

THE

FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXX.—No. 12

[REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL
POST OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER]

Price Threepence

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Truth Will Out

WE think it would be acknowledged by fair-minded people, as well as by Freethinkers, that the attitude of the B.B.C. towards religion is one of "disgusting partiality;" a partiality, furthermore, which flouts the most elementary principles of Democracy, to which, in other fields, the B.B.C. is never tired of appealing. When one considers the basic fact admitted by clerical spokesmen that the proportion of regular church-goers in ratio to the entire population is barely one in ten, this travesty of Democracy becomes obvious when one compares the enormous proportion of religious broadcasts with the adamant refusal of the authorities at Broadcasting House, hitherto rigorously maintained, to allow any avowed spokesman of atheism, or even any outspoken critic of Christianity on the air.

Unfortunately, it is much to be feared that deliberate humbug must be charged against those responsible for this monstrous policy. We recall a lecture given by the then Governor of the B.B.C., Mr. H. Nicholson, who quite frankly admitted that he had no religious beliefs and was himself an agnostic, yet when someone in the audience asked the relevant question as to whether he would support an application to put the case against religion over the air, he replied curtly that he would never be party to any "anti-God propaganda."

Perhaps Mr. Nicholson, who is something of a historian, had in mind the classic reply of that Regency cynic, Lord Melbourne, whom ironical chance permitted later on to usher in the prim respectability of the Victorian Age as the "Great Queen's" first Prime Minister. When a Dissenter asked Melbourne why he showed "this disgusting partiality to the Established Church," he replied: "I show what you call this disgusting partiality to the Established Church because it is established. Get your damned sect established and I will then show 'disgusting partiality' to that, too." Upon another occasion, his Lordship made the frank avowal: "I am, of course, all in favour of Christianity but, really, it ought not to be intruded into one's private affairs," and one is entitled to assume that this protector of the Established Church was not a very ardent Christian. In fact, had Lord Melbourne lived to-day he would surely have made an ideal Director of the B.B.C.

However, truth will out—even on the B.B.C., for recently we listened with growing astonishment to a broadcast on the "Emergence of Man," which represented Atheism pure and simple, that is, not in the popular and entirely fallacious sense of trying to disprove the Existence of God, but in the scientific sense of completely ignoring "God" as a superfluous hypothesis, by explaining the subject under discussion, the emergence of Man from the animal world in terms of evolutionary cause and effect, with absolutely no reference, either ultimate or proximate, to the intervention of a "higher" or "overruling" power such

as Christian broadcasters usually manage to drag in by hook or crook at some stage of the evolutionary process.

To all this, the broadcast on human origins was an exception. It explained the origin of man purely in terms of natural causation. We can only assume that the clerical sleuths whom the B.B.C. employs in such large numbers must have had a day off when this script was vetted. For like M. Jourdain, the character in Moliere who had been talking prose all his life without knowing it, so one broadcaster was talking, whether he knew it or not, pure, undiluted atheism.

The broadcast represented the final talk in an interesting zoological series on the Animal World. The last talk "The Emergence of Man," though a lucid exposition of human origins, and interesting as all scientific expositions of that tremendous subject are interesting, did not seem to say anything particularly original. What was original in it for a B.B.C. broadcast was simply this: *it left God out*. It never even mentioned a higher Power as a cause of the appearance of Man upon earth; the Divine Plan was conspicuous by and for its absence. Truly, a red letter day in the annals of Broadcasting House, pure undiluted atheism on the air.

The speaker traced the emergence of man to about a million or so years ago in the manner made familiar since Darwin's "Descent of Man," and stressed both his emergence from an ape-like stock, and his obvious relationship to our simian and anthropoid "cousins" in the animal world, with which the earlier talks in the series had already dealt with in more detail. The actual emergence of man was described in accordance with purely scientific evolutionary concepts, as the result of a purely natural causation at present not fully known in all its details but in which changes in terrestrial habitat, from the forest to open ground, and the consequent changes in the physical and mental habits of Early Man, his upright posture and the greater stimulus to his reasoning faculties were fully stressed as efficient causes. About the Garden of Eden, the Snake, the indiscretion of Eve and the Fall of Man, not a word!

Unfortunately, the broadcast ended with the emergence of civilisation some 10,000 years ago in the fertile deltas of the Nile, the Euphrates and other rivers. It would have been intriguing to know what the B.B.C. really thinks about the future of *Homo Sapiens*, now that he has evolved from the equatorial forests to Broadcasting House—not to mention the invention of the "H. Bomb." But would Dr. Wand and his clerical colleagues permit another talk which excluded the Supernatural as completely from Mankind's Future—that is, if he can restrain his present suicidal tendencies long enough to have one, as the talk to which we have referred, excluded it from Mankind's Past? Probably not, for this is still a Christian country—or is it?

One thing at least seems to be certain. The evolution of man and his appearance as a separate species on this earth are explicable upon grounds of pure natural causation, without dragging in the supernatural at any point in the long process. As the old English materialist,

the "soul-sleeper" Richard Overton, wrote in the days when the revolutionary English Commonwealth first won for Englishmen the right to think freely, "All comes by nature." This intuition of our pioneer English materialist is now buttressed and demonstrated by an evolutionary concept first made available by another great English thinker, Charles Darwin.

The despicable efforts of reactionary clerics and servile bureaucrats to keep the people in ignorance of the greatest discoveries of English thought, not only upon the problem of human origins in their explosive bearing upon the scheme of Christian Theology, but upon all fundamental problems which vitally concern human progress, must ultimately fail. For this is, after all, not a Dark Age, and it is impossible to prevent mankind from finally arriving at the truth. For *Homo Sapiens* is an enquiring animal, that, indeed is why he is *Homo Sapiens*.

To-day, truth is in, and on, the air. Even the "King Canutes" of the B.B.C. cannot dam up the truth indefinitely. Truth will out, not only in the proverbial affidavit but even in the B.B.C.

F. A. RIDLEY.

SCIENTIFIC ORTHODOXY

MR. VERNON CARTER is a poor sophist; demanding "authority" and asking how *any* scientific method can be applied in psychology, he seems unaware that he is echoing a theological assertion. But many professing materialists play into the hands of theology, as in saying man is a machine, a victim of blind chance, or is less than a speck of dust in the cosmic scheme, are accepting antiquated theories and repeating theological misstatements of materialism. For here, to believe scientific orthodoxy is to find religious ideology. Science and religion are concerned, in personal experience, with the same problems, but science, with the modern "immaterialism" is trying to escape its own *Deus ex machina*.

Truly, "mechanistic" science cannot deal with personal experience. A Christian simply cannot believe he is a machine any more than he can think of a machine as having feelings. Trying to think of himself as a machine is as mystical as any religious idea, such as the shadow or the dream vision, but this mechanistic notion excludes the one thing the Christian is most concerned with. Nor can the word "mechanistic" be given a wide enough meaning, for he is concerned with his own feelings. If our confused scientist cannot include himself, our Christian is equally unable to exclude himself, in a mechanistic cosmic theory. And the mental confusion involved, like religious belief, is a matter of psychology.

The Christian is concerned not only with theory but with vital and personal fact. He does not examine his own brain and nervous system to consider his thoughts and feelings, any more than he needs to examine his own stomach to know if he is hungry. So it is equally absurd to give physiological function as explanation. This is even more true emotionally. And the theory of psycho-neural parallelism only confirms the Christian body and soul dualism. Such explanations are irrelevant and the wider and more detailed the explanations the more the point at issue is obscured in a perplexity that is emotional as well as mental.

