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## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### Freethought in India

IN the vast sub-continent of India which recently re-entered the world of sovereign states, two important events have occurred. On January 26 the Republic of India was proclaimed, and about the same time organised rationalist and humanist movements first appeared in India.

It is indisputable that the events are of great importance for the future evolution both of Freethought and India. India is, traditionally, the most religious country in the world. For nowhere does the influence of religion appear to be more pervasive. It is problematical whether Hinduism is to be more accurately described as a religion, a racial philosophy, or a social code; in which respect it somewhat resembles Judaism. But religion is an integral part of Hinduism, its Brahmin priesthood derives its power ultimately from religious sanctions, and the caste system itself, perhaps more racial than actually religious in origins, is intertwined at every stage of its existence with ideas derived from religious sources.

To the thoughtful observer, there is nothing particularly surprising in the overwhelming hold of religious notions over the Hindu mind. Racial history and climatic conditions seem to have conspired together to produce this end. From the racial standpoint, the ideas expressed in modern Germany by the "Aryan" theorists, most recently by Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, form the elementary commonplaces of the Brahmin philosophy which has dominated Hinduism and Indian society for the past two thousand years. In this respect, indeed, the Nazi leaders were merely crude imitators of the authors of the caste system, in which "Aryan" blood and racial purity form the distinguishing features of caste. The higher castes of Brahmins, and the warrior caste (Kshatriya) which were the two dominant castes, owe their ascendancy solely to one thing; the purity of their Aryan bloodstream. Whilst the lower mixed-blood castes (Vaisyas and Sudras) owe their inclusion in the system only to their modicum of Aryan blood. The "Untouchables" (impure) non-Aryan (aboriginals) are defiled from birth as members of a conquered and hence congenitally inferior race.

Thus, one of the permanent roots of Hinduism is racial in origin; the Divine Right of Race, we may call it. Hitler, who derived his solar wheel (swastika) from the ancient Brahmanic cult, similarly derived his racist philosophy from Indian sources. But Hinduism, with four thousand years in which to develop since the ancient Aryans first crossed the Khyber Pass, has had time to evolve its racial philosophy into a complexity that its modern German disciples lacked the time to achieve. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler propounded racism as a political philosophy only.

The ancient Brahmins went far beyond this; they taught not only the Divine Right of Race, but its actual

Divine origin. In the laws of Manu, the pseudonymous Brahmin legislator of ancient India, now accepted as canonical by modern Hinduism, the various castes are divinely created with, of course, the Brahmins as, so to speak, God's own caste. No man, however holy, famous or brilliant, can change his caste in this life. But, by a truly masterly touch which would have delighted Macchiavelli, reincarnation may enable the obedient slave of the Brahmins to become a Brahmin himself in his next life. The age-long system of Brahmin ascendancy is based ultimately on a fraudulent system of post-dated and post-mortem cheques.

The fact was that the Brahmins very early realised that truth aptly expressed by a modern politician "you can do anything with bayonets except sit on them." A permanent system of racial oppression cannot continue merely on a basis of sheer force; it requires an ideology in which its subjects believe. The social truth that lies behind the famous dictum "religion is the opium of the people" was obviously well known to the ancient Brahmins who may perhaps be described as the original patentees of spiritual "opium."

However, the Aryan philosophy of racial ascendancy is only one of the permanent roots of Hindu religiosity. The other, equally potent one is to be found, as already Buckle insisted in his famous work, in the overwhelming character of the natural forces before whose capricious ascendancy man is so frequently powerless. In particular, the irregular winds of the monsoon continually threaten India with drought and famine.

A French philosopher, Robert Louzon, has recently made an interesting comparison between the attitude to religion of the two greatest Asiatic nations. The Hindu is the most religious of men because he bows down before and seeks to propitiate natural forces which he cannot control, but which effectively determine his economic existence. Contrarily, the Chinese are the "least religious of mortals" precisely because they are faced with the constant danger of inundation from the overflow of their great rivers against which prayer is useless, but which can be checked by the arduous labour of building dykes. Hence the pragmatic motto of Chinese religious ethics *Laborare est orare*. Actually, Louzon's comparison is insufficient since it ignores the social basis of Hinduism, but it seems to draw attention to an important and neglected aspect of the problem.

The traditional Hindu society thus created by racial policy aided by climatic conditions has proved to possess amazing tenacity and resiliency. It has successively checked and absorbed the atheistic and pantheistic philosophies which have arisen on Indian soil. To-day, one can combine the ritual code of Hinduism with a starkly atheistic philosophy if one so desires, always provided that the social foundation, the caste system, is retained. Thus, any Hindu can be a rationalist as long as he confines his rationalism to theology and does not question the irrational social system of the Brahmin legislators.



Two world-religions have sought in vain to destroy this monolithic Brahmin fortress; Buddhism and Islam. Buddhism, in its origins, apparently a revolt of the warrior caste; to which Gautama Buddha himself belonged, against Brahmin ascendancy, actually displaced Hinduism for several centuries. But the pacifist ethic of Buddhism proved unequal to the essential task of defending India against recurring invasions. This seems to have been the real reason for its failure to maintain itself in its land of origin.

The later invasion of Islam left more permanent traces. It, too, temporarily subjugated India under the Moguls, but unlike Buddhism, it has remained strong enough to partition the sub-continent into India and Pakistan. A cosmopolitan and monotheistic creed, without castes, and which proclaims the equality of all "True Believers" in an equality of slavery to Allah, the ideology of Islam clashes at every point with that of Brahminism. The history of modern India is largely the record of the often bloody conflicts between these rival and utterly irreconcilable ideologies.

It is thus evident that the history of India is primarily the history of racial and religious ideology. Genuine rationalism has not been unknown in the past to the subtle Indian intellect, but the objective factors of race and climate have always been too strong for its effective propagation. A modern industrial society such as is now arising in India will provide it with a potent auxiliary; mankind's mastery over nature, whilst a more scientific sociology has already abolished "untouchability" and is steadily undermining the whole racial-religious ideology of caste. The rise of a humanist rationalism may well prove not less important than its newly-won political independence. For it will both liberate and unite a nation with incalculable mental and material resources which, say, a century hence, will probably be one of the world's greatest and most cultured nations.

