consider the mess and muddle that man appears to be making of his world, it is not in any way easy to be optimistic about the years ahead.

However, I trust that what I have said will be enough to make at any rate some of my readers want to read Mr. Trewin's book. It is a rewarding volume, with many a happy phrase and many a passage which echoes in the memory. And in these days of mass-produced literature there are few enough books about which that can be truthfully said.

JOHN ROWLAND.

ON WINGS OF A DOVE . . .

DURING the Parliamentary elections campaign in Italy, all reactionary publications explained that "the effective safeguarding of the rights of God" was a monopoly of the Christian-Democratic Party, the employers, land-owners and remnants of fascism, who, as everybody knows, enjoy the Vatican's special solicitude. Cardinal Schuster, the Archbishop of Milan, forbade priests to grant remission of sins to—

"Communists and their fellow-travellers, disguised under the mask of the People's Democratic Front, or to adherents of materialist and rationalist doctrines, and to all who vote for unapproved candidates or even abstain from voting."

A message issued by the bishops of the Julian March declared it a "mortal sin" to vote for the People's Democratic Front and forbade clergymen to perform Easter rites in the homes of Front supporters. The Bishop of Tuscany told the population that a vote cast for the People's Front would be regarded as a mortal sin, and Bishop Laquila would excommunicate every Catholic who refused to vote for the Christian Democrats in South Italy. 79 bishops and archbishops published a Pastoral Letter promising the peasants agrarian reform if they kept away from the P.D. Front. In Catholic schools the nuns demanded of their pupils that they persuade their parents to vote for the Christian Democrats, otherwise their daughters "would be exiled to Siberia by the Bolsheviks after the elections."

The Pope spoke from the balcony of St. Peter's shortly before the elections. He called on all Catholics to combat the dangerous "agitators who deny the teachings of Christ"—a circumvention for the Left Wing parties. But for all that, in his Christmas broadcast, he had the brazenness to claim:—

"Our position between the two opposing camps is exempt from every prejudice, from any preference for this or that people, for this or that bloc of nations, as it is foreign to any sort of temporal consideration."

Is it really? Not only in Italy the Holy See possesses large properties. Through trusted agents, the higher dignitaries of the Catholic Church control entire branches of Italy's national economy. Behind some of the large stock companies stand high-placed representatives of the Papal Court, men known for their active support of fascism—Cerutti, Battistelli, Castellani, Soccorsi, Torlonia, Nogara and others. The Vatican has shares in every branch of industry—mining, food, engineering, building, chemicals, textiles, electrical equipment, railways, municipal transport, and so on. And this, of course, explains the Vatican's interest in the maintenance of capitalism.

Particularly large is the part played by the Holy See in banking. It controls the Istituto Centrale di Credito di Roma, Banco Cattolico del Veneto, Banco S. Geminiano and San Prospero, Banco Veneziano, Banco

Agricoltore, Istituto Regionale del Credito Emilia and Romagna, Banco Santo Spirito, etc.

It is common knowledge that the Roman Catholic Church owns vast estates; its affiliates control approximately 250,000 hectares of land in Italy alone. Suffice it to say that 15 representatives of the Vatican aristocracy—Ricasolli, Torlonia, Pavanelli, Chigi, Colonna and others—have 500,000 hectares between them.

The relations between the Holy See and Wall Street in general and the House of Morgan in particular, were dealt with in these columns before (June 13). Investments of the Roman Catholic Church outside Italy are valued at several billion dollars, especially in Franco Spain.

The Catholic Church controls the Banco Hispano-Americano, a veritable base of Latin-American fascism, with headquarters in Madrid and a ramified network of subsidiaries. In Switzerland, the Jesuits are in control of the Elektro-Bank, which in turn controls the large Italian power companies. In France, the Jesuits have worked their way into the Franco-American Bank which finances the fascist movement in the South-American countries; the Church has an important share in the French Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas.

Besides large real estates and industrial establishments in all Catholic countries (Spain, Austria, Brazil, etc.), the Church and the Jesuits own whole city blocks in Buenos Aires, control mining concessions in the Portuguese colonies and a good part of the milling industry in South America.

Religion, you see, is rather a profitable proposition.

TOM HILL.

OBITUARY

EDWARD ARTHUR FROMLING

With sorrow we announce the death of Edward Arthur Fromling, of New Addington, which took place on December 18, after a short illness, in his 48th year. A regular reader of "The Freethinker" for a long period, his views were outspoken and in many ways he helped to get the message of Freethought examined and often accepted by his friends. He was associated with a circle of workers who many years ago succeeded in getting "The Freethinker" in the Poplar Library. His remains were cremated at the Croydon Crematorium, Surrey, on December 23, where, before an assembly of relatives and friends, a Secular Service was read by the General Secretary, N.S.S.

R.H.R.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

LONDON—OUTDOOR

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, 12 noon: Mr. L. EMERY and Mr. J. G. LUTON.

LONDON—INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "Hopes and Fears for 1949." Mr. S. K. RATCLIFFE.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W. 1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: Annual General Meeting.

COUNTRY—OUTDOOR

Glasgow (Brunswick Street).—Sunday, 3 p.m.: Messrs. S. BRYDEN, E. LAWASI and J. HUMPHREY.

Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barker's Pool).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. A. SAMMS and others.

COUNTRY—INDOOR

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: "China and the Far East." Mr. JAMES HARRISON, M.P.