Consideration of the immensity of the achievements of mechanistic science is bewildering and gives a feeling

of frustration in contrast with the power of a gigantic machine. In astronomy, the vastness of a physical universe with immense distances and magnitudes, has the same psychological influence as with the mystic in contemplation of the stars. As the theologian says, "the heavens reveal the power of God." Looking upwards into the infinity of space, or even looking up at a huge mountain, the contrast is impressive, and our modern scientist, as with the Christian, feels his own puny insignificance. And it is man's weakness that is the theologian's strength.

Brevity is the soul of wit contrasting absurdity, and profundity in contrast with ignorance is provoking. So it is with contemplation of the "unseen world," the tremendous power of atomic energy contrasts with human weakness. That of electro-magnetic, or even chemical science, contrasts with a sense of powerlessness, and not only in fear of atom bombs. Our scientist, like our Christian, simply can not think of himself as electro-magnetic or chemical formula; for in this cosmic scheme man has no place, is a cog in a gigantic machine, or a victim of circumstance. But to play on this theme is to strengthen the fear and powerlessness of frustration that is the fetishistic yearning with which theology dogs the footsteps of science.

Scientific theories are involved in religious tradition. The old idea of a "fire mist" origin, of evolutionary development, was given as an alternative to Creation, and, supported by "entropy" has been accepted as such by theology. But this orthodox absurdity of a condensing and contracting Universe is now contrasted, arising from Einstein's theory, with one of a Universe that is expanding and bursting with radiant energy. New problems with new methods confuse old and new absurdities. As science tries to escape its dilemma, theology takes over an accepted hypothetical excuse for limited knowledge. So, as ever, new theology is old science just as the superstitions of to-day were the religions of yesterday.

This historic paradox can be seen in the contradictions of Hegellian dialectic. As to old Omar "the first morn of creation wrote what the last dawn of reckoning shall read." Man is still powerless for "history," is the *raison d'être*. Righteous declamation is seen in Marx's "personification of economic categories" with age-old feud against "Mammon" and the "Seven Deadly Sins." In this mystical "history" we see the combination of ancient and modern, with personal feeling in typical self-contradiction. With this fetishistic personification in the worship of the State there is "no compromise." Extremes meet, and by its own logic, with the "identity of opposites," this "scientific" historic materialism is identified with religion.

Who wrote this history but men? Our cosmic scheme, the mechanistic or the historic, materialism, is as much man made as is God. It is sheer fancy that gives objective reality to such abstractions as this "universe" or these "categorical imperatives." But if knowledge is power, where is the need for denial of oneself or of one's own potentiality? In this projection the "force of circumstances" is as much excuse for inhibition and frustration as is the personal God, but in personification and personal identification the fetishistic craving accepts religious ideology, for the "mechanistic" theory is lacking in "personal appeal." And what then becomes of our materialism?

In this mystical dilemma, we might say that scientific methods are being used, our understanding to-day is very different from what it was a few generations ago. But to say psychology can never be a science, that it is the

Scientific Fraud of the Age is defeatist acceptance of theology, for without a scientific psychology we still have the ideology of the Middle Ages, if not of the Forest Glade.

H. H. PREECE.

HOW TO SPREAD FREETHOUGHT

THE forces of religion, over the centuries, have developed many methods of increasing their followings. Of course they have had the power of the state, in most lands, to force people to become converts or suffer imprisonment. All have the benefit of exemption from taxation, so that they can carry on their campaigns of deluding the people with a minimum of cost. For ages the doubters and dissenters have been killed off, tortured and imprisoned so that they have shut off opposition. Their weak spot is that they do not propagate the truth, but delusions and myths. Because of the vast profit in their activity they seek to perpetuate it.

Fortunately for us, such men as Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Charles Bradlaugh, Col. Robert Ingersoll, George E. McDonald, have paved the way for us to be able to speak and write without fear of death or imprisonment. We are denied the use of the Press and the radio. But we do have a golden opportunity which we should grasp before our rights are again lost. They have been lost in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and most of Europe, where political and religious dictatorship prevent men from spreading the truth if it does not meet with the approval of the powers that be.

Only in the British Commonwealth and the United States are we still free to fight those things we deem wrong.

We have no background of experience as the churches have. Those men who could have passed on their experiences to us were early killed by priest, preacher, rabbi, inquisition, burned at the stake, tortured on the rack and their writings confiscated and destroyed. So we have to try new methods of spreading enlightenment. We are pioneers.

Only 100 years ago, in the United States, black and yellow men were the slaves of some white men. They were no more than chattels, animals. Many brave Americans shed their blood that physical slavery might be wiped out, and now that the black men are free, there has been a tremendous advance of all, comforts and prosperity undreamed of by either black or white has been the result of the growth of freedom and intelligence. Even those who fought hardest against the emancipation of the slaves are now better off than they were then.

So it will be when men's minds are freed from the delusions of religion. The advance of 2,000 years will be greatly eclipsed in the first 50 or 100 years when men's minds have been freed from the slavery of religion.

There is no greater gift we can give our fellow men than to free them from mental religious slavery. Those of us who have been so freed treasure our mental liberty above all other things we know. We are anxious to pass it on to our fellow men. We now walk upright like men should, instead of grovelling before priests, popes, rabbis, altars, imaginary gods, devils, saints and angels. We have no fear of the supernatural, nor their self appointed representatives who grow rich deluding ignorant people.

We hope to see science and reason rule instead of superstition and ignorance, and when they do, men will be largely freed from disease, war, crime, poverty and fear.

Each Freethinker can hasten that day! Our leaders are doing more than their share to perpetuate intelligence, we must not depend on others to do what only we can do. There is no vast profit system for Freethinkers which sustains anyone who works on that programme. Each of us should work as if the whole movement depended on our efforts alone.

I suggest the following plan. Let each of us make a list of names of friends, relatives and others whom we think deserve to be brought out of the darkness of superstition. If we do not dare to come out in the open, we can send, anonymously, a circular, pamphlet, periodical or book which will open the way for them to awaken their minds. Such can be sent in an unsealed envelope for only 1d., and the circulars or periodicals are only a few coppers each, while books may be bought at low prices.

Those of us who have been emancipated can well afford to spend each month at least as much as we used to contribute to the church which formerly enslaved our minds.

To those who can come out in the open, it is easy to lend periodicals, pamphlets or books. By lending our material will not be wasted. If our friends are not interested the materials may be used over again. If they are interested they will buy a book or subscribe for the periodical. We should encourage them to do this.

Week by week and month by month we can continue our work, not obtrusively nor combatively but quietly and diligently. When we make ourselves known we will find that many of the people we know have been Freethinkers for years but have kept it to themselves.

If we run out of names of friends we can send our literature to prominent educators, public officials and others.

If we should lose a few so-called friends who are so bigoted that they seek to avoid us, let them go—it may be good riddance of inferior people. But let them go of their own free will—do not drive them away. We will find great enjoyment in associating with intelligent Freethinkers, instead of religious bigots.

We can mould human destiny if we are diligent, instead of drifting on the waves of superstition. Drop by drop the rains fall, enlarging into torrents, they grind the greatest mountains of stone into the finest grains of sand.

If we, month by month, year by year, distribute and lend periodicals and books, our persistent and diligent efforts are bound to double and redouble the men whose minds are freed from superstition, the curse of mankind.

When should we start? Just as soon as you have laid this article down would be a good time to start making up the list of names of those whom you will seek to free from the delusions of religion.

JAMES HERVEY JOHNSON. (U.S.A.)
(Author of *Superior Men*.)