F. A. RIDLEY.

## GLORIES OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

THERE are three superb periods in English annals. These were the age of Elizabeth, the Augustan age of the last of the Stuarts, and that of Victoria. This last, if second to the Elizabethan in music and drama, displayed a versatility previously unknown. In imaginative literature and science it excelled all antecedent centuries. Plays were pre-eminent in Shakespeare's day; the Victorian novel occupied a seat of supremacy without precedent. If history produced no Gibbon, it was represented by giants such as Grote, Buckle, Macaulay, Maitland, Froude, Carlyle and Lecky, to name no other illustrious writers. Tennyson, Browning and Swinburne were all splendid masters of prosody, while Meredith's *Modern Love* and Hardy's *Dynasts* rank as first-rate achievements. Pictorial art found great masters in Watts, Millais, Burne Jones and Sargent, while to Ruskin, Turner was the finest landscape painter the world has ever seen, while in science and philosophy, men like Faraday, Darwin, Lyell, and the evolutionary expositor, Herbert Spencer, served to transform the outlook of the intellectual world.

As Lytton Strachey shows in his biography of Queen Victoria, she was a woman of limited views. Still, she possessed "horse sense," and this enabled her to overcome many difficulties when assisted by the advice of a series of shrewd statesmen. Her reign was a time of imperial expansion and, on the whole, the foreign and colonial policy pursued was markedly successful. England

had many advantages in industry and commerce. Dr. G. P. Gooch avers in *Social and Political Ideas of the Victorian Age* (Harrap, 1933) that we inherited both the wheat and the tares of the 18th century. He notes that: "The lead that was gained by Watt and the inventors of textile machinery was maintained for over a century. . . . As we were first in the field with machine industry, so we were first in the race for railways. George Stephenson inaugurated a second revolution, which brought with it a period of feverish enterprise. The first steamship crossed the Atlantic in 1838 and our geographical position enabled us to take full advantage of the new markets beyond the seas." When our coal and iron deposits were utilised, we built up our invaluable cotton and woollen industries and London became the centre of the financial realm.

Yet, despite all material success with its immense accumulation of wealth, in periods of business depression the privations of the masses were deplorable. Conditions, however, improved as the century advanced, while it may be confidently said that our national wealth was never more equitably distributed than it is to-day.

Intellectual liberty found eloquent expression in the writings of the Benthamites, especially in those of John Stuart Mill who, declares Gooch, "In his books on *Liberty*, *The Subjection of Women* and *Representative Government* presented a system more complete and more humane than any other country could boast—a high-souled individualism which aimed at spiritual realisation, and an educated democracy which guarded the conscience of its members."

Mill's dread of State despotism was shared by Spencer whose sturdy individualism was never modified, although it is out of fashion in present-day Collectivism. Still, as Professor Hearnshaw states, Spencer "was a great man and a notable thinker. Many of the principles to which he gave expression were principles of permanent validity and importance. . . . Certainly not a few of his painful prophecies have been fulfilled, and not a few of his solemn warnings justified by the course of events. There are many welcome signs that thoughtful men are beginning to open his books again in search of political guidance in these difficult and anxious days."

Again, Dr. Hearnshaw opines that Herbert Spencer's "contributions both to the science and philosophy of the nineteenth century were of the highest importance. In the sphere of ethics and psychology he will be principally remembered as the man who found in evolution the key to the reconciliation of the inductive and deductive schools of thought."

Catholic emancipation having been granted, Newman and his associates at Oxford were embarking on their conversion to Rome. Wiseman returned to London from Italy in 1835 and a Romanist hierarchy was soon established. Catholics emerged from obscurity and paraded their faith, and their leaders have been growing more aggressive and demanding greater privileges ever since. They now claim favours in a nominally Protestant country which the Church sternly refuses to all non-Catholics in lands where her priesthood exercises authority.

The outstanding novels of the Victorian era are too numerous to mention. Scott died in 1832, but Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontës, George Eliot, Charles Reade, Hardy and Meredith were all eminent Victorians. *Daniel Copperfield* is Dickens's supreme achievement, *Pickwick Papers* hardly ranking as a novel. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and *Esmond* are works of genius, while George Eliot's *Middlemarch* is acclaimed by Hugh Walpole as the greatest novel in our language.



*Wuthering Heights* of Emily Brontë is another precious product of a female pen. George Eliot's star has waned in recent years, but the Brontës have been restored to popular favour, while Anthony Trollope, who long appeared as dead as Queen Anne, has now a multitude of readers, even for his most inferior fictions.

Lyell's celebrated *Principles of Geology* and Spencer's profound *Psychology* anticipated Darwin's masterpiece, *The Origin of Species*, which awakened the traditionalists from their intellectual torpor. Also, Faraday's electrical researches and the investigations of Clerk Maxwell ultimately led to the establishment of wireless-telegraphy, while Rayleigh's acoustic studies and Sir George Darwin's tidal discoveries with Professor J. J. Thompson's atomic experimentation maintained the eminence of the Cambridge school of physicists.

Also, Sir Joseph Hooker's improved botanical classification and development of Kew Gardens; the astronomical enlargements made possible by the use of Lord Rosse's giant telescope, and the fruitful spectographic studies of Professor Huggins; Professor Ramsay's discovery of helium on our planet, first detected in the solar spectrum, and Rayleigh's discovery of argon, all made substantial contributions to contemporary botany and physics. And last, but not least, as Dr. Gooch reminds us: "Spencer's vast system of synthetic philosophy traced the working of evolution throughout the whole field of nature and human experience."

Moreover, Dr. Tylor well and truly laid the foundations for the monumental achievements of Sir James Frazer in anthropological science, while Maine, Bagehot, Grote, Mill, Pollock, Maitland, Trevelyan, Macaulay, Freeman and Froude, among many other illustrious writers, illumined their various departments of research. Furthermore, John Richard Green composed the history, not merely of kings and conquests, but that of the English people themselves.

