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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Missionaries in Africa

THE Christian religion, along with Buddhism and Islam, belongs to the category of cosmopolitan religions, which depend for their expansion upon missionary propaganda. However, it is generally known that the evangelical propaganda has rarely relied solely upon what is quaintly called "the sweet reasonableness of the Gospel." In fact in an elder age, in the good old times when Christendom really was what the name implied, conversion with the aid of naked force seems to have been the rule rather than the exception.

There was, of course, the classic case of the great Christian Emperor, Charlemagne, who used invariably to give his Pagan captives the immediate alternative of baptism or execution, both on the spot. Whilst the fiendish practice of the Spanish conquerors of America who baptised the Indian babies before murdering them, was actually justified on the usual plea of the theologians that "eternal life" is of infinitely greater consequence than a brief sojourn in the "vale of tears," and we may concede that a "vale of tears" it would have indeed been for the wretched Indian serfs of their Christian conquerors.

The "Age of Faith" is long past, and Christianity now claims to have discarded the barbarous practices of its medieval past, and to rely upon the inherent force of its own propaganda. None the less, there are parts of the world where missionaries still rely on force and upon political intrigue to further the "spiritual" aims of the Gospel. The open support given by the Italian Hierarchy to Mussolini's barbarous war against Ethiopia (Abyssinia) is a case in point.

To force the heretical Abyssinian Church into the arms of the Vatican at the bayonet's point, was, so cardinals and bishops loudly proclaimed, an act that redounded to the "greater glory of God." Of a similar character is the present demand of members of the Catholic hierarchy for "preventive" Atomic war against Russia, which will destroy its present "infidel" regime and will reintegrate the present land of "atheistic Bolshevism" into the fold of Christian civilisation by the time-honoured agency of a Crusade. Such examples indicate that the spirit which animated Charlemagne and the medieval crusaders is still far from dead.

The modern age, however, is not medieval and missionaries who desire to avail themselves of the services of the "secular arm," have, to-day, to employ more indirect methods, and have to ally themselves with Christian Powers which pursue aims that are far from being purely religious in character, for our age is an era of secular and not of ostensibly religious Imperialism. Very often in modern times, missionaries have sought to gain influence in Pagan lands by allying themselves with competing imperialistic groups out to conquer and exploit colonial lands for their own secular ends. The missionaries lend themselves to these unprincipled

ambitions and thereby win souls for Christ, not to mention wealth and power for themselves.

A classic example of such spiritual double-dealing, one that eventually recoiled with a vengeance upon its Christian promoters, was the attempt made by the Jesuits in the early seventeenth century to acquire a dominant position in Japan with, for the evidence seems overwhelming, the ultimate object of paving the way for an eventual Spanish conquest. This would have won Japan for Christ and given the natives the choice between Christianity and death as in the Americas. The Japanese however, woke up to the danger in time and the Christians, including the missionaries themselves, were literally exterminated. At the conclusion of the persecution, no Christians were left in Japan, and monetary rewards of varying value for the heads of, respectively, the King of Spain, the Pope, and Jesus Christ himself were posted up in every Japanese town. In Siam, a similar plot of French Jesuits miscarried with equally disastrous results.

But not all missionary intrigues have ended in such a crushing debacle. An African publicist has recently reminded us that in his native land "first came the missionary cadres with the Bible and the Cross, followed by the traders with gin and Lancashire cotton goods, and finally, the plume-helmeted pro-Consuls, backed by the armed forces of the annexing power."

That the European subjugation and exploitation of Africa has been largely achieved by the effective combination of this unholy trinity, is charged by the author of a new book: *In Africa—Britain's Third Empire*, George Padmore, the eminent Negro publicist gives some startling examples from African history in order to substantiate his exposure of the part played by missionary political intrigue in what this well-known spokesman of rising African Nationalism regards as the modern spoliation of his native land.

One of the most revealing and diverting chapters in Mr. Padmore's book describes the leading role played by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries in effecting the conquest of the Central African Negro Kingdom of Uganda at the end of the last century. As one does not often get the opportunity of quoting such a devastating exposure of the actual workings of Christianity in colonial lands from the pen of one of its victims, we quote at some length.

Having described the arrival of both French and Catholic missionaries in Uganda about 1877, our historian continues:—

No sooner had these European "Soldiers of Christ" arrived than there were set afoot some of the most scandalous episodes in the history of Christianity outside Europe. Religious persecution reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition, civil wars and revolutions against an African king were all promoted by these men of Holy Orders in the service of trade and commerce.

The Protestants, who were bent on winning over Mutesa (the then king) to their particular brand of Christianity in order to pave the way for their British Imperialist masters, banded their converts into a party called *Ba-Ingleza* (the English). The Catholics, equally deter-

mined to gain the country for French Imperialism, organised their African converts into *Ba-Fransa* (the French). Between these two sets of Christians active war broke out, ostensibly for the soul of the King, but in reality for his country.

Our author then goes on to describe the bloody civil war, ending in foreign intervention by the British Imperialists in support of the Protestants who put an end to the independence of the country under conditions which, we hope, few people would try to justify to-day.