THE SANCTUARY

In a garden early morning,
Whilst the dewdrops linger round,
And a golden haze is forming
O'er the distant rising ground.

Then I feast in full contentment
Of the peace abiding there,
And I pray an earnest moment;
Come, O World! And with me share.

W. ASHTON.

AN ANTHROPOLOGIST SPEAKS

WHEN a man reaches the ripe old age of eighty-three his views on his job and on the wider issues of everyday life have usually become fairly well set and firm. An autobiography written at that age, in consequence, tends to be a kind of monument of all that he has thought. *An Autobiography*, by Sir Arthur Keith (Watts; 25s.) is no exception to this general rule. It is in many respects a fascinating book—most of all in its description of his younger days—but it enshrines in its pages many of the controversial views which he has advocated over the years. Some critics who have taken the attitude that Sir Arthur has many deep prejudices, which he regards in some unaccountable way as scientific hypotheses (even, sometimes, as scientific facts), will find their views abundantly confirmed in the pages of his life-story.

Especially in his beliefs about war—beliefs which are indistinguishable (to this reviewer, at any rate) from those of Hitler or Mussolini—is Sir Arthur open to the most serious criticism of all progressively-minded folk. Sir Arthur holds in brief, that war is “an instrument of evolution,” and in 1915 he first set out his idea that the union of Germany had been brought about by aggressive war as a national policy. He does not seem to have seen that there is anything to be said against that theory, now that the German cities lie in ruins and the country is hopelessly split, under the leadership of American Capitalism and Soviet Communism, into two violently opposed camps.

It is, of course, not to be expected that a man at the age of eighty-three should be able to throw overboard the cherished theories of a life-time; but one would expect that there would, in this book, be at least a recognition that they are theories and not facts. Yet Sir Arthur appears to feel that the ideas which he has for so long advocated are facts, and that anyone who does not face these facts is a “wishful thinker” of the worse possible type.

I know that Sir Arthur has an intense hatred of tyranny. His book contains many biting remarks about the Germans (particularly those of the Nazi vintage), and he would, of course, not for a moment agree that his views are those of a Fascist. He is, I also know, a democrat in his attitude towards the problems of politics. Yet there is nothing in his view of international affairs which would not be a hundred per cent. acceptable to the Fascists of all countries. He mentions (to take a typical example) that admirable book by Julian Huxley and A.C. Haddon, *We Europeans*—a book which was deliberately designed to show up the stupidities of the Nazi racial theory, and its results in anti-Semitism—and says of it, “in that book, even anthropology was given a pacifist bias.” To call something one does not like by a name that seems to be unpleasant (as “pacifist” undoubtedly seems unpleasant to Sir Arthur) is such an old trick that one would have thought an experienced controversialist like Sir Arthur Keith would be far beyond it.

But there is something else which deserves to be said with regard to this book. Those of us who have for so long believed that evolution was satisfactory, not merely as an explanation of some of the biological changes observed by the scientists, but also as a general basis for a philosophy of life, may be driven to an awkward point by Sir Arthur's calm assumption that evolution means a belief in war as a worthwhile activity of man. In other words, if this is the ultimate end of a belief in evolution, many thoughtful people will be brought around to face the fact that undesirable results may follow. Hitler used to use a kind of Darwinian argument, suggesting that the

“survival of the fittest” implied a violent head-on collision between nations at fairly frequent intervals. Sir Arthur Keith attempts to show that this is a sane and sensible philosophy. It may have been so in the days of spears and lances; it may even have been so in the days of muskets and muzzle-loading cannon; it certainly is not so in the days of super-fortresses and atom bombs. And in the days ahead, with hydrogen bombs and bacteriological weapons, war will (if not somehow controlled) quite certainly lead to the complete collapse of everything that we know as civilisation. That is something which, it seems, is quite beyond the imagination of Sir Arthur Keith. That some great epidemic of radioactive stimulus might well be spread across the world is something which he cannot bring himself either to see or to admit. Yet to those of us who have managed to keep our minds alert to the changing times, such a thing seems to be quite beyond all possible dispute.

I hope that readers will not feel that I have spent all my space on something that is of little importance in this book. In most autobiographies the theories of the writer are of less value than his friends or the circumstances of his private life. Sir Arthur Keith, however, has been the storm-centre of so many controversies that one's assessment of his life-story is bound to be controversial.

That the book has its human interest goes without saying. A “success story” is always intensely interesting to read, and this is certainly one of them. But the fact that a man who is usually assumed to be on a pillar of evolutionary theory should be seen, even by sympathisers, to be pushing that theory to a point where it tends to repel by its sheer irrationality is one of the most striking things to emerge from a reading of recent literature.

Sir Arthur Keith says that this is the last book which he will write. That is in many ways a pity, since he has a style which is intensely readable, and a great gift for scientific popularization. But if he has nothing more to say to support those theories which he has now advanced in several recent volumes, it is perhaps as well. I am sure that nothing can make one feel more doubtful about the fundamental ideas of Darwinism than the way in which Sir Arthur interprets them. If this is the logical end to which evolution points—well, many who have hitherto believed in the principle will be inclined to say: “This is not good enough. This cannot be true.” That such is one's reaction to a great man's last book, a considered account of his life written in old age, may be unfortunate. But it is a fact, and to face facts, I feel, is one of the traits which Sir Arthur has always valued. He will regard it as being one of the most tragic ironies of his life that his assessment of his beloved science, because of the way in which he stresses certain aspects of his work, may make sceptics of some who were once believers in it. Yet I am certain that this will be the effect of his final book on many who have in the past been sympathetically inclined towards a general belief in evolution and towards materialism of the kind advocated by Sir Arthur Keith.

JOHN ROWLAND.

PIOUS LAYMEN

PRIESTS and gods alike depend for their existence on an admiring and worshipping laity. It is a staggering but instructive fact that gods would cease to be were it not for belief of their devotees. Then there would be no priests.

This is not the whole story. Examination of religion and its practices reveals that the mass of adherents are

more rigid, formal and insistent on observance of rites than priests themselves.

No doubt priests urge them on, acting as dogs chasing sheep in the direction required. Sheep is the classical religious figure for laity, not complimentary to them, who should bestir themselves to behave unlike sheep and more as human beings capable of thinking and of independent movement following thereon.

When pious laymen do so the results are startling. Some of the biggest changes in religion have come from laymen outpriesting the priests, who are generally conservative, satisfied with things as they are if their own snug, safe jobs are left to them in peace.

Contrarily enthusiasm of laity can be disturbing. If individuals consider what Henry VIII, Philip of Spain, Cromwell, George Fox, Gandhi and many more did, when they took the bit between their teeth and galloped away from control by their Churches, whose policy was more cautious, though more crafty and cunning. They employed laymen if subservient enough for their purposes.

The roll of martyrs consists chiefly of laymen and women. The martyr rôle does not attract priests. It needs too great sacrifice of personal comfort.

Mass movements illustrate the same laic extremism. as crusades, religious wars, English Civil War, evangelistic revivals, penal legislation, the brutally joyful attitude of mobs at burnings of heretics, and witch hunting. So much so that in the enormities of the last the Spanish Inquisition called for an easing of the ferocity. Though witch smelling was more an orgiastic delight of Protestants than Romanists.

With its customary equivocation as well as skill in employing baser aspects of human nature the Inquisition, after condemning heretics, Jews and infidels handed them over to the secular arm for punishment. Inquisitors knew that pious governments would proceed to the final consequence of their victims' condemnation.

Modernly politicians like Gladstone and Stafford Cripps solemnly assure us they are implementing the precepts of Christianity. This may be vote-catching, English hypocrisy, or sincere.