Innumerable other outstanding personalities adorned the Victorian age which was certainly the most versatile; if not the mental rival of Athens in the marvellous period of Pericles. "It is true," observes Dr. Gooch, "that we see many things through different spectacles; but we shall be well advised to confront our difficulties with the industry and thoroughness, the courage and competence of the Victorian era."

T. F. PALMER.

## THOUGHTS ON RELIGION

### IV

A SURE method of convincing one's enemies that they are wrong in their opinion is found in the following expression of Bossuet regarding Theodosius I in his *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*: "Il fit taire les hérétiques." ("He made heretics shut up.")

Theodosius I, surnamed the Great, A.D. 346-395, was emperor of the Roman Empire from 379 until his death and was a tyrant under whose reign Arians, other heretics, and pagans were persecuted. His intolerance in enforcing Catholicism like the persecutions ordered by Constantine, his predecessor, without doubt established a precedent for the policy of intolerance and persecution in matters of belief which the Roman Catholic Church has followed for so many centuries.

Gibbon wrote in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter XXVII, that Theodosius in fifteen years promulgated at least fifteen edicts against the heretics and especially against those who rejected the doctrine

of the Trinity. Gibbon further wrote that, "The guilt of the Manichaean heresy was esteemed of such magnitude that it could be expiated only by the death of the offender; and the same capital punishment was inflicted on the Audians, or *Quartodecimans*, who should dare to perpetrate the atrocious crime of celebrating on an improper day the festival of Easter. Every Roman might exercise the right of public accusation; but the office of *Inquisitors* of the Faith, a name so deservedly abhorred, was first instituted under the reign of Theodosius. Yet we are assured that the execution of his penal edicts was seldom enforced; and that the pious emperor appeared less desirous to punish than to reclaim or terrify his refractory subjects."

The religious songs which are solemnly sung in badly-pronounced Latin by church singers who rarely understand Latin are wearisome. The use of songs and rituals written in ancient languages like Latin and Hebrew gives an air of mystery to religious services; for no one knows what is being sung or said; and, of course, mysteries are necessary ingredients of religions.

Churches are places where people meet to be seen in their best clothes and to gossip about each other and to be gossiped about and then be bored and sometimes asleep while a priest or a preacher, the rash would say a charlatan, preaches a bad discourse on morality, immortality, God, etc., which is understood by few of those who hear it. It is not the truth which he tries to teach; for, if he tried that, he would probably have no hearers; it is rather a traditional system of belief founded on the fables, unreliable history, and generally bad philosophy of a book called the Bible written mostly by the ancient Jews, that he expounds. Churches might be regarded as symbols of human ignorance; and it might be concluded that, wherever there are a great number of churches, men are more ignorant; and this is a correct conclusion.

It is to be doubted that Christianity has brought peace and happiness to anyone as has been pretended by its adherents; but, if we grant that it probably brings the quiescence of ignorance to those who are already ignorant, for every case of quiescence there are ten cases of men in whose lives it has done no good. Intolerance, fanaticism, and the ruining of the intellect are three of its products; and they do not resemble peace and happiness. That religion can be the source of mental peace, as the religionists and the pseudopsychologists of recent years have said, is something that only those who have never intelligently studied the religions of the world would say.

That there is peace and happiness in Jesus Christ is a stock doctrine of Christianity. It is safe to assume that few have experienced this dreary peace and happiness. In that writing indicating lack or loss of emotional balance called *Le Memorial*, Pascal wrote: "Certitude. Certitude. Sentiment. Joie. Paix." And further: "Joie, joie, joie, pleurs de joie." This joy is vaporous and imaginary. The false and repressive doctrines of Christianity could produce only misery and dreariness of soul.

The fear of God is no doubt a development of men's fear of natural phenomena some of which they formerly regarded as gods. The fear of God, inherited from the religion of the Jews, has been a fundamental tenet of the Christians. In Chapter XII, verse 13, of the Book of Ecclesiastes, which is the only really philosophical book in the Bible, we have a Jewish expression regarding the fear of God from which the Christians have in part derived their tenet: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his



commandments: for this is the whole *duty* of man." In Proverbs, I, 7, it is written that: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." It might be better said that fear of any kind is disastrous to knowledge; and fear of Jehovah, who is the Lord in this case, has not aided human knowledge as is shown by the history of Europe and the Americas where the Christian religion has been an obstruction to philosophy and science. The fear of God is not a noble human sentiment; for no form of fear is noble.

The whole structure of religious superstition is based on fear; and the tyranny of fear exercised by the priests is possible only because men are too lazy and dull to investigate intellectual matters for themselves.

If fears of gods, ghosts, devils, hell, and damnation were not taught to children, they could not, if they grew to be reasonable men instructed in philosophy and science, have such fears. If the use of fear were not a racket of the priests, a man would scarcely approach death with fears about meeting an avenging god. Someone must invent, keep alive, and disseminate religious error and fear; for fear of the unknown, while it is universal, could not assume the definite and atrocious shape of fear of a merciful god unless the religionists kept the thoughts of men poisoned with such a fear.

Fear is a heritage of man; but he does not naturally come forth from his mother's womb equipped with the claptrap of religious fears; for they are human inventions and must be acquired through exposure to them.

The fear of death is used by preachers to obtain conversion from their dupes; and an efficient way of getting results with this fear is for the preachers to illustrate the uncertainty of life and how sinners easily pass up salvation, die unexpectedly, and go to eternal damnation in the fires of hell. Then, it is helpful if the preachers declare that they do not play on the emotions of their hearers in order to convert them; for honesty is necessary in matters of religion.

A part of the art of religious writing consists in saying at least twice what could be well said once or perhaps better not said at all. This art is illustrated at its best in Hindu scriptures.

When it is reflected that the dense books of religion and theology have in general been written about purely imaginary things, the highness of human intelligence and the honesty of men rightly become doubtful.

WILLIAM RITTENOUR (U.S.A.).

### "LONDON FOR AMERICANS"

HOWEVER much some people may disagree with Mr. William Kent on the Shakespeare problem, there can be no two opinions as to his knowledge of the highways and by-ways of London. It is truly encyclopedic. One would have thought that he had, in his numerous books on the Great Metropolis, exhausted this matter, but here he is again with an intensely interesting work on *London for Americans* (Staple Press, 7s. 6d.) full of all sorts of literary lore and pictures appealing, if I may say so, quite as much to Englishmen as to Americans.