Soon the missionaries began to quarrel over the spoils. Each party wanted to dominate. The Protestants disliked the idea of the King being converted to Catholicism, and the Catholics resented the economic control which the Protestants were exercising over the country. . . . Religious civil war ensued between them, and since the Protestant missionaries were British subjects and the Catholics largely French from Algeria, the struggle quickly took on the character of war between British and French Imperialist interests. Taking advantage of this rift between the Christian forces, the Muslim Party, *Ba-Islamu*, joined with *Ba-Fransa* against *Ba-Ingleza*. The followers of Rome and Mecca soon had the better of the fighting. Their followers were armed by an Irish-Catholic gun-runner, Charles Stokes, who was later caught in the Belgian Congo and hanged. When things were going very badly for the Protestants, they appealed for help to the Imperial British East Africa Company.

As a result of this colonial exhibition of Christian brotherly love, Uganda lost its independence. The African explorer, H. M. Stanley, of "Doctor Livingstone I presume" fame, first invited the missionaries to Uganda. Stanley also once went on record with the historic declaration that the newly-invented maxim gun was "a splendid instrument for spreading Christianity and civilisation amongst the heathen races of Africa." The facts narrated in Mr. Padmore's book certainly appear to justify this claim.

F. A. RIDLEY.

THE PIONEER OF OLD AGE PENSIONS

THOMAS PAINE lived in stirring times. During his 72 years' life, there were revolutions not only in opinion and industry; the struggle between France and Britain for supremacy in India and North America; the later declaration of American Independence by the 13 New England colonies, with its sequel, the great upheaval in France in 1789. The eighteenth century was also the period of statesmen such as Chatham and Walpole, while science and philosophy were represented by men as illustrious as Cavendish, Priestley and Hume, and the greatest modern historian, Gibbon, composed his immortal work, the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Nor must Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* be unremembered, while in France, a brilliant galaxy of men of science and letters distinguished the era in which they dwelt. There was also the religious revival in England and America with Wesley and Whitefield as its leading representatives. All these phenomena influenced Paine when writing his optimistic *Rights of Man* and his later manifesto of Deistic democracy, *The Age of Reason*.

After an adventurous career, Carlyle's "rebellious needleman"—for Paine was a staymaker by trade—landed in America in 1774. In a pseudonymous article in 1775, Paine declared his conviction "that the Almighty will finally separate America from Britain." This contention was the dominant note in his celebrated pamphlet *Common Sense*, which appeared in 1776. As the Rev. Norman Sykes avers in his survey of Paine in *Social and Political Ideas of the Revolutionary Era* (Harrap, 1931): "The purpose of this public profession

of political faith was to sound a resounding call to the American people to fight for independence; its circulation was estimated at half a million copies, and it was followed on 4th July by the Declaration of Independence by the united provinces." This influential pamphlet was succeeded by further publications which insisted, amid all the uncertainties of war, during America's conflict with the mother country, that through complete independence only could America's liberty be ensured.

During the war, Paine served as penman, soldier and public official and when the New England Republic was established, Paine's invaluable services were rewarded by the grant of a dwelling-place, estate and revenue, by the Administration. But a man of Paine's tireless temperament soon wearied of retirement and he soon returned to Europe to spread his evangel there. He met Jefferson, the American ambassador, in Paris and saw the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 and, in company with progressives generally, he welcomed the opening stages of the upheaval with joy.

But in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke denounced the downfall of the old régime as utterly iniquitous. Paine replied with his *Rights of Man* which was widely read both in France and Britain. The later excesses of the Revolution, however, scared many of its earlier admirers, and insensate mobs, encouraged by the clergy and others, burnt Paine in effigy and destroyed Priestley's dwelling, books and scientific appliances. Then the English Cabinet instituted proceedings against Paine which led to his flight to France where, despite sinister developments, he strove to establish a system of democratic republicanism similar to that of the United States.

In Paris, the Convention voted for the execution of Louis XVI, but Paine and other members formed a minority who were opposed to regicide and bloodshed. Although he had been elected to the Convention by four departments, to the extremists Paine now became suspect. As Sykes notes: "He ceased to attend the meetings of the Convention . . . and devoted himself to the composition of *The Age of Reason*, designed as a constructive essay to preserve the essentials of religion, theology and morals, from the subversion in the confusion which followed the proscription of Roman Catholicism in France." But Paine's absence was very adversely viewed and he was arrested and imprisoned in 1793. Many of his fellow prisoners were executed and Paine narrowly escaped their fate, when, with the fall of Robespierre, the American Ambassador in France obtained his release.

Paine remained in Paris until all his cherished illusions were shattered by the rise of Napoleon and his subsequent Concordat with the Papacy. He then sailed to America with the confession that France "is not a country for an honest man to live in; they do not understand anything at all of the principles of free government . . . I know of no republic in the world except America." Yet, on his return to the States, he found that the earlier enthusiasm for free institutions was markedly diminished and, indeed, that the principles of the Revolution were expiring.

While much of Paine's work was destructive, its constructive contributions are outstanding. He foresaw coming events far more clearly than any of his contemporaries. Granted that many of Paine's political principles were those of his period, but as Norman Sykes observes: "Upon his readers who are possessed of the advantage of a knowledge of the history of nineteenth century England, there must rest the obligation

A LEGEND OF JOB
(Supplementary to Holy Writ)

SOME years ago, Colonel Cox, the well-known traveller, in the course of a journey across the Arabian Desert, found a heap of stones that appeared to him to be the ruins of an ancient building, and after some digging he found a pot which, to his delight, contained some ancient parchments.