ALAS! WE ARE "U.N. DONE"

THE Third Session of the General Assembly of the "Untied" Nations opened here in a blaze of glory, the U.N. having at long last gone into action. At least, it requested the French Government to go into action on its behalf, by evicting from U.N.O. territory Mr. Garry Davis, self-proclaimed citizen of the world.

It is significant that this eviction was an act which the Charter does not authorise U.N.O. to take. As a spokesman explained to me, however, here was clearly a case for immediate action; there was no time to wait for the matter to be discussed in the General Assembly, and for that body to "make recommendations" (Article 17). This would probably have involved recommending the "Security" Council to make recommendations (Article 37, para. 2) or to decide (if it *could* decide, which is doubtful) to take action under Article 36. This Article also authorises the "Security" Council to make recommendations.

Mr. Davis had already announced that he was no more interested in recommendations than were the Jews or Arabs in Palestine, the Russians regarding Korea and Berlin, the Bulgars, Albanians and Yugoslavs concerning Greece, the Indians over Hyderabad, the Dutch over Indonesia or the South Africans in the matter of South West Africa or of discrimination against Indians. Under Articles 49 *et seq.*, my informant explained, U.N.O. had the power to "take action by air, sea, or land forces . . . such action may include demonstrations, blockade, etc."; but, in the words of Mr. Trygve Lie, U.N.'s Secretary-General, "deadlocks have blocked all progress in the Military Staff Committee" and U.N.O. has nothing to demonstrate with. Even if it had, the probability was that the demonstrators would neutralise and paralyse each other's efforts.

The presence of a world citizen on U.N. soil was clearly a "situation which might lead to international friction . . . or likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security." (Article 34) since Mr. Davis was disseminating dangerous thoughts.

Twenty-six-year-old Garry Davis has officially renounced his American nationality and handed in his passport to the American Consulate here. "There is only one way to save our civilisation," he says, "abandon narrow nationalism and out-dated, hypocritical diplomacy, which perpetuates quarrels instead of healing them. All men of good will should demand an international government. We should unite under just law, instead of splitting into national enmities which bleed each other white."

In diplomatic circles here, such remarks are considered rank heresy. "U.N.O., with its system of 'one State, one vote,' is the most democratic body in the world," said Monsieur Protocol, sipping his aperitif and holding a Corona-Corona between his elegant gold-filled teeth. "After all," he added, "the war was fought for democracy, was it not?" That the Grand Little Duchy of Luxembourg has the same voting strength as the U.S.A. on unimportant matters he described as proof that the rules of cricket are not unknown outside Britain. He pointed out, too, that on important matters, particularly issues likely to endanger the peace of the world, equality also prevailed, since nobody had any voting power whatsoever, or at least, no State had any voting power that could not be completely nullified by the Veto of another.

Monsieur Protocol was bitter about Citizen Davis's notion that international law should operate directly

upon individuals. If that were the case, Monsieur Protocol pointed out, war criminals would be arrested before the war, instead of afterwards, and the world would be robbed of such historic war guilt trials as were held, for instance, at Nuremberg. The very idea that international law should be enacted by an international legislature, elected for that purpose by an international electorate, M. Protocol denounced as crypto-fascist, undemocratic bourgeois capitalism. "How could people be expected to obey laws which they had made themselves?" he pertinently asked. U.N.O. had been based on a belief in men's natural and inherent tendency to agree. That was realism. Mr. Davis was not only a dangerous idealist, he was a pessimist, propagating the doctrine that in this imperfect world men are prone to differ, and that decisions must therefore be taken by majority vote in a voting procedure which truly reflects the political power behind each vote. Davis had actually repeated the morbid slogan that "It is better to stand up and be counted than to be counted when laid out in rows under little wooden crosses."

At Paris, U.N.O. received the Secretary-General's Annual Report, reporting failure in Palestine, in Indonesia and Kashmir, in Greece and Korea, the collapse of the Atomic Energy Commission, the paralysis of the Commission for Conventional Armaments, the one advisory opinion given by the International Court of Justice and its one (unfinished) case, the failure of the U.N. Charter to provide a law-making body, and the proposal of the Interim Committee that the Charter be amended.

It has been pointed out by authoritative commentators that whereas the old League failed because the Nations would not play the game according to the rules, U.N.O. would succeed if only Russia would not insist on sticking to them, on using the Veto and, e.g., invoking Article 107 in the Berlin dispute. "Why the devil can't these Reds be gentlemen, and turn a blind eye, like us?" asked Madam Dilys d'Alliance, petulantly. "The Charter does not need to be amended. We could make more progress if we ignored it more often." I heartily agreed with her conclusion.

She recalled the words of Mr. Trygve Lie's report, to the effect that the Charter "is more than sufficient to deal with every situation which has come before the Security Council to date . . ." This was before Berlin was brought before it. Now, the "Security" Council is being asked to make a decision in the Berlin dispute. Under Section 3 of Article 27 (Voting), such a decision could only be made by an affirmative vote of the five permanent members and two others. Parties to the dispute must abstain from voting (in case they vote against themselves). The parties to the dispute are permanent members. For a decision to be reached, therefore, the parties to the dispute:—

- (1) Must vote, but must not vote.
- (2) Must all be in agreement.
- (3) Must be in agreement with the other permanent members.
- (4) Must find two other members to agree with them, too.

This, it is thought, would solve the Berlin dispute, and would be hailed as a resounding vindication of the United Nations Charter.

HAROLD S. BIDMEAD.

(Our Specious Correspondent in Paris.)