Considering that the United States was a one time British colony, it is not surprising, of course, to find so many distinguished Americans visiting England in general and London in particular. And Mr. Kent has gathered together a large number of the most famous ones telling us where they lived and how they travelled and what they thought—all set off with those inimitable

references to life and literature which make him one of the most readable of all writers on London.

A glance at the contents page will show how wide is the net he has cast. Beginning with Princess Pocahontas, he has dealt with some of the most world-famous names in literature, poetry and art. (Curiously, not one famous musician.) There are splendid chapters, among others, on William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Washington Irving, R. W. Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, O. W. Holmes, Motley, Hawthorne, Whistler, Mark Twain, and, of course, Moncure Conway. They are not just dry-as-dust chapters either. Mr. Kent works in his knowledge of the by-ways of London as much, if not more than, of the highways, and a fascinating record it is.

It is always most interesting to read what travellers from America or the Continent have said about London and Mr. Kent's chapter on Benjamin Silliman (1779-1864) with its copious extracts from Silliman's *Journal of Travels in England* (1810) will give readers an excellent idea of that author's acute observation and comments on what London looked like 145 years ago. The same can be said of Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*, unfortunately not so well known these days as it once was. Mr. Kent has done Londoners a service in marking for us so many passages from the work of so many famous Americans. Apart from descriptions of places, we have extracts describing our own great men. Motley's portraits of Thackeray, Macaulay and Disraeli were well worth transcribing again, and those of us who remember the *Scarlet Letter* will want to read what the great American novelist, Nathaniel Hawthorne, has to say of people like Charles Reade, Monkton Milnes, and the Brownings. Moncure Conway's portraits of the great men he met make also fascinating reading.

The book has many fine illustrations, including a clever reproduction of the house where Thomas Paine lived in Lewes—now a modern cafe; and there are more chapters on other American memorials and benefactions. For our visitors, they will find the chapters on Museums, Galleries, and Miscellaneous and useful information invaluable.

I feel sure that all those Americans who buy the book only as a "guide," will later treasure it as a very worthy addition to their library bookshelves. And this goes as well for even hardened Londoners.

H. CUTNER.

### A PHILOSOPHICAL CLASSIC

MOST people, whether Freethinkers or not, who are interested in the relationship between religion and science and in that disputed borderland territory which lies on the edge of philosophy, will have a select shelf in their libraries on which stands a series of books dealing with these matters from various points of view. The aspects from which these things are studied need not be identical; indeed, in many cases they may be directly opposed. But that does not make such books any the less interesting to the philosophically-minded reader.

My own selection of books of this type includes Dr. Joad's *God and Evil*, Prof. Levy's *The Universe of Science*, Dr. Julian Huxley's *Religion Without Revelation*, the Rev. D. R. Davies's *On to Orthodoxy*, Mr. Chapman Cohen's *Materialism Re-Stated*, and Dr. B. H. Streeter's *Reality*. It will be clear that this is a very mixed bag, varying in approach from Atheism to the strictest Christian orthodoxy; but every book in this list, I think, is a book from which thinkers of all schools can gain



something. I know that they all have something to do with my own attitude of mind to-day, even if it is only that they have helped me to make up my mind as to what I do not believe.

I am writing here, however, mainly to draw the attention of what must now be a new generation of readers to a volume which seems to me to have been one of the cardinal books of twenty years or so back—a book which is still of great importance. I refer to Dr. Streeter's *Reality*, a volume which was deliberately designed to work out in a satisfactory manner a philosophy which shall accept the findings of science, and which shall none the less not offend against the religious ideas of a large number of intelligent people. *Reality* was first published in 1926, and my edition (dated 1928) is the eighth impression—a fair indication of the attention which the book attracted on its first appearance.

I know that many of Dr. Streeter's ideas on purely religious matters were not those which the rank-and-file church member would have whole-heartedly approved. Nor, for that matter, were they those which would appeal to the strictest Freethinker. But Dr. Streeter was a man of genuine intellectual integrity, and his summing-up of the problems of science in its relation to theology was a genuinely valuable contribution to thought in the 1920's. Indeed, as I have already tried to suggest, it has its value at the present time.

And what is the main point that Dr. Streeter attempted to make? This is what gives his book value, especially to those who may have a mixture of science and art in their temperamental make-up. He suggests that science, for the most part, concentrates on what is mathematically measurable; religion, on the other hand, tends to concentrate on what may best be called quality. This has some resemblance to Herbert Spencer's famous classification, by which religion was concerned with the unknowable; but Dr. Streeter was mainly occupied in pointing out that the distinction between quantity and quality (and not wholly in the Marxist sense) is in many ways not unlike that between science and art. As an example of this he indicates that if a friend is going to visit Venice, and wants to know something about the place, we might help him by giving him a good map of the city (science) or by presenting him with a copy of a famous picture by J. M. W. Turner (art). The map will be most useful to him if he wants to find his way around the city, but if he wants to find out the sort of place that Venice is—in other words, to sample its quality—the picture will probably be more valuable.

It is manifestly impossible in the space of a short article to do justice to a long and closely-argued book, or even to summarise its main points. But what has already been said should, I think, be sufficient to indicate to most readers that this is an important volume.

Naturally, there are sections of it which, at this comparatively late time, tend to date. There is, for instance, a chapter on "The New Psychology," which deals with the theories of Freud and other schools of psycho-analysis. This now reads in a somewhat old-fashioned manner, but at the same time it anticipates many later criticisms and elucidates for thinkers of all schools such of the apparently revolutionary scientific investigations as have by less superficial writers been greeted as completely new.

The attitude of mind which is usually regarded as scientific is so constant in its general approach, even though some of its bases may have altered, that a book of this kind, penetrating beneath the superficial outlook on things, is of importance, even though many of the accepted theories of science may have since developed.

That Dr. Streeter has disputable passages is, of course, undeniable. The fact that he was a Church of England clergyman partly intent on reconciling science and religion, will tend to invalidate some of his findings, both for scientists and for those liberal thinkers attached to the more progressive religious bodies.