When the 1944 Education Act made religious practices and teaching compulsory in State and rate-supported schools, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Doctor Temple, expressed surprise at the amount given to the Churches. Religiously-biased politicians handed far more to them than they asked for; more than they dared to expect.

Explanation of the whole matter is that pious laity take their faith more seriously than does the priesthood. The latter grow accustomed, inured, slightly bored and mechanical in operation. Meeting priests, parsons and ministers in everyday life, one finds them genial, sociable, considerably cultured and tolerant outside their creeds. Many of them are more modernistic than laymen. Examples being Doctor Major and Bishop Barnes. If they wish, they have wider chances of contacting new ideas.

Pious laymen and women tend to fundamentalism, fear to surrender any iota of belief however outmoded or untenable. They do not keep in touch with research and criticism, but remain hidebound by the conventions and narrow interpretations acquired in their early lives. In short they are more credulous and superstitious than clerics.

One may illuminate their attitude by comparison with other professions. No doctor believes in the efficacy of his treatment so thoroughly as his patients. Doctor Roberts, famous as a practitioner in East London, estimated 90 per cent. of his patients who recovered would have done so without his ministrations. Except

for the psychological effect of his presence giving the patients a sense of security, which is what religion does without reference to its reality of truth.

Pharmacists and dispensers know this as they dole out millions of medically-ordered prescriptions to *bona fide* and imaginary sufferers alike. Something nasty tasting and mysteriously named is all that most people require. As an example of faith healing, medicine taking is colossal. Those who get no better in health continue trustingly to swallow the medicaments, as pious laymen do the exhortations of priests.

Lawyers similarly flourish on disputation and obstinate laymen who continue ignorantly to rely on law as something potent to help them. Powerful it is for enriching lawyers, who occasionally break into honesty by advising people never to go to law if they can avoid it. What would happen if priests gave similar advice about religion?

Few teachers have the confidence in school education which parents show. The same may be said of politicians in relation to the electorate's credence that legislation can make a nation happy and healthy and prosperous.

All the professions which live on human intercourse and society, all more or less parasitic, draw their profit and their authority from the continued trustfulness of the masses who employ them and enrich them. When professional people meet among themselves with no outsiders, they are humorous and cynical about their own pretensions.

On such occasions priests of all denominations must laugh as they think of the pious laity supporting and upholding them, trying to carry their behests a step farther than originally stated. Also they do the minor clerical duties, such as Sunday School teaching and innumerable others, besides being instruments of propaganda and the source from which money is drawn.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

CLERICAL INCOMES

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, in St. Paul's Cathedral on 31st January last, told his congregation that every clergyman must have an assured income, of at least £500 per annum, and that he, with other bishops, deplored the fact that many of the clergy are poor; and so they should be if they were truly followers of their Lord and Master, who commanded his followers to live in poverty—it is a Christian blessing as stated in the Gospels.

However, the Archbishop said nothing about his wages, £300 a week. Perhaps he, with his brother bishop, the Bishop of London, with his £200 a week, might be brotherly and give some of their poorer colleagues part of these huge amounts. After all, it is difficult for a rich man to enter heaven—so it is said.

There are 29 Bishoprics in England, and the following details of pay packets for preachers of poverty may be of interest:—

In the Diocese of Canterbury, the Archbishop's stipend is £15,000, the Dean's is £2,000 per annum.

In London, the Bishop's stipend is £10,000, the Dean's is £2,000 per annum.

In York, the Archbishop's stipend is £10,000, the Dean's is £2,000.

In Durham, the Bishop's stipend is £7,000, the Dean's is £3,000.

In Winchester, the Bishop's stipend is £6,500, the Dean's is £2,000.

While the Dioceses of Ely, Gloucester and Oxford, expect their Bishops to scrape through on a mere £5,000 per annum.

W. A. VAUGHAN.

ACID DROPS

Repercussions of the pre-election invasion of St. Paul's have not yet been felt, but the Rev. Guy Howard, of St. Peter's, gets straight of the mark in his *Parish Magazine*, by saying that he "can see no valid reason why a Chancellor of the Exchequer, a journalist, or an author, should take upon himself the work of a priest." This sounds very much like professional jealousy, but the Rev. Mr. Howard need not worry, Sir Stafford and other laymen who preach from the pulpit can be relied upon not to queer any parson's pitch.

Incidentally, Mr. W. Gallagher blames the Roman Catholics in his constituency for his defeat, but we have no recollection of his thanking them for electing him to Parliament for the past 15 years.

We may perhaps be permitted to enquire of Mr. Jack Burns, Liberal candidate, whether he was standing for election to the British House of Commons to represent the electors of Coventry, or only for Irish Roman Catholics? We ask in all seriousness, for we have just seen his election address, in which he appeals to his "fellow Irishmen and fellow Roman Catholics" to vote for him. And in an advertisement in the *Coventry Telegraph*, Mr. Burns claims to be an Irishman and a Roman Catholic, and pledges himself to support Catholicism.

There will be quite a family reunion of the Bourbons (of whom it was said: "they learn nothing, neither do they forget anything") in Rome. Several members of the Spanish royal family on a Holy Year visit will meet at the Vatican. It has been stated that the Restoration question will not be discussed, but, it is well-known that Franco is no longer in favour with the Pope, as hitherto. This, coupled with the happy "coincidence" that one of the most influential clerics at the Vatican is the Spaniard, Fr. Emmanuel Suarez, General of the Dominican Order and said to be the brains behind the Restoration movement, should indicate which way the wind blows.

We have reiterated time and time again that a Christian has no monopoly of the virtues or the vices, and we are always ready to praise honesty in a parson. In fact, when a clergyman can be so open as was the Rev. R. Ward, we begin to wonder what is he doing in the Church. When he was called upon to give evidence at Lewes Court he refused the Bible and said: "I can tell the truth just as well without it," and when pressed, he was almost blasphemous and rather irritably added: "Give me the thing and I will get on with it," which must have shocked the authorities for he was allowed to affirm. It could be that the Rev. Mr. Ward has really read the Bible and knows the injunction by Jesus: "swear not at all," which, however, does not seem to prevent other Christians swearing; very often with reservations.

A Roman Catholic priest has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of £1,000 for conspiring to sell drugs, reports a Montreal newspaper. The mental dope peddled by religion is not an indictable offence, in fact, it is encouraged, but the effect is far worse than all the other narcotics. It leaves man a mental slave, it inculcates a sheep-like attitude, rendering the addict more susceptible to any kind of charlatan—and like sheep, they are sheared.

The Communist "master" spy, Dr. Fuchs, appears to have been brought up in a very religious atmosphere, for his father is even now lecturing on Christianity. To a German newspaper, he said that his son "was no Judas, but a true international Communist." The reporter added that the Rev. Mr. Fuchs "seemed completely confused between Christianity and Communism"—and the fact that so many of our own Communists welcome the "Red" Dean proves that this confusion is not confined to Germany.

Mr. Alan Paton, the author of a South African novel, *Cry, The Beloved Country*, spoke the other evening on the relationship between the blacks and whites in South Africa, and appears to have bluntly blurted out the truth, at least on the activities of missionaries. "It is a fact," he declared, "that missionary endeavour has been characterised by a blundering entry into a delicate province. The whole Western world blundered into the tribal people of South Africa. Under the impact, the whole tribal system reeled and shook, and much of it is damaged beyond repair. It is indeed a lasting reproach to us that the Christianity we took was itself confused and divided." This has been the constant cry of *The Freethinker* and it stood almost alone in its condemnation of missionary activities.