On his return to England with his find, he looked up his friend, Professor Parker Knowall, reader in Ancient Semitic Languages to the University of Oxford, who undertook to examine and translate the parchments for the benefit of those interested in antiquities.

The professor finally succeeded in his task, and prepared for publication these documents, which proved to be in an ancient semitic language allied to Assyrian and Hebrew.

The professor's translation, a somewhat polysyllabic text, with long footnotes discussing the meanings of words, plentifully strewn with cuniform, Hebrew, and other semitic syllabaries, cannot yet be published owing to a blockbuster having destroyed the only printing works that possessed some of the rarer syllabaries, but he has consented to the publication of this one, which I have re-written in English more familiar to ordinary persons, and in harmony with Biblical rather than modern American phraseology.

This will interest all who are Bible students, as it is concerned with an episode in the life of the Patriarch Job, in his later years:—

And it came to pass that when Job, having been delivered from his misfortunes, was one day sitting outside his tent, there came a travelling merchant, with camels laden with merchandise, and Job greeted him, saying, "Tarry awhile, and eat bread with me, and make me acquainted with thy news before going thy way. I have suffered many tribulations, but by the Lord's mercy I have been delivered, and have gotten many gifts and pieces of money, which I would gladly exchange for some of thy merchandise."

And the merchant did eat of Job's bread, and afterwards displayed his merchandise before him. Many articles he showed to make glad the hearts of women: silks, brocades and fine linen, and also were shewn pots of precious ointments.

And Job did choose of these, a horn of eye paint to make beautiful the eyes of women, as a gift for his wife.

This horn was of the length of a man's finger, but thicker withal, and that night Job did give the horn of eyepaint to his wife, saying take this horn of eyepaint for it will, by its shape, remind thee of my love for thee, my wife!

And in due course his wife again conceived and bare a woman child; and she said to Job, "What name shall we give this child?" and Job answered and said, "Her name shall be Keren Lappuch, for did she not come from that which is like unto the horn of precious eyepaint I did give you after the merchant ate bread with us, and I did buy the horn of eyepaint from him with pieces of gold.

This narrative refers to Job 42. 14, and it would appear that the erudite scholar, the late Rev. T. K. Cheyne, who proposed the translation of Keren Lappuch should be "Scent of Apples," must be in error.

Readers will find this reference in that scholar's book, *Fresh Voyages on Unfrequented Waters* (A. and C. Black) a work not unlike that previously mentioned (by Professor Parker Knowall), in the frequent use made of square Hebrew in the text of the book. M. BAKER.

tion gratefully to differentiate and acknowledge the element in his thought which has borne fruit after his death."

Paine protested against official squandering of public money, and the salaries of public servants should be restricted; the poor rate swept away and a grant made of 4 million sterling for the benefit of the poverty-stricken. "This sum was to be disbursed in the form of family allowances at the rate of £4 per year for each child, and old age pensions, beginning at the age of 50 and increasing in amount after the age of 60." Poor parents were to be provided with educational facilities for their children; assistance made available to the temporary unemployed; while the loss to the Exchequer through the abolition of the window tax could be recovered by a graduated tax on landed estate. Moreover, the expenses of the Army and Navy could be substantially reduced by guarantees of peace between the then leading nations of the world, while free commercial intercourse would tend to lessen rivalry and antagonism between competing industrial communities.

These proposals appeared visionary, if not revolutionary, to Paine's contemporaries. That the State should provide for the indigent adult, as well as poor children, seemed to have as much touch with reality as a madman's dream. Still, Paine insisted that his advocacy of old age pensions to be provided by those who needed no support, must not be regarded "as a matter of grace and favour, but as a right." These and other startling Radical suggestions were followed by Paine's *The Age of Reason*, which inflamed the passions of the pious, as well as the politically minded. As our historian notes, it needed only "the sequel of *The Age of Reason* to convert the revolutionary into an Atheist, according to the opinion of the vulgar and to earn for him a discredit which the lapse of more than a century has scarcely succeeded in modifying."

The Rev. Norman Sykes is a discriminating and broad minded scholar whose appreciation of Paine deserves wider publicity than it has yet been given. He notes that: "The correspondence between many of the guesses of *The Age of Reason* and the agreed conclusions of modern critical Biblical scholarship is surprising. Nor have the general lines of his negative criticism failed to find secure acceptance by Christian apologists. The predictive character of Old Testament prophecy is no longer stressed; miracles rarely form the bulwark of apologetic defences of Christianity."

Again, our author declares that: "In regard to Paine himself, it is impossible to withhold admiration for his sincerity, his endurance and his unfaltering belief in the goodness of humanity. He was the prophet of democracy and deism, and he fulfilled his apostolate with abundance of journeyings, perils and discomforts. To the end he remained a knight errant." Truly, among the many heroes and benefactors of mankind, the name and fame of Thomas Paine must ever be inscribed.

T. F. PALMER.

The exceptional benefits of a thorough religious education were proven up to the hilt in the case of Miss Jean Hitchcock recently. She was fined and bound over for three years for assaulting a neighbour. Tired and hungry, she was later found in a shed. Her father appears to be completely surprised at her conduct, for he told reporters that "she has never been in trouble before, and rarely goes out except to Church every Sunday." We do not think that her case will be enthusiastically received by opponents of Secular Education.