But the general argument of his book is so well set-out, so neatly rounded off, that the book deserves to be widely read, even now, more than twenty years after its first publication.

The volume will not appeal to extremists on either side of the theological fence. But since there seems to be developing in the religious world an attitude not unlike that adopted by Communists and Roman Catholics in the world of politics, it may be that the work of Dr. Streeter, taken with that of such Rationalists as Dr. Julian Huxley, may help to build up that "Third Force" (to use the phrase of the French politicians) which will eventually stand between the two extremes. If the religious thinker is to have no choice, except to join the ranks of the Vatican, or to become an orthodox Atheist of the purely Marxist type, the theological and the political outlook of the world will not appear very promising to many of us, Freethinkers and Liberal Christians alike. But if there is to be an alignment of forces which makes room for the independent thinker who dislikes both orthodoxies equally, then such writers as Dr. Streeter still have an important part to play.

JOHN ROWLAND.

## FREETHOUGHT IN WESTERN GERMANY

RECENTLY the Archbishop of York complained to Britain and the rest of B.B.C. listeners of the exasperating fact that "in America, as in Britain, the great majority of the people are untouched by any form of organised religion" and he was seconded by his Roman Catholic rival, Mgr. R. A. Knox, who complained and confirmed this same "strong tendency away from the Christian faith, away from God" by admitting that "religion is still losing its hold from year to year . . .". These delightful confessions which make Christian statistics look foolish are also echoed in Western Germany.

Said Dr. R. von Tadens-Triglat, of the German Christian Student Movement, in an article, "Church Without Congregation" in a local Lutheran paper:—

"People reject not only particular dogmas with which they find no connection any more, but they resist the whole world of Christian beliefs; the world outlook of the Bible, its piety, the absolute truth of salvation, the figure of Christ, the Cross and the faith in resurrection. This is, perhaps, not fought publicly, but they also do not conceal that all inner contact with Christianity has been completely lost."

Now to fight publicly against churches and for secularism, the German freethinkers of the Western zones have formed a union of, up to now separate groups. At a conference of four freethought societies in Hanover, 1949, "Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft freigeistiger Verbände" was founded. It passed a resolution "to resume work at once on a wide front and to appeal to particular groups to associate." Its leading group is, "Deutscher Freidenker Verband" with headquarters in Hamburg; President Herr Kurt Neumann. Two of Hamburg's publishing houses and one in Stuttgart have published a few freethought pamphlets. The new official organ of the "AFV" is "Die Geistesfreiheit" (free thought), published in Hanover.

GREGORY S. SMELTERS.



## ACID DROPS

**While Roman Catholic speakers** say very little about "unity" except in accordance with instructions from the Vatican, members of other denominations are still at it as if anything they say will make Rome budge an inch. For example, Canon Smyth told an audience the other day that unity was quite impossible unless it meant "unity in Christ," and therefore "in the Father." It was quite clever of him. Then Dr. Newton Flew "catalogued" the "agreements" between the sects—as if agreements mattered two hoots to Rome. It was the disagreements which caused the schisms. And so long as there are disagreements, unity is a beautiful castle in Spain.

**The Rev. R. L. Roberts asks** "How can you possibly ask me to turn my life upside down because of something that happened so long, so very long ago?" And his answer is that, as "the Lord Jesus in his mercy has arranged for the past to be carried forward into the present," it is the love "which we see in Christ crucified" which is ever present "in abiding power." He admits that we cannot "understand" it, that it is a "mystery"—so what? We know that the Lord Jesus is with us and what more can we want? And some people wonder why it is still necessary to attack such incredible rubbish.

**The statement made** by the Archbishop of York recently that Roman Catholics get converted to Anglicanism in about the same numbers that Rome gets converts from the Church of England has been challenged by Fr. J. Heenan and declared to be "simply not true." Even the *Church Times* is sorry that Dr. Garbett said it—sorry that he is trying emulate Rome which is always boasting of its many conversions. Quality is what the Church of England wants—not quantity. Fr. Heenan admits that some people "flit" about from one religion to another, but he wants Dr. Garbett to give exact figures and in this he will reciprocate.

**Fr. Heenan made a lot of fun** of a Church which could hold such a variety of belief as shown by the Communist Dean of Canterbury, the almost complete unbeliever Dr. Barnes, the complacent Archbishop of Canterbury, and the near Roman Catholic, Dr. Wand. Well, that may be so, but at least let us grant them their use of reason if only in a small degree. It is at least better than the complete surrender of reason by the average Roman Catholic—like Fr. John Heenan.

**Many Jews pin a Bible text** in a small container outside their front door—whether to frighten away evil spirits or to welcome the visitation of angels is not quite clear. However, Fr. Donovan of Scranton, U.S.A., has attached one to his crucifix and is very happy about it. He thinks a Catholic should be proud to carry one about with him. But surely it would be far better to carry the complete Bible? The power of warding off evil spirits must be far greater with all the texts than just a solitary one?

**Perhaps the action** of the Stowmarket (Suffolk) Council will enable certain clergy to view themselves in the right perspective. For the Council have refused to grant a licence to build a house for the minister on the grounds that the building "was not required for a key worker in an industry vital for National recovery." The councillors' perspicacity does them credit and they should be invited to "keep an eye" on the religious infiltration of the Festival of Britain, the buildings for which are now aris-

ing on the South Bank of the Thames and on which the Churches have already staked their claim.

**Ralph Champion** of the *Sunday Pictorial* pretends to be shocked at the "spivery" now in full swing in Rome. In particular, he fulminates against the sale of clockwork popes—which mechanically dispense blessings—crooks disguised as priests, pickpockets in St. Peter's, and confidence tricksters. Frankly, we fail to see the point of Mr. Champion's anger; the background is perfect, and the Church herself has set many examples; statues of the Virgin that move or roll their eyes, phials of blood, hundreds of years old, that liquify on command, popes that have murdered and stolen. And for the last 2,000 years the Church has perpetrated the greatest confidence trick of all times—in fact, the "humble pilgrim" does not need to be gulled, he gulls himself.