The Vatican has at last responded to the call for "unity," and has made it quite clear, as the *Church Times* says, that "Roman Catholics are in no way to compromise the doctrinal position and claims of their Church." Well, why should it? The Church of Rome is in the strongest possible position. It was the "parent" Church, and it upholds all the primitive teaching of the early Christians which is the backbone of true Christianity. There can be only one unity, and the Vatican has made that very clear. Swallow all the doctrines of Rome, express contrition, come back humbly, and the Pope will do his best to administer the funds of the Church of England in the interests of Rome and Christ. But whatever else happens, we doubt if our bishops and archbishops will stand that.

The Catholic journalist who writes under the pseudonym of "Pasquin" agrees with the *Daily Telegraph* description of the recent "spy" trial in Hungary as "preposterous," but objects to it being called "a medieval Inquisition." He contends that the Holy Christian Inquisition was "scrupulously fair, as a general rule." We wonder what some of the victims would have thought as their finger and toe nails were pulled out, their tongues torn out with red hot pincers, their thumbs and shin bones crushed, their bodies wracked—to name but a few of the "penalties" given for not believing the drivel of Roman Catholicism. Scrupulously fair, indeed!

We have always been puzzled to know how a person claiming to have met Jesus Christ would recognise Him. Take, for example, a Mr. J. R. Mosely, who claims the other week, that one day "a presence, a power, descended upon him and the glorious Jesus manifested himself in front of me." How did Mr. Mosely know it was Jesus? No one was present to effect an introduction, and it is almost certain that J. C. does not carry an identity card or Passport; J. C.'s mates and fellow scroungers are all dead. It's no good showing the marks of the nails in his hands and feet: the stigmata is quite a common religious neurosis.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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London, W.C.1.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

A. D. CORRICK.—Many thanks for your suggestion which will be borne in mind.

J. HUMPHREY.—Thanks for cuttings, which are always welcome.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, 17s.; half-year, 8s. 6d.; three-months, 4s. 4d.

The following periodicals are being received regularly, and can be consulted at "The Freethinker" office: THE TRUTH SEEKER (U.S.A.), COMMON SENSE (U.S.A.), THE LIBERAL (U.S.A.), THE VOICE OF FREEDOM (U.S.A., German and English), PROGRESSIVE WORLD (U.S.A.), THE NEW ZEALAND RATIONALIST, THE RATIONALIST (Australia), DER FREIDENKER (Switzerland), DON BASILIO (Italy).

Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, and not to the Editor.

Will correspondents please write on one side of the paper, and keep their letters brief. This will give everybody a chance.

SUGAR PLUMS

Prof. H. Levy, M.A., D.Sc., lectures in The Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, W.C.1, under the auspices of The National Secular Society, on Thursday evening, 23rd March, and London readers should make a point of attending with friends. The subject, "The Meaning of Proof," holds varied possibilities for a very interesting address and should appeal to Freethinkers and others. Admission is free and the lecture begins at 7-30.

South London Freethinkers should not miss what promises to be an interesting lecture at the Hope Hotel, 78, Loampit Vale, Lewisham, S.E., when Mr. F. A. Ridley will speak on that intriguing subject—"Ancient Rome and Modern America." The Hope Hotel is well served by transport, buses and trams pass the door, and there is a good train service from Charing Cross to Lewisham Station. Lewisham Branch N.S.S. extends a welcome to members and friends. Note the date—Sunday, March 19, at 7-30.

Leicester Freethinkers and religious folk can spend an Evening with the Gods" in The Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, this evening (March 19), Mr. R. H. Rosetti will be the speaker and proceedings will begin at 6-30. Gods from different parts of the world will be dealt with but no actual introductions are promised.

Here is an opportunity for Scottish Freethinkers to get together when the Glasgow Secular Society hold their Annual Dinner on Saturday, March 18, at the Kenilworth Hotel, Queen Street, Glasgow. Reception is at 6-30 p.m. Tickets (11s. 6d.) may be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs. M. Whitefield, 351, Castlemilk Road, Glasgow, S.4.

Business ties have hitherto prevented Mr. L. Ebury accepting lecture engagements in the provinces, but

to-day (March 19) is an exception. He visits Newcastle-on-Tyne and will speak for the local N.S.S. Branch at 7 p.m., in The Socialist Hall, Royal Arcade, Pilgrim Street, on "The Curse of Immortality." Admission is free, with some reserved seats at one shilling each. We hope local saints will take full advantage of Mr. Ebury's visit.

THE PROBLEMS OF MATERIALISM

II.

IN *Energy and Matter*, Dr. Worrall begins by showing what "matter" has meant to some of our greatest thinkers, philosophers, and scientists. Democritus and Epicurus considered it consisted only of "discrete particles"; following Plato, Aristotle "assumed an absolutely featureless and purely passive primary matter, void of form till form is impressed upon it." "Form" here seems to mean "an active and formative principle." This also meant "motion," and for Aristotle, motion came from a "divine mover."

But when two centuries ago, Aristotelian philosophy was discarded by our scientists, they still retained its idea of matter as being passive and inert. Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton both insisted that "the origin of motion in matter is from God." Later, Dr. Worrall points out:—

Nineteenth century physics assumed that matter was absolutely discontinuous, consisting only of discrete particles separated by empty space. Since matter was also assumed to be absolutely inert, non-material forces were postulated to account for the activity of material particles. All kinds of imponderable forces were postulated as the non-material causes of physical change.

Moreover, "mass and motion were absolutely distinct from one another in being mutually unconvertible," while "absolute space and absolute time were regarded as separate entities." Or, to put the problem in another way, matter was in itself, passive, dead; all motion of life was caused by force; and the solution of the problems of physiology, physics, and chemistry, consisted "in the enumeration of the forces acting upon the material particles and in the exact quantitative determination of the effects produced by their action."

Later in the nineteenth century, all this was modified "by the concept of energy which developed as a synthesis of mechanics and thermodynamics," and by the principle of the conservation of energy. All physicists accepted the idea of force or energy, of course, and did their best so to define it as to make clear what they meant. Faraday wrote: "What I mean by the word 'force' is the cause of a physical action." Mayer emphasised that "forces are causes," and so on.

Buchner in *Force and Matter* wrote: "Equally uncreatable, equally indelible, equally imperishable, equally immortal as Matter is the Force bound up with it . . . As it is an indubitable fact that Matter can be neither newly created nor annihilated, but only changed in form, so must it be accepted as an absolutely certain experience that there is not a single instance in which a force has been brought out of nothing nor reduced to nothing, in other words, *born nor annihilated*."

But force or energy "was regarded as an entity," says Dr. Worrall; "an active 'something' distinct from

'passive' matter and characterised by a 'capacity to do work.' " As Clerk Maxwell said, "Work may be considered as the transference of energy from one body to another." And Dr. Worrall calls the two definitions, "Work is transference of energy," and "Energy is capacity to do work," as the classical pair which marked a tremendous advance in scientific thought. "With this advance," he adds, "the vague idea of equality of cause and effect was replaced by exact calculation of physical change, in terms of mass, energy, space and time."

In Ingersoll's lecture, "Why I am an Agnostic" (1896), he says, "Matter cannot exist apart from force. Force cannot exist apart from matter. Matter could not have existed before force. Force could not have existed before matter. Matter and force can only be conceived of together." The physicist, P. G. Tait, put it in his *Properties of Matter* (1907) in this way: "Energy is never found except in association with matter," upon which Dr. Worrall comments, that it was "a remark which epitomized the understanding as well as the limitations of nineteenth century physics." It assumed, in fact, that matter was "absolutely inert," and therefore "something non-material had to be postulated to account for changes in the motion of matter." At first it was a variety of independent forces, but later, "energy" as a transformable force, accounted for all the changes, and as it remained constant, energy "was subject to exact numerical calculation."