ACID DROPS

The Vicar of St. Barnabas, who will in the future preach in a darkened church to help his congregation concentrate on his sermon, seems to think the idea revolutionary. He has forgotten that the Christian has always been in the dark where his religion is concerned. How many church-goers really understand religion? Even the most prosperous era of Christianity has been dubbed the "Dark Ages." The current drift from the Churches is far too great to be stemmed by any such stunts; the spotlight of reason has been focused too long on the Christian pantomime, and people no longer are satisfied to be kept in the dark.

There are very few (if any), of the famous names in history of Christianity who can be considered as having a sense of humour, even Jesus himself was not exactly noted for His bonhomie, and we have never seen any reference to His Mum ever engaging in fun and games. However, his present-day followers break out now and again in unconscious humour, as did the Rev. W. Westall when he preached on the "Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin" to a Mother's Union. Is not the idea of Jesus in nappies (or their Palestinian equivalent) funny?

It looks as if the American faith-healing racket has been switched to Sweden, but Mr. W. Freeman is not having such an easy time in Stockholm, for despite his assertion that seven years ago, angels visited him and conferred upon him the power of healing, the Swedish authorities have forbidden him to treat people suffering from cancer or T.B. The joke of the whole affair, if indeed there can be a funny side to this trading on people's credulity, is that when reporters called on Mr. Freeman, they were informed that "Brother William" was too ill to see them!

Anybody in search of a soul can find its habitation at the Berkeley Galleries, in Davies Street, London. It appears that souls inhabit "Churingas" which are sacred tablets of wood or stone and which are hidden in the clefts of trees among the wild tribes in Australia. Souls in search of something to live in spot these tablets—and there you are! We are quite sure that any decent Churinga will have a soul as much as any human being—though no doubt our Archbishops will angrily dispute this.

Mr. R. W. Casasola, the defeated Labour candidate in the recent Moss Side election, was quite ready to give Roman Catholic schools "a fair deal" as he called it. With the help of three other Manchester Labour M.P.s, he was going to introduce, if elected, a private member's Bill "to ease the burden on Catholic schools"—which meant, of course, that he was going to do his best to perpetuate the religious teaching of the Vatican in England at the expense of the vast number of Protestants and unbelievers, and that the State would not be allowed to have any say whatever in the conduct of the school. Mr. Casalola will now have leisure to consider the merits of Secular Education unless he is very religious himself.

Eleven thousand Japanese became Catholics in 1949. At this rate, we leave it to mathematicians to calculate how long it will take to convert the 100 million there are of Japanese—and to religious moralists, whether the converts will be worth having.

An Edinburgh Church Elder and Sunday School superintendent, was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for embezzling £500 which he admitted he had "spent on drink." His parson, in a letter testifying to his good character, said "his downfall was entirely due to drink." Such profundity leaves us gasping and our comments on Noah are stillborn.

Jesus Christ, so we are told, started his career as a tramp and founded one of the world's great religions, but he died unblessed with this world's goods. His followers are much more successful: as for instance, Harold P. Nicholson, who, reports the *Sunday Dispatch*, started his religious life as a waiter "curing waitresses' headaches" by faithhealing, in a small chapel with a capital of £4. To-day, he styles himself Archbishop of the Ancient Catholic Church and performs in a "Cathedral," valued at £51,000, and has ambitions to start a chain of cathedrals, with the "help of God"—plus a few hysterical, emotional, rich old women. Verily, the pupil has outstripped his Master and one who is not going to await his reward in heaven.

The Aga Khan wants Islam and Christianity "to draw closer together in mutual respect," which shows that he must know little of the historical side of the two religions when both had power and were so thoroughly believed in. In sober fact, they both hated and despised each other, and Catholics would even now love to make the victory of Lepanto a world national holiday, for it saved Roman Catholicism from conquest by Islam once for all. Does the Aga Khan really know how terrific is the hatred engendered by true religion?

It is too early to say whether the "Holy Year" will be a pious flop, but so far Italy has not raked in either the pilgrims or, what is more important, the shekels in anything like the numbers required. One British journalist claims that it is suffering from a confusion between tourism and pilgrimage—but surely this Holy Year was really never meant to be anything else but a sort of Fortunatus purse from which all classes in Italy could benefit? Are we expected to believe that millions of poor pilgrims, most of them without money, would be welcomed?

According to the Rev. W. H. Elliott, faith is not a part-time job." It demands "whole-hearted loyalty, and the reward is "unlimited powers." Whether the rev. gentleman actually believes this we do not know—for certain—but he insists also that Faith "assures us of the presence with us and in us of a living Christ—guide us and to guard." That this kind of balderdash can be swallowed by millions of people is a sad commentary on their intelligence.

The collections from Lanark's Sunday school averaged only one penny per child, and the Rev. Frame doesn't like it, "a penny in the plate is obsolete and should be increased," he complains. Children may think that a penny is all that Sunday school is worth, but trust a parson to squeal as soon as his pocket is touched.

THINGS WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW—

The Pope was treated with a new anti-rheumatism drug called "Pan." What's wrong with a dip Lourdes?

"THE FREETHINKER"

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

We greatly regret if anything in the articles by Mr. H. Cutner on Dr. Worrall's *Energy and Matter* should give the impression that the author has any connection with the Communist Party. Dr. Worrall wishes us to make quite clear that he has no connection with any political organisation, and that it cannot be too strongly urged that *Energy and Matter* is written entirely from a scientific and philosophical point of view.