**One does not expect** any kind of scholarship from the average spiritualist, but a Mr. G. Hobson, in a recent number of *Two Worlds*, would easily take a potato medal for the least-informed amateur theologian possibly alive. He says, "Spiritualists do not believe in the Divinity of Jesus, his Immaculate Conception, or Virgin Birth." The "Immaculate Conception" of Jesus would no doubt make Cardinal Griffin's hair stand on end if he saw this precious announcement, but what he would say to the infantile explanation of the three things which Spiritualists do not believe—though most of them do, of course—we hardly like to think about.

**Mr. Hobson confidently** tells us that "in biblical days a woman was a virgin until she gave birth to her first child," whereas to-day "a woman is no longer a virgin after submitting to sex relations with a man." to the "Immaculate Conception"—about which Mr. Hobson knows as much as our tom cat—"lack of knowledge of ancient Eastern customs is at the root of this ignorance." Mr. Hobson, in proof of this, adds that "not so many years ago every bride in this country had to spend her first night of marriage with the Lord of the Manor." Words fail us, but if the Editor of *Two Worlds* can put this kind of hopeless balderdash in his paper we are not surprised that even Spiritualists constantly complain of the sheer illiteracy of so many "mediums."

**Herewith another instance** of Christian reasoning: The Rev. J. Fisher would like to see the preliminaries to divorce to include the birch and the "cat." This, he says, "would stop divorce which is a crime against society." But why stop at including flogging in divorce? As flogging is such a deterrent, why not use it on all occasions? We can give him plenty of authorities—Christian ones—who imagined that flogging was a universal panacea for all evils. We will even quote a case of two victims of smallpox who were whipped.

**To join the vaccination queues** in Glasgow, many families missed church and Sunday schools. This is hardly a "Christian" attitude. One would actually think that this life is more important than the next!

## THINGS WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW—

Now that Ingrid Bergman is to become a Roman Catholic, will her films now be passed by the American (Roman Catholic) League of Decency?

How do the 21 Roman Catholic Labour Party M.P.s square their "Socialism" with Pope Pius' Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* which lays it down that no Catholic can be a Socialist?



# "THE FREETHINKER"

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS

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).

Will correspondents please write on one side of the paper, and keep their letters brief. This will give everybody a chance. Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.

## SUGAR PLUMS

In connection with the National Secular Society's Annual Conference at Sheffield during the Whitsun weekend, a morning coach trip into Derbyshire has been arranged for Monday. Returning to the Grand Hotel at mid-day will enable those wishing to return home the same day to do so. The return fare for the trip will be 2s. 6d., and as arrangements must be made in advance and accommodation is limited those wishing to join the party making the trip must notify either the General Secretary at 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. 1, or the local secretary, Mr. A. Samms, 18, Junction Road, Woodhouse, Sheffield.

Now that prayers have been offered for the success of the Arsenal Football Team in the cup final at Wembley, the Liverpool team should turn out easy winners—providing they keep off prayers. But surely God has quite enough serious work on hand in the world without kicking goals for the Arsenal at Wembley.

"Cross-Bencher" of the *Sunday Express*, is taking a little holiday from his usual smear campaign of delving into the financial resources of Labour M.P.s. (The resources of some, incidentally, make curious reading for exponents of Socialism.) He is now concerned with the number of Atheists and Agnostics in the Labour Party. He thinks it a good thing that ordinary people were not present at the swearing-in of new M.P.s. "Good Christians might have noticed how many Atheists declined to take the oath," and "that nearly all of them were members of the Socialist Party." The implication that the Labour Party must be so much worse than the Conservative Party because it has more Atheists is really funny, the pity is that so many people can be "taken in" by this slick journalism.

A fervent Catholic has written to the *Universe* to ask whether theologians would approve of his prayer which he repeats every morning and night: "Oh God, help me to love you more, and fear you less." In our own humble theological way, we should object very much. A God who is not feared far more than loved—even if he does nothing at all to invoke either fear or love—is a poor sort of a God. No, give us a God Almighty whose wrath constantly descends from high Heaven and smites everything which doesn't love and fear him. That's the God for us.

## A RETURN TO PURGATORY

A Nonconformist parson, in the person of the Rev. Leslie Weatherhead, having grown hilarious about Hell, we have now Lord Holden, a Catholic peer, playful about Purgatory. Freethinkers may well ask whether seriously either gentleman believes in any posthumous existence. On the whole, fun about Purgatory is less jarring, for it must be admitted the doctrine has a humaner aspect. That eschatological conception, as compared with everlasting torment, is as preferable as a reformatory school to a life sentence in a gaol.

His Lordship—with a daring scarcely possible if he was also His Reverence—imagines himself touring through Purgatory, conducted by St. Philip Neri, who went there in 1595; and apparently had earned release. (I am assuming that even the saints need a little purging!) The tour starts at the Brompton Oratory. Lord Holden is surprised to be told: "You would be amazed to see how the infernal and purgatorial regions are crowded with English sinners since I left your world. . . . But it was during the nineteenth century that by far the greatest number of English sinners were punishable in Purgatory or in Hell." Specimen sinners are then inspected, much as one might survey the figures in Madame Tussaud's, but they are vocal.

Cardinal Manning is found gazing intently on a picture of Cardinal Newman. Lord Holden asks for an explanation. He transferred his stare from the oleograph to myself, but now his eyes mirrored suffering rather than scorn. "It is my purgatorial punishment to cleanse my soul of pride," he answered softly, and paused, folding his crystalline hands below the emerald cross which coruscated brightly on his shrunken chest. "My pride was threefold: intellectual, spiritual and secular. . . . I could tolerate no equal in the domain of the mind or the spirit, not indeed in mundane affairs. For that reason I hated Newman."

"Was your Eminence ever able to make reparation to Cardinal Newman for your hostile attitude towards him?" I venture respectfully. "Yes," replied Manning with decision, "I attempted to do so on the one occasion I met him during the last ten years of his life—I then kissed Cardinal Newman on both cheeks."