Dr. Worrall has a long chapter on Ether and the part various conceptions of what it means has played in the science of physics, together with what "the revolutionary genius" of Einstein has done to make new fields of exploration possible. Instead of the Lorentz theory of "a stationary ether," Einstein postulated "the constancy of the velocity of light," and from this he demolished "the motionless ether hypothesis, which conflicted with the relativity principle of classical mechanics." This chapter is not easy reading except for students familiar with the terminology and with the mathematics used by physicists. It takes more than a mere reading of a book to understand what non-Euclidean geometry means, "one in which parallel lines do not exist at all." That Einstein adopted it to formulate his theory of relativity meant that Dr. Worrall had to devote another chapter to elucidate Einstein whom, in the end, he congratulates as having ousted Newton's idea of space and time.

Dr. Worrall added to his exposition by an illuminating chapter on "Fields and Particles," in which electric and magnetic fields are clearly discussed, as well as the theory of light waves, and the inter-penetration of particles and fields. He quotes W. Heitler, "A beam of electrons must be described 'partly' as consisting of a number of individual particles and partly as a wave . . . speculations as to the 'medium' of the wave have proved fruitless." And Dr. Worrall comments, "Yet the electron waves to which physicists are loth to grant a material character, are as physically real as an atomic bomb . . . electron wave-lengths can be measured with precision and vary inversely with the velocities of the electrons . . . the wave propagation obeys exact laws."

The conclusion to which he comes is that—

If the material character of radiant energy was recognised, it would not be possible to regard matter as absolutely inert. Matter would then be seen to have an active as well as a passive quality; motivity as well as inertia. Instead of the current view that inert matter is acted upon by non-material energy, matter would be recognised as self-motivated. All this would conflict with theology, which teaches that

something supernatural is ultimately responsible for the activity of "inert" matter . . . modern materialism has no such attachment to theologically inspired assumptions. Defining matter as that which exists independently of thought, we can see that matter is active as well as passive, self-motivated as well as inert.

When Dr. Worrall says "modern materialism" here, he does not make it quite clear as to whether he means "dialectical materialism" or just modern materialism. There is a definite distinction, for, as I pointed out in the first article, the dialectical materialist opposes what he calls mechanistic materialism, which latter, in passing, has my own support. Of course, my meaning for this quite possibly clashes with the meaning given to it by other materialists, and no doubt would cause some angry disclaimers.

What Dr. Worrall has to say regarding time, space, and energy, I must leave for another article.

H. CUTNER.

THE SHAKESPEARE PROBLEM

(Concluded from page 98)

As to the glorious tributes in the First Folio, 1623, the verse To the Reader, by B.L., ascribed to Ben Jonson, is couched in equivocal language concerning the "figure" for gentle Shakespeare; the "figure" not being a portrait but a drawing of two left sleeves and a mask showing the line on left face and a false convex ear. "For" Shakespeare can mean "in place of" S. "Out-do" can mean to "shut out," the life; and "he hath hit his face," can, and actually does mean in this case, "hath hid his face," "hit" meaning "hid" as in Chaucer. Lee knows of no portrait of Shaksper done in his lifetime, but accepts two portraits, one the bust in Stratford Church, the other the frontispiece in the Folio of 1623. "Each was an attempt at a posthumous likeness by an artist of no marked skill . . . The engraved portrait . . . was by Martin Droeshout . . . 15 years old . . . in 1616 . . . It thus belongs to the outset of the engraver's professional career, in which he never achieved extended practice or reputation" (Lee's "Life of Shakespeare," Chap. XVII). I mention this as one of many mistaken assumptions of Lee to fit the Stratford case. M. Droeshout made engravings of the Duke of Buckingham, Bishop of Durham, Marquis of Hamilton, Lord Coventry, and others. See R. L. Eagle's "Martin Droeshout" in "Baconiana," No. 121, October, 1946, which gives a reproduction of M.D.'s Gustavus Adolphus and also the title page illustration of Dr. Hedkirk Crooke's "Mikrokosmographia," 1631—an engraving, a remarkable achievement in detail and execution. No wonder Ben Jonson told the reader "Look not on his picture, but his booke." In his eulogy a different construction can be put on "Sweet Swan of Avon, what a sight it were, to see thee in our water yet appear." "He seems to shake a lance, as brandished at the eyes of ignorance," recalls how good a pseudonym is Shakespeare, as deriving from the Greek Goddess Pallas Athene, the goddess of wisdom and power, and represented in statuary art as armed with a spear. Shakespeare occurs fifteen times in printed editions of the Plays and Poems, but not once in any record of Shaksper. In 1616, year of Shaksper's death, Ben Jonson had referred to Shaksper as "a poet ape, an upstart, a hypocrite and a thief" (E. D. Johnson, "Fictitious Shakespeare Exposed," p. 46); and in 1641, Jonson, in his "Timber" wrote of Shakespeare, and not of Shaksper, as Lee con-

tends, "I loved the man and do honour to his memory on this side idolatry as much as any. He was, indeed, honest and of an open and free nature." (Ibid, p. 56). Ben Jonson has already been mentioned as one of Bacon's helpers after his return from France in 1579. "The exact date when Ben Jonson went to live with Francis Bacon at Gorhambury is not known, but in the list of Bacon's household in 1618, Mr. Jonson is mentioned as Chief Gentleman Usher . . . Ben Jonson assisted Bacon in translating the books Bacon had written in English into Latin." ("Baconiana," 1679, p. 60—see "Baconiana," No. 129, 1948, p. 199). Ben Jonson, Bacon's secretary, succeeded Edmund Tylney as Master of the Court Revels ("Baconiana," No. 129, p. 201). Jonson, in his "Timber or Discoveries," ca. 1637 or 1638, discusses and highly praises Francis Bacon as an orator; values his work as a poet, and places him at the top of the literary men of all ages entirely ignoring William Shakespeare. ("Baconiana," No. 129, 1948, p. 200; No. 133, p. 199.) Greenwood, mentioning Jonson's testimony that "the players" regarded Wm. Shakespeare, the actor, as the author of the Plays, says it was "extremely remarkable that Jonson should have used the same words about Bacon: 'He hath filled up all numbers . . . preferred to insolent Greece or haughty Rome' (Shakespeare Problem" p. 404.) Also remarkable that no mention should be made of the great dramatist whom Ben Jonson in 1623 called "the Soul of the Age" in B. J.'s "Scriptorum Catalogus" a catalogue of the best writers of his day where he put Bacon at the head of it, while he omitted Shakespeare altogether (Ibid., p. 404). "Dr. Ingleby also characterises as 'remarkable' the omission by Jonson of Shakespeare's name in another part of his "Discoveries," (ca. 1638), making the same remarkable omission as Thomas Lodge in his "Wit's Miserie and the World's Madness," or by Edward Guilpin in his "Skiaethia, 1598 (Ibid. p. 405/6). Jonson, the affectionate friend of Shaksper, pace Lee, paid no tribute to Shaksper on his death in 1616.