A. G. BEDANE.—Thanks, we have noted articles by Maritain and Hoyle in *The Listener*.

D.L.W.—Cuttings received. Religious education in schools does not make for better citizens.

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

Birmingham readers should not miss the opportunity of hearing Mr. J. T. Brighton who lectures for the local N.S.S. Branch in Sati's Café, 40, Cannon Street, off New Street, at 7 p.m. this evening (26th March), on "Man, Mind, and Muddle." Mr. Brighton has point, humour, and personality in his lectures, and is always worth listening to.

The Archbishop of York in his book, *Church and the State in England*, deals with the many problems which face the Church in its relation to the State in the past, and which face it now, and appears to be rather hazy in finding a solution. At the moment, it seems that the Church is controlled by Parliament, and many of its members, we know, are unbelievers even if they do take the oath. Should the Church be disestablished? Should it insist on having a big hand in temporal affairs? Should it swallow the smaller Churches? These and many other questions have to be answered if the Church is to survive; but the one we should like to pose is—is it necessary for the Church to survive at all? How many of its Bishops really believe in its primitive Oriental doctrines?

The Archbishop admits that the record of the bishops in the House of Lords is unsatisfactory. This is rather an understatement, for the record is worse as will be plain to anyone taking the trouble to look up their reactionary measures and opposition to all progressive steps. The Archbishop also admits that the Church of England has been for centuries the "handmaiden of the Tory Party," or as another has so succinctly put it, "the Church of England is the Tory Party at prayer." This leaves us with the Nonconformists as the Liberal Party in a Bethel, with the remaining Party holding High Mass at Transport House.

A POET OF FREETHOUGHT

FOR nearly a quarter of a century—to be precise, since 1927—discerning readers of this journal will have enjoyed the work of Bayard Simmons. Modest and unassuming, he has given us of his best, never sacrificing either his artistic integrity or his message for Freethought.

Of the many writers who have put their talent to the service of the cause, Bayard Simmons, except to a small intimate circle, must be one of the least personally known. Yet he has played a big part, not only for Freethought, but for other movements and never more notably than during those stirring days when women fought so heroically and often so tragically for the vote. He marched with them, sang with them, suffered with them—and is ever remembered gratefully by them since victory crowned their world-famous struggle.

But poetry for him was, as it was for Edgar Allan Poe, always a passion, and it must have often caused a shock to many of our opponents to find in these columns a poetic gem, polished with consummate artistry, enshrining a lesson or some valuable thought—something which it was hard to believe a cold, flint-hearted Materialist could ever enjoy. We are always being solemnly lectured that Atheism is bound to destroy any love of the Arts—a piece of insolent nonsense. In any case, our appreciation of the work of Bayard Simmons is sufficient to give the lie to that.

His three slender volumes, *Minerva's Owl*, *The Pagoda of Untroubled Ease*, and *Fanfare for Freethought*, contain some of his finest work—not all, for quite a number of his poems unpublished in book form, have appeared in these columns—like "The Witch." His passion for artistic form and the magic of words leap to one's eye in an instant. Bayard Simmons obviously loves to experiment, especially with Ballades, Kyrielles, Rondeaux, Villanelles, and Triolets. These, together with his Sonnets and Lyrics, prove him to be a master of metre, and a worthy successor to those other masters of light verse—Herrick, Austin Dobson, Prior, Praed, and many others who have graced English literature with what Frederick Locker-Lampson called *Lyra Elegantiarum*. But beyond all, however, much he has striven to perfect his poetry, however much he has insisted on artistic integrity, Bayard Simmons often had a flaming message. Liberty of thought and speech, and hatred of cruelty in every form he taught and sung, and there must be few readers who have not felt his passionate advocacy.

In this number of *The Freethinker* is the 150th poem he has contributed for our delight. It honours the poet and the journal. And those of us who love poetry are profoundly grateful to Bayard Simmons for keeping alive in its controversial columns something of what, for a better term, we can call the divine spark—in the beauty and music of our language.

Yet more than that too. Written in 1934, "A Neuvain for the Sleepers" should be learnt by heart by all who love liberty. Never was it more applicable than to-day.

The free must fight or freedom die;
Writ plain the warning comes to all,
But few men hear Cassandra's cry.

Reaction soon on us will fall;
The free must fight or freedom die.
Awake! and heed the watchman's call.

The hour of peril draweth nigh;
Read, as upon Belshazzar's wall,
The free must fight or freedom die.

H. CUTNER.

MATERIALISM IN HISTORY

SOME readers of this journal want definition, etymology and historical justification of materialism. But if definition calls for doctrinal assurance, most of the confusion arises here. Historically, there is no doctrine of materialism, and the concept "matter" has seen many changes; etymologically, it may signify substance, as in *materia medica*, but is also connected with "mathesis" which was "learning, especially knowledge of mathematics," so confusing learning with teaching. In saying "nothing happens by chance but of necessity" Democritus founded no school; and F. A. Lange said he was not recognised in Athens, being averse to argument, saying "he who is fond of contradictions and makes many words is incapable of learning anything right."