Dean Stanley is found in front of his comfortable fire—evidently, not purgatorial or it would have been uncomfortable. He warns his visitor: "Be careful not to burn your trousers. Augusta always warned me about that." The Dean was engaged in reading his diary. "You see, this is my purgatorial punishment," he said, quietly, tapping the manuscript with his spectacles. "In this diary lie the proofs of my intellectual and moral pride. On nearly every page there are passages for which only aeons of suffering can atone." A passage quoted is so amusing that readers might wish some abatement in quantity or quality of purgatorial fire for the writer of it.

"The sections I am going to read to you concern my journey to the Near East with the Prince of Wales in 1862. I was deputed by his reverend mother to be the Prince's mentor and friend. It was a hard task." The Dean sighed deeply at the distant recollection. "For example," he continued, "when we were in Egypt I went to fetch His Royal Highness to see the Pyramids, and this is what I wrote in my diary: 'The Prince of Wales was sitting in front of the tent, smoking and reading *East Lynne*.' Just think of it." Dean Stanley glanced up with sad eyes; "smoking and reading *East Lynne*." Once more the Dean heaved a deep sigh. "Again, when we were at



Thebes," he continued, "I was anxious that he should visit the Temple. The Prince, however, was reluctant and said, according to my diary: 'Why should we go and see the tumble-down old Temple?' Horrified by his slothful attitude, I dared to insist, and I afterwards wrote: 'He treated the pillars with the most well-bred courtesy, as if he were paying a visit to a high personage'."

I am sure Lord Holden is wrong in attributing to Queen Victoria the phrase "body-snatcher" as applied to Dean Stanley. It was of Carlyle's coinage. However, if this time she was not guilty, we may agree with St. Philip when he says, "Queen Victoria said and did many things during her lifetime which she later had cause to regret." "You don't mean to suggest that our beloved Queen is really in . . .", I began, delighted at the prospect of meeting her in such unexpected surroundings. But the Saint interrupted me sternly. "Enough of your unseemly prattle; the air of Purgatory must have gone to your head."

General Booth is found standing on a soap-box, making an impassioned speech to the elements since an audience did not exist. He was holding a large book in one hand and an umbrella in the other. On observing us, he immediately descended from the soap-box with a gesture of despair. I was naturally surprised, presuming that even an audience of two would be preferable to none. "Please continue your speech. I shall be most interested to hear what you have to say," I added, with as little patronage as possible. The General gazed at me with pitying eye. "With what little imagination you are blessed," he answered, "you should realise that this is my task of expiation, to stand here on my soap-box preaching to no one and to hear my empty words echoing round the Mountains of Purgatory. But instantly a congregation, however small, appears, divine justice compels me to silence." Like Manning, Booth is expiating the sin of pride. "At the age of sixteen, so overweening was my spiritual pride that I boldly announced I was 'saved', and continued to proclaim it all my life. But how could I tell? How, indeed can any man know he is saved until he has crossed the Styx?" Lord Holden is certainly not familiar with the Salvation Army. General Booth would not have heard of the Styx. He would have talked of going over Jordan!

Dr. Spurgeon—surely the degree was posthumously conferred—is given to propounding riddles. St. Philip says:

"When on earth and alone he was constantly inventing riddles to prevent improper thoughts from occupying his mind." But Dr Spurgeon on the Cote d'Azur and apparently living *de luxe* at Monte Carlo, I gasped. "I fear this is quite beyond me." "There are two reasons for it," St. Philip answered, "Dr. Spurgeon died in the South of France, actually at Mentone; but more important from the expiational side is the fact that the Doctor often and bitterly referred to Monte Carlo as the 'Devil's Marine Residence'."

The Rev. Charles Kingsley, that apostle of muscular Christianity, is found engaged in shadow-boxing. "Let me give you a piece of advice," he said to me rather unexpectedly; "never let the people know where the man leaves off and the parson begins."

All the above are in "The First Circle." Space forbids more than a brief reference to other wraiths that are met elsewhere. There is the Duke of Wellington, who recalls Miss Jenkins who called at Apsley House to leave a Bible and left more patently a strong impression on the heart of the "Iron Duke". "Damme! in fifteen years she wrote me nearly four hundred letters." Lord Brougham appears,

and makes reference to his ardour in arranging for courts to sit on holy days. "Didn't Mr. Gladstone have something to say about that?" I asked. He did indeed; he said I was the first judge to hold Court on Good Friday since Pontius Pilate." Lord Palmerston had not had his coarseness purged away.

"What, sir, in your opinion should be the fundamental objective of British foreign policy?" He did not hesitate for a moment. "I can best describe it to you," he said, "in the blunt words I often used to the Queen. 'England, Ma'am,' I used to say to her, 'should stand upon her own bottom.' 'Bottom, Lord Palmerston?' she would inquire, a little shocked. 'Yes, Ma'am, I said bottom, and bottom is a good old English word, and thank God, Ma'am Britannia has a broad one.'"

*Purgatory Revisited* by Lord Holden (Skeffington & Sons Ltd., 12s. 6d.) will provide much amusing reading for readers of *The Freethinker*, but, by the same token, very little for Roman Catholics. What, I wonder, would be the purgatorial pains inflicted upon the son of the true church whose book was placed on the index? Surely terrible to contemplate! There might, too, be two counts in the indictment: (1) Mirthfully treating the posthumous state of existence known as Purgatory. (2) Sowing thereby the seeds of scepticism in the minds of pious readers. Perhaps the sentences—not to run concurrently—would include daily gazing for hours on the page of *The Freethinker* upon which the damnable work was applauded.

At the Church of St. Margaret, Westminster, on a "Lord's Day" in 1666, Samuel Pepys heard a young man play the fool upon the doctrine of purgatory. He was bored, and more interested when he spied Betty Howlett who indeed is mighty pretty. Lord Holden is much more entertaining, but then it is one thing to treat the subject from a pulpit, quite another to approach it through the Press.

WILLIAM KENT.

## FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

BOOKS on sex and marriage are multiplying, and it is not surprising that the Ethical Union has produced a pamphlet entitled *The Grammar of Marriage*. At ninepence, it is very good value indeed. It contains three essays, all written by experts—"Physical Relations," "Psychological Adjustments," and "Ethical Implications." The first by Philip M. Bloom, M.B., Ch.B., is one that even long married couples would find extraordinarily informative. Those entering the threshold of marriage often imagine that they have nothing or very little to learn, but a reading of this essay would soon undeceive them.