Bacon and Shakespeare are said to be equal in vocabulary, numbering 15,000 words. It was Bacon's avowed project to improve and increase the English language. Sir G. G. Greenwood deals with Miss Rose G. Kingsley's article in *Nineteenth Century Magazine*, May, 1910, "Shakespeare in Warwickshire" and charges her with "resort to deliberate falsification of a document by the orthodox" ("The Vindicators of Shakespeare," pp. 159-160). Mr. E. D. Johnson tells us: "Many years ago, Mr. Appleton Morgan, President of the New York Shakespeare Society gave a glossary of 518 awards, claimed by him to be used exclusively in Warwickshire. The English Dialect Society's Dictionary shows that of these 518 so-called pure Warwickshire words only 46 were not current in Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Wilts, Hamps. Lincs., and Leicestershire. How is it, therefore, that not a single one of the 46, which can be shown to have been used exclusively in Warwickshire, is to be found in the Shakespeare Plays? ("Baconiana" No. 133, p. 212).

As to errors, could Bacon have committed these in the Plays? Mr. R. Eagle says: "Chapman, the learned translator of Homer, took far more liberties with the canons of the classical drama than Shakespeare" ("Shakespeare: New Views for Old" (p. 37)). S. H. Reynolds says in his Introduction to Bacon's Essays that for accuracy of detail Bacon had no care whatever, and this may be set down as part of his craft. . . . In "King Lear" and "Cymbelin," Shakespeare follows the custom of the Greeks in using native legend as a vehicle for presenting great examples. Bacon was equally unconcerned about strict accuracy so long as his purpose in

metaphor, simile, or illustration was served" (Ibid., p. 28) . . . "Stratfordians do not remind us that Shakespeare inhabited the Forest of Arden with lions, because it does not fit in with the Stratford point of view" (p. 29). . . . Shakespeare's "errors" are "consistent with what Bacon says about Poesy in the 'Advancement of Learning' . . . Several of Bacon's blunders are pointed out in Devey's notes in Bohn's standard edition of Bacon's works. Dr. Edwin A. Abbott [orthodox Stratfordian] observed that Bacon 'was eminently inattentive to details,' for, as Taine mentioned, Bacon 'thought in the manner of artists and poets, and spoke in the manner of prophets and seers'" (p. 30).

Draper, in his "Conflict . . ." wrote of the over-rated Bacon's errors; Ingersoll in his Stratfordian essay on Shakespeare, dwelt on Bacon's follies and blunders; and Professor J. W. Hickson, in the "Rationalist Annual," 1929, said: "Notwithstanding his description of the various Idola, the greatly over-rated Francis Bacon swallowed quite a few old wives' beliefs without a qualm."

Mr. Metcalfe Wood, editor of "The Theatre Edition" of Shakespeare's Works, writes therein, in Preface: "Again throughout his works there are innumerable references to Stratford and its neighbourhood." Mr. H. Bridgewater, in his "Evidence Connecting Sir Francis Bacon with Shakespeare," writes: "It [Stratford] is not mentioned in any single Play, though, curiously enough, Stoney-Stratford, Bucks., is . . . St. Albans . . . is mentioned in the Plays no less than 23 times . . . Gray's Inn is mentioned only once . . . York Place is twice mentioned in 'Henry VIII'" (p. 7).

A very important Quiz of 100 searching questions is given in Nos. 132 and 133 of "Baconiana," 1949. It is not likely that any Stratfordian will, or can give satisfactory answers thereto.

GEORGE ROSS.

THANKING GOD

AS the old year was dying, the archaic intonation of the medicine-man diffused the magic message to all who, by wish or accident, were listening. Antiquity in doctrine was aided by modernity of practice; a thing not to be wondered at, for the conflict of religion and science does not imply inability in the magician to make use of mechanism. A Jesus of today would, at least occasionally, travel by the aid of the internal combustion engine.

Where religion and science are in conflict is in their doctrine, and over the radio the character of the battle was plain. The priest told his listeners of the things for which they should thank God, health, food, loveliness, affection, peace; in short, for the unremittent divine care. The art of the message consisted in the omission of facts destructive of the idealism of the picture. Some of these facts were recently referred to by Professor Plant, of Manchester University, in *The Lancet*. "I have," he said, "seen too many children die of leukaemia or nephritis to believe that man is the 'object of God's love, as God has shown in his acts.'"

We have in fact never far to go to see the kind of thing that prevents the professor believing in God's love, and such examples have always been about. There is in a modern history of medicine a picture of the mummy of an ancient Egyptian priest. His spine shows the gross deformation of tuberculosis. What did that theologian think of the goodness of the gods? This question could be put also to the modern priest, but would he answer sincerely?

The average religious teacher has suffered as the average layman has suffered. He has, if more than a youth, experienced the loss of relatives and friends, or, at least, seen members of his flock so suffer. He has a wide circle of acquaintances, and therefore knows how often the innocent and the young have been afflicted by disease and accident. It is, therefore, difficult to acquit him of an accusation of fraud, when he asks us to thank God for those good things which are matched, in our world, with so many evil things.

One ancient idea of disease was that it was a punishment for sin. The ancient Israelites, for example, suffered with this superstition. Disease was sent by God, and it was the duty of the priests to deal with it. In Leviticus xiii the rules to be followed by the priests for the recognition of "leprosy" are set out. In 2 Kings vi, Naaman, captain of the host of the King of Syria, is cured of "leprosy" by bathing seven times in the Jordan, but Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, fraudulently receiving money from Naaman, is cursed by his master, and goes from his presence a leper, as white as snow.

The diseases in the above references are considered by modern medical men not to have been leprosy. The later reference is absurd in any case, and, in regard to leprosy, it is enough to know that its incubation period is peculiarly prolonged, and is at any rate from two to five years.

The Bible also relates that 185,000 Assyrians were slain in one night by the angel of the Lord, and that the Philistines who took the ark to the house of Dagon at Ashdod, were for that offence smitten by the God of Israel with "emerods." As expiation, the sinners made a trespass offering to Jehovah, of five golden mice and five golden "emerods." Both these epidemics may have been plague. The Egyptians, in reference to the discomfiture of the Assyrians, say their affliction was brought about by Ptah, the god of the rats, and the "emerods" that troubled the Philistines are thought to refer to "swellings" rather than to hæmorrhoids. The offering of golden swellings (buboes) with golden mice is a significant indication of plague, for although the cause of the diseases was unknown, the presence of dead rats with the epidemics could have been obvious. There is, however, a remark in Psalms to enemies having been smitten in their "hinder parts." Epidemic hæmorrhoids do not, I believe, come within sure medical knowledge.

The ignorance of the ancients concerning the nature of disease is, however, not shared by the modern priest. He knows of the world of the invisibly minute, that lepers are not especially sinful, that typhus strikes equally the just and the unjust, that the plasmodium of malaria makes no distinction between the blood of a priest and that of a docker. Yet with his knowledge he asks us to thank God for goodness!

If, however, the particular parson who gave this talk with which we are concerned were suddenly by, let us say, a rejection of superstition, to refuse to preach religion any more, his place would easily be filled. The B.B.C. would at once find another fool or liar to serve the same dish. The propagation of religion is considered very necessary, often in order to keep social conditions unchanged.

In this connection the *Daily Telegraph* has shown some perturbation over the news that Professor Einstein has worked out equations which are a general explanation of the way all things work. That paper had an editorial triumphantly proclaiming that science will, of course, not explain away God, as the Victorian predecessors of the professors so "arrogantly" considered

they had. The rejection of the theistic hypothesis by some Victorian scientists was based on reason and observations continually made. The rejection had often been made before, and has been since. Laplace, no more than Einstein, had use for God in his hypotheses. As for arrogance, the Victorian scientists were men of various temperaments. Who would call Tyndall, Clifford or Huxley arrogant? It did happen in the Victorian age that the use of anæsthesia in childbirth was decried "so as not to rob God of the deep earnest cries of woman in labour." That was a religious manifestation.