Most of what we know of this famous Sceptic comes from those who quote him in order to refute him. It is clear that materialism arises in scepticism, not dogmatism. In opinion there is always a doubt, how then can we be sure? To Democritus surety lies in learning "mathematical demonstration" as he did in Egypt. "Only in opinion consists sweetness, bitterness, warmth, cold, colour; in truth there is nothing but atoms and empty space." This was the beginning of "mathesis" that leads up to the "immaterialism" of modern science, and if Democritus is credited with "atoms" he was also, as E. B. Tyler said, the originator of "ideas" in a theory of vision, which was expanded in Plato's Idealism.

Confusion starts with Plato's "Socratic Question" calling for definition; and with Aristotle's distinction of form and substance, Archimedes' mechanics was overshadowed by Epicurean and Stoic ethics and rhetoric; and with Christian dualism of body and soul, matter came to be identified with the lusts of the flesh. To Augustine or Aquinas there was no question of mathematics or of science, but of "perfection" in dialectic opposition of good and evil, with matter as the substance of "corruption." In consideration of form and content, with Scholastic "qualities" or "faculties," materialism was smothered in the art of "putting the question" and with inquisitorial interrogation supporting theological dogma.

But science did not stand still. With "Arabic numerals" and algebra, mathematics again came in with Descartes' analytical geometry. But his "first matter" was not atomic but extension in space; in a World designed by God the Mathematician and sustained by His "General Concourse." Some philosophers, such as Malebranche, identified this ether of space with God, but with Galileo's law of falling bodies and Newton's laws of motion and of gravitation, we are no longer concerned with "matter" as substance, the matter of dynamics is "force," conceived in the terms of energy and inertia, as measurable quantities in calculation of motion. As Leibnitz said, God was turned out of his His own Universe.

The atoms were revived by Dalton as a numerical classification in chemistry. But just as Newton, with his calculus, adapted Gilbert's magnetic "mass" and "attraction," so has this atomic theory been modified in consideration of electro-magnetic radiation. Even the idea of electron structure of the atom clashes with Maxwell's field theory, and with the quantum and indeterminacy, atoms or electrons become, to Shroedinger, "waves of probability." And Einstein, with Riemann's geometry, and the speed of light as absolute motion, explains gravitation in a space-time

continuum, without any "forces." It seems clear we are not concerned with a "matter" of substance but a matter of calculation.

With William of Occam's "nominalism," Roger Bacon's "experiment" and Galileo's "demonstration," the influence of science is seen in Spinoza's pantheistic Naturalism, and in the dynamic power of Hobbes' Leviathan. Newton's "scientific empiricism" appears in the criticism of Berkeley's metaphysical Idealism by David Hume in his empirical Materialism. Following Descartes' dualism, a mechanistic anti-clericalism arose in revolutionary France, as with d'Holbach and Lamettrie. In this we see the influence of, in a reaction against, theological dogma. In the "System of Nature" and in "Man a Machine" living things and men are "material" to the exclusion of the soul; as with Laplace, God is excluded in his nebula hypothesis.

There was a reverse of this tendency in Germany following Kant, with moral and political concern, as with Fichte and Hegel, involving the idea of evolutionary change, which is also seen with the Darwinian, Huxley, Spencer, and the Monist, Haeckel, while a psychological approach is seen with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. With Karl Marx adapting Hegel's historic dialectic, we have the ideology of historic or dialectic materialism. In the transformation of "quantity" into "quality" we are no longer concerned with dead matter but with living matter; life or consciousness are functions of "highly organised" matter, or "reflections of conditions," whichever one chooses to accept. So again we have a different concept of "matter."

It seems clear that, just as science can accept any theory, so can materialism accept any concept of "matter," with the etymological connection with mathematical demonstration. Apart from its many vicissitudes, even in physical science, "matter" seems to have been a matter of opinion even with materialists. If it began as a matter of opinion to the Sceptic, it became a matter of doctrine to the Christian. With accepted authority or Ultimate Authority, in the intricacies of philosophy or theology, it has been an obsession with the body and soul doctrine. But without a doubt old Democritus would have said this was only opinion. And only with the acceptance of some such authority can mechanistic or historic materialism be anything more than opinion.

The argument against "doubt," in need of doctrinal assurance, came from Augustine's "City of God," that for "existence" comes from Aquinas's "necessary being." Concern for the "outside world" comes from Bishop Berkeley; and that for life and consciousness, and if these are properties of matter or can be conceived in physical or chemical terms, is metaphysical fancy. But what has this nonsense to do with materialism? To reject one doctrine is not to set up another. One does not learn by accepting doctrines, and one does not have to accept either the mechanistic or the dialectic doctrines to be a materialist. But whose life, whose consciousness, and whose opinion is it that matters?

H. H. PREECE.

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE WATCH STORY.

Sir,—Scratch an Atheist, and you find a Plymouth Brother. When the Watch Story revives, the laugh is always against the Atheists; for when they indignantly deny that Bradlaugh ever took out his watch and challenged God to strike him dead in five minutes for denying His existence, they mean that so great a man could not do such a horribly wicked thing, which is just as a Jehovah's Witness would put it.

If Bradlaugh did not do it he ought to have done it, as it is the short and entirely proper and practical way of determining, not whether God exists or not, but whether, if He does, He is a savagely violent and vindictive idol like Blake's Nobodaddy.

Years ago I told in print how I was present at a doctor's bachelor party when the watch story cropped up and started the old protests that it is a wicked and shocking falsehood. I said it was, on the contrary, a legitimate experiment, and that if Bradlaugh had omitted to try it, I would do so myself. And I took out my watch.

An amazing ballyhoo ensued. The whole company, Free-thinkers, Evangelists and all, were so terrified lest the threatened thunderbolt should consume them as well as me, that our host begged me to withdraw my awful challenge, or at least put up my watch and change the subject. This, I of course I did; but none the less, apprehension reigned until five minutes had expired.

Such challenges are quite common. In England a lie is emphasised by "Lord strike me dead if I am not telling the truth." In Ireland the formula is "Hell to my soul, but I, etc."

Genuine Freethinkers do not trouble about such nonsense.—Yours, etc.,

G. BERNARD SHAW.

Sir,—In any book that glances over a man's life, a certain amount of "Dichtung" is likely to get mixed up with the "Wahrheit."

Apparently I have, in my "second innings," offended you by dragging into the light again "the Watch Story," and applying it to G. W. Foote. I still hold a vivid impression of him standing on the platform in the Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester, holding a watch in his hand; but after a close interrogation of myself, I am ready to confess that he might have been making a mock of the "hoary old lie," as you call it.

But why do Freethinkers in general allow themselves to get so hot whenever this tale is told? They work themselves into most virtuous attitudes, as though aghast at the very idea of such blasphemy from an Ingersoll, a Bradlaugh! Anybody, indeed, might well imagine that Freethinkers in bulk begin to confuse Ingersoll and Bradlaugh with Dr. Parker and Mr. Gladstone the moment the "Watch" story resumes its eternally recurrent rounds.

In a note on the passage in question in my book, "J.S." concludes: "We are willing to place the columns of *The Freethinker* at the disposal of Mr. Neville Cardus, although we suspect he will not take advantage of our offer either to substantiate his assertion, or withdraw it."

But why did "J.S." suspect any such thing?—Yours, etc.,

NEVILLE CARDUS.

J. S. writes: "I certainly never thought Mr. Cardus would take advantage of our columns to deny or substantiate his 'Watch Story': how could it possibly be substantiated when we know that G. W. Foote exposed it time after time; was he likely to do the same thing himself? Incidentally, to plead that *Dichtung* may get mixed up with *Wahrheit* is really too naive and not worthy of Mr. Cardus. Surely his concern should have been for *Wahrheitsliebe*? In any case Mr. Cardus' vivid impression is not now quite so vivid since it was challenged."

And we do not 'get so hot' when the hoary old lie is revived. Indeed, most of us would gladly test the Lord in this way—as a joke. But the story crops up, not as a joke at all—but as an attack on Southwell, Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, Foote, or whoever it is fastened to. It is used to hold up Free-thought and Freethinkers to ridicule by the higher-minded Christian, and to show how much superior Christianity is to blasphemous infidelity. [We are astonished to find Mr. Cardus thus perpetuating an out-worn superstition at the expense of Freethought.]

NOT A COMMUNIST.

Sir,—I wish to place on record my denial that I am in any way associated with the Communist Party. I affirm that I have never at any time been associated with this Party, and moreover regard the British Communist Party as little better than Moscow "yes men and women."

I do not doubt that the Russian form of Communism suits the Russian people, but I do deny that it would suit the British people.

Whoever asserts that I have stated that I was considering joining the Communist Party is quite mistaken, as I have no such intention.—Yours, etc.,

E. W. SHAW.

OBITUARY

WILLIAM ROBERT ANGELL

In the Cambridge Crematorium on Tuesday, March 14, the remains of William Robert Angell of Hunstanton were cremated in accordance with his wish. A member of The National Secular Society for twenty years, and a reader of *The Freethinker*, he was one of the most loyal and sincere friends of the movement. Strong in character, he saw straight, thought straight, and talked straight, with no time for the twists so common in public life to-day. When he felt his end was approaching he dictated the following statement: "To all my friends in Hunstanton and neighbourhood: I cannot bother to think about anything further, but I would like to say that I have lived to just on 82 years of age and consider I am proud of the life and happy times I have had. I shall die as I have lived so many years—an Atheist."

A Secular Service was read by the General Secretary, N.S.S. R.H.R.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: "Christopher Marlowe and Dr. Faustus," Mr. J. GREENALD.

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Sati's Cafe, 40, Cannon Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: "Man, Mind and Muddle," Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON (Vice-President N.S.S.).

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Tuesday, March 28, 7 p.m.: "Problems of Coloured Peoples," Dr. M. JOSEPH MITCHELL (Secretary, League of Coloured Peoples).

Irish Rationalist Society (The Four Courts Hotel, Dublin).—Sunday, 7.15 p.m.: "Why Religious Education should be abolished in State Schools," Mr. EDMOND LAWASL.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: "Sabbath Dictatorship," Mr. G. L. COLEBROOKE.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (International Club, 64, George Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Annual General Meeting.

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: "The Shadow across the World — Atomic Energy," Mr. JOHN McNAIR (I.L.P.).

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "The Place of Science in Ethics," Prof. J. BRONOWSKI, M.A., Ph.D.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: Debate: "Is the Labour Party sound in its attitude to Religion?" Pro, Mr. E. PAGE. Contra, Mr. E. W. SHAW.

West Ham Branch N.S.S. (Loco. Men's Institute, 62, Forest Lane, Stratford, E.15).—Tuesday, March 28, 8 p.m.: A meeting.

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. G. WOODCOCK and C. McCALL.