The Victorian scientist may have been mistaken about religion. If so, it was not in believing that he had explained away God, for God does not fit into any explanation of the nature of things. It was, however, a mistake to think that, while power over education, and through the Press, over public opinion, was in the hands of religious interests, the atheist could easily eradicate superstition, but the scientists mentioned did not make this mistake.

The battle for science is not over, as witness the knocking on the holy door at the Vatican at the beginning of the Holy Year and the water that has prevented the Pope from announcing momentous revelations about St. Peter!

J. G. LUPTON.

NEW YORK LETTER

WHAT actually can a Freethinker report after only a few weeks in New York for the first time—if, even he has any right to draw anything approaching a conclusion. And yet, finding myself in Montreal, where I broke my journey by air, only some twelve hours after leaving London, one at once notices the Catholic influence. There is a sense of Puritanism abroad in this lovely Canadian city, in keeping with its icy winds and frozen landscapes.

I was told by an Englishwoman, some years out from London, that after coming here she was compelled to adopt a different mode of life, and could no longer go about after dark without an escort, or to be seen alone eating out at night. She longed for London and its gentle tolerance.

Here in New York, the same bristles and, one feels, rather insincere religious sanctions, seem to prevail. Public "decency" is maintained by fierce and persistent legislation (e.g., the fantastic Mann Act) and repressed instincts ooze out unhealthily through the only legal loopholes provided by Press sensationalism and an endless stream of sex literature. Newspapers feature rape and the sex criminal in an unending stream of six-inch headlines, yet it is dangerous to speak to a woman on Broadway unless she is someone whom she can prove to be a relation or friend. As a sharp distinction, however, divorce is easy and cheap. Everyone I have yet met here seems to be a Catholic, and Mass and the Confessional a matter of routine.

I am left with the feeling that Freethought here in New York, unblessed by any great names, and practically without a literature, would be as dangerous as unprofitable, and I must ashamedly admit that I have, up to now, maintained a discreet silence broken only by the still small voice of the Editor of the *Truth Seeker* on the telephone. One story may seem to illustrate the picture. A woman acquaintance here said to her priest that she had listened to a "doubtful" story and wished to confess. "What did the priest say?" I asked her. "Oh," she said, "he did not seem very shocked. I told him after I had repeated the story that I had done no wrong."

if, as I assured him, I had not laughed at the correct juncture," and happily my friend could not see his face.

I am left with the impression of a great, and very wonderful country far ahead of us in many fields, both historical and sociological. The American, above all, means well. His social services are vigorous and enlightened, his sense of personal freedom is keen and alive, excepting in such fields as are still dominated by religious bigotry—and they are many. America is young and immature. How else can one reconcile the vast number of churches—the Bibles in the hotel bedrooms and the tremendous sale of the Kinsey Report?

J. STURGE WHITING.

ON RE-READING A CLASSIC

MOST readers will be acquainted with one or other of the accepted classics of English literature, and will find that such a volume, approved by the critics and accepted as a leading specimen of its class of work, is worth re-reading at intervals. And, I think, such a re-reading often gives the reader a new insight into the value of the book, possibly explaining just why it originally became accepted as a first-rate example of its kind.

I have just re-read *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë's famous novel, and I wonder how many who regard themselves as Freethinkers or Liberal Christians are aware of the wonderful power and force of the early chapters of the book. (The recent film, starring Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles, did not attempt to hide this, either.) The point is that the story, which is told in the form of an autobiography, describes the life of an orphan, brought up in the home of an aunt, and eventually despatched to a charity school, run by a group of earnest Christians of the most hard type.

Lowood School (for such is the name of the place) was supposed to have been based on an institution of which Charlotte Brontë had direct knowledge. And the fact that she was the daughter of a clergyman did not prevent her from telling the truth about a place so cruelly run and so hard on the unfortunate young people who were consigned to it. The evil of ignoring people's bodies and concentrating on their souls, has seldom been so well portrayed as in this book. I think that many Freethinkers would find it of interest.

J. R.

CORRESPONDENCE

JAMES JOYCE

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Gridgeman (at his favourite sport of boosting the drivel of Joyce) I still hold that the followers of Joyce and Picasso hate beauty. And the fact that Picasso himself "appreciates" Michelangelo, does not mean that he can paint or sculpt like that incomparable master any more than my own etchings equal those of Rembrandt, whom I also "appreciate." Incidentally, on the question as to whether James Joyce was a Freethinker, his sister, on the Radio Third Programme recently, while admitting he had left the Church, insisted that he never gave up religion or his belief in God.—Yours, etc.,

H. CUTNER.

FUCHS CASE COROLLARY

SIR,—Not long ago, as we all know, the Government decided, very reluctantly, that all men known to be Communists should be suspended from positions of trust, because such men—if sincere—would always have to place their loyalty to a foreign power before their own country if it came to a showdown.

The situation is, obviously, exactly the same with all sincere Roman Catholics in this country, a fact which a really "free" Press would not find it convenient to suppress.—Yours, etc.,

M. C. BROTHERTON,
Comdr., R.N., ret.

OBITUARY

C. B. SINCH

We regret to announce the death of Mr. G. B. Singh, a valued contributor to our columns, which took place at Norwich, February last. His remains were cremated, and at his express wish, without a secular service, and his ashes scattered in the Garden of Remembrance at the Crematorium.

Mr. G. B. Singh was born in 1877 in the Gujranwala District of India. He got his early schooling at the Islamia High School, Amritsar, under Mr. Rothwell, the headmaster. He left this school in 1892, getting the Victoria Diamond Jubilee Gold Medal presented yearly to the best Matric. candidate. He won a Government Scholarship and joined the Municipal Board College at Amritsar. He left this college in 1895 after winning a further scholarship and joined the F.C. College, Lahore. He left the latter in 1897 to commence vocational training at the Thomson Engineering College, Rurki. On completion of the Civil Engineering Course he was appointed as Assistant Engineer in the Government Telegraph Department on the 1st June, 1899. He served in many parts of India and retired in September, 1932—having held the posts of Postmaster General, Central Provinces of Rajputana and Senior Director, Posts and Telegraphs. The rest of his life was spent in retirement at his home at F. 4 Model Town, Lahore, until September, 1947, when, due to the partition of India, he was forced to leave his home and come and live with his son in England.

He was a well-known Indian scholar and rationalist, having done a good deal of research work on Indian Philosophy and published standard works on the Origin and Development of the Punjabi language and the Gurmukhi script, besides various other literary articles in Punjabi.

(Dr.) H. L. CAPOORE.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: "Things as a Doctor Sees Them," Dr. MARJORIE WILSON, M.D.

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, 21st March, 7 p.m.: "Bread and Peace," Mr. ROY WALKER (Secretary, London Vegetarian Society).

Glasgow Secular Society (McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: A Lecture.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: "An Evening with the Gods," Mr. R. H. ROSETTI (President, N.S.S.).

Lewisham Branch N.S.S. (Hope Hotel, 73, Loampit Vale, S.E.).—Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: "Ancient Rome and Modern America," Mr. F. A. RIDLEY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (International Club, 64, George Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: A Lecture.

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: "The Vatican in World Politics," Mr. AVRO MANHATTAN.

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

West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: "Blood Transfusions and Diseases," Dr. STARK MURRAY, B.Sc., M.B.

OUTDOOR

Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: Mr. J. BARKER.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Bombed site, St. Mary's Gate).—Lectures every lunch hour, 1 p.m.: Messrs. E. BILLING and G. WOODCOCK.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, 12 noon: Mr. F. A. RIDLEY.

Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barkers Pool).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. A. SAMMS.

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