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

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

APE INTO ESSENCE

EVOLUTION is no longer news. The bitter struggles of the last century have given place, in the main, to a general acceptance of the theory. With the exception of curious organisations like the Evolution Protest Society, the Church, limping as ever painfully and protestingly in the wake of human progress, is in agreement, and by cautious sophistry now allows the possibility of man's descent from the apes. Aldous Huxley is even bolder. For him the wheel is apparently turning full circle. We are about to return to our simian forefathers. Happily, his querulous prophesy is not likely to be fulfilled, for however gloomy the horizon, man's achievement remains greater than that of other animals, and the hydrogen bomb notwithstanding, I am inclined to the view that although at the end of an epoch, it is well within the potential of mankind to go forward into a happy future, where reason rather than an unquestioning acceptance of dogma, and murmuring of shibboleths will be a guide not only to conduct, but to a rational code of ethics and morals.

It is of course in the story of man's evolution that the greatest hope for the future of mankind lies, and in his new book*, Dr. Broom has a fascinating tale of discovery to tell. As a pedantic record of investigation, or as a sober study, the book is a failure. As the enthralling record of a search that is almost an obsession, the book is an unqualified success. There is something of the freebooter about Dr. Broom. At times he is capable of displaying a disregard for the law that is to say the least, refreshing. "I was quite ready to defy the Historical Monuments Commission and carry on," he writes of disagreement with that body over some trifling absurdity of law. He won his point.

Throughout the book, in spite of a painstaking accuracy in matters scientific, there is a pleasant informality that gives the whole thing a leavening of humanity that is often totally lacking in books of this kind. "Daniel," Dr. Broom's native assistant, is listed in the index, and in the text there is a snatch of his conversation. I mention this because it is an indication that Dr. Broom can occasionally introduce these essentially human touches without detracting in any way from the very considerable value of his book. Chapters 6 and 7, describing the discoveries of the years 1947, 1948 and 1949 deserve close study. We general readers have had too little news of them.

There is, too, an illuminating introductory chapter, that sketches in the background concisely and adequately. Its thirteen pages are a model of compression. The sneer at "Western highbrows" on page eleven might have been omitted, and should be in future editions, but this is too slight a thing to quibble about. Chapter 1, the introduction, is perhaps the best in the book.

Passing from the general background, there is a discussion of the Pekin Man, the Taungs skull, and the ape men of Sterkfontein and Kromdraai. Occasionally the reader is left a little breathless at the speed with which he is rushed along. There is no friendly jolly here, the author is determined to see us through the argument, even if we are too breathless to comment immediately it is over. It is the speed of the enthusiast and certainly not that of the amateur.

Occasionally, Dr. Broom conveys the real thrill of the hunter who finds his quarry; "... the most wonderful

* "Finding the Missing Link," by R. Broom. pp. 104. Watts, 6s. Illustrated.

teeth ever seen in the world's history. These I promptly purchased from Gert and transferred to my pocket. Enthusiasm is delightfully uninhibited, and it is pleasant and unusual to find it in this context. Gert, I should add, was a Dutch lad.

Still, the thought remains, isn't Dr. Broom occasionally guilty of wasting space? There are, it is true, redundant lines here and there, but to cut them out would be to rob this little book of the individuality with which it is stamped, and that would be a poor return for a fact or two more. As a popular presentation of recent developments in archæology, this book could hardly be bettered. Compact, readable, well printed and illustrated, it represents popular science at its best, and in these days of rising costs, reflects great credit upon the publishers.

One point remains. In any scientific work of a popular nature, there should be a short book list. Believing that the best introduction to history is a study of our own times, it appears to me that this volume is an admirable introduction to wider reading on anthropology, and that such a list would be of very real value to the reader who wishes to continue reading along these lines: and that by omitting to do this, the value of the book is limited to drawing attention to recent developments, rather than to stimulating general interest in the subject as well as giving a picture of the contemporary scene. Odd, for I think Dr. Broom would agree with me here: "... Labourers (in the field of anthropology) are very few," he says on page thirteen.

The author would not claim to have said the last word upon the subject of man's evolution, and it is stimulating to realise that at this moment, a further chapter is being written.

VICTOR E. NEUBURG.

ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN

Before this world was, there was war in Heaven
Between two Powers whose strength was almost even;
The army of the Principle of Good
The Devil's forces valiantly withstood;
The combat lasted for some thousand years,
With ups and downs of fortune, hopes and fears,
Until, at length, the Power of Evil won,
And Lucifer sat on the Heavenly Throne.

Now Lucifer has great intelligence,
His victory he organised with sense;
He through the universe made proclamation
That he was God, and threatened with damnation
All who withstood his claim; he called his Rival
Satan, the Devil, and the Prince of Evil.
This done he next created this our world
And over it his banner was unfurled.

The Art of Propaganda is not new
(A truth still grasped by relatively few);
You seize on power, and who shall dare gainsay
That you are Good, that Righteousness holds sway;
The losing side you straightway blacken quite,
And brazenly assert that Black is White;
You know most men in any case are fools,
But to make sure, you feed them lies in schools.

And what became of him who lost the War?
He lives in exile, from his Heaven far;
His still small voice is heard upon occasion
By poets, sages, all with clearer vision:
He seeks our help to climb back to his Heaven,
For good and evil still are fairly even.
The balance may be tipped by one weak hand
And Good restored to Heaven and command.

BAYARD SIMMONS