Two people who have to pass their lives together require mutual sympathy and understanding, as well as "physical" love; but it is a fact that where the sex relationship is satisfying and harmonious it will greatly help the other qualities. In any case, it is often just this which fails because of ignorance or stupidity, or what are called "Victorian" repressions and inhibitions. It is not "nice" to do this or that. Dr. Bloom makes the issues very clear, and his advice if followed would help to make almost any marriage a success as far as the satisfying of the sexual instinct is concerned.

He also gives some hints on birth control with most of which we agree; but those who wish to postpone the birth of children for any reason should avoid the method known as the "safe" period. There is no safe period whatever.



On the psychological side—it is very important—Dr. Clifford Allen discusses at length the many factors which come under this head. Does pre-marital experience, for example, make for happier and more stable marriage? It is a point hotly discussed but the figures given by Dr. Allen tend to show that "virginity" in both sexes can be proved by statistics to form the basis of happier marriage.

Dr. Allen writes well on such points as the honeymoon, feminine anxiety and fear, and various sexual manifestations which, unfortunately, show themselves in marriage; and his advice, if followed, would reduce divorce statistics. We were pleased to see that he recommended Van Der Velde's *Ideal Marriage*—a book no married couple should be without.

On the "Ethical Implications of Marriage," Mr. H. J. Blackham writes excellently and supplements the other writers with necessary advice. Altogether, this is a little work we heartily recommend.

A second edition of *A Short History of Sex Worship* by Mr. H. Cutner—whose articles form a feature of this journal—will be welcomed. The first at 8s. 6d. was quickly exhausted, and now it can be bought for 2s. 6d., or bound in cloth, for 5s. It is published by Messrs. Watts and Co., and is excellent value in these days of dear books.

The essay deals with a little known aspect of religion—at least, little known to most simple-minded Christians. It is well known to learned Jesuits, historians, and anthropologists, who generally prefer to soften the truth as much as possible because it shows how all religions have as one of their chief bases the worship of fertility expressed in forms of sex.

This truth has been, however, divulged in a comparatively few rare works written for students and not at all easy to procure. Payne Knight's *Worship of Priapus*, for example, is almost unknown even to well-read Free-thinkers, and similar books, though perhaps more easily accessible, are often passed by because of a too frank treatment of their subject.

But the treatment of sexual subjects these days is much more open than in the past, and in this *Short History* the reader will find chapters on Phallicism in the Bible, in India, and in other countries, sex symbolism, the cult of Venus, and a great deal of other information in connection with sex and religion. And for those who believe in a Divine Revelation, it provides a devastating exposure of this and other credulous beliefs.

It is a book which all Freethinkers will find useful for their future study.

J. D.

## TO SPAIN WITH A BIAS

DR. HALLIDAY SUTHERLAND went to Spain. He went, on his own admission, with a bias—the bias of the most bigoted type of Roman Catholic. The outcome of his visit was "Spanish Journey", a most satisfying book for the person who believes with Dr. Sutherland that everything Spanish is a glowing example to the rest of the world and that General Franco is the saviour of Spain and Christendom. It provides plenty of sentimental slush for his wallowing, and all the things he wants to believe are confirmed by misrepresentation and specious half-truths.

"A Communist sent me to Spain." That is Dr. Sutherland's opening sentence and paragraph. It is dramatic. It is theatrical. It sets the tone of things to come.

First let us recall the unadorned facts of the Spanish Civil War . . . . .

The Republican Government consisted of 148 Right Wing members, 128 members of the Popular Front, and 15 Communists out of a total of 473; there were no Communists in the Cabinet. From its inception it introduced reforms to alleviate the poverty of the peasants and workers; this could only be done at the expense of the wealthy land-owners (including the Church), the big industrialists, and the grandes and kindred parasites.

General Franco, a professional soldier, engineered an insurrection. Proclaiming a Holy War against the Communist anti-Christ, he brought a horde of Moorish (Mohammedan) troops across from Morocco to plunge Spain into fratricide of indescribable horror. From the outset he had the support of Mussolini and Hitler, who saw that the cutting of Britain's life-line through the Mediterranean would be of tremendous consequence in the major war which the world now knows they were planning.

The purpose of "Spanish Journey" is obviously to present the Civil War as a struggle between Christianity and Communism, between the forces of Good and the forces of Evil. Incidentally, it seems not to embarrass Halliday Sutherland in the least that Franco initiated a savage war in the name of Christianity.

In due course he met General Franco: his admiration has the pathetic quality of schoolboy hero-worship. He praises the Credo of the Spanish Foreign Legion prepared by Franco:—

"The spirit of the Legionary, unique, without peer, must be blind and ferocious in battle. His duty is to shorten the distance between himself and the enemy and to charge him with the bayonet . . . . . He must obey until death. He must always, always fight, without rest, without counting the days, the months, the years. To die in combat is the highest honour . . . . ."

It is strange how Halliday Sutherland reconciles this effort to debase fellow human beings, this utter denial of moral responsibility for their own conduct, with his much-vaunted Christianity. Stranger, still, that he should admire a man whose political creed, Fascism, is, according to Dr. Sutherland's own definition, "the deification of the State."

The book abounds in half-truths, false analogies, and mischievous implications. This one is quite a gem of its kind:—

"Behind the lines in the Republican Zone, some 16,000 priests, monks, nuns, and church workers . . . were murdered in cold blood."

While the melodramatic choice of the last four words may be ignored, it is, perhaps, advisable to point out that these people were not religious martyrs; they were executed not because they were priests, monks and nuns, but because they were members of Franco's Fifth Column: men and women found working behind Republican lines for the overthrow of the legitimate government of Spain.

Most remarkable, perhaps, are Dr. Sutherland's efforts to show the superiority of Spain, with its feudalism, superstitions, and civil wars, over our own England in humanitarianism, morality, and indeed in every aspect of civilisation.

"Franco has claimed," he writes, "that the Spanish penal system is the most humane in Europe. Of that I cannot judge, since the only penal systems known to me are those of England and Spain; but with this knowledge I say that the prisons of Spain are better than those of Britain, and that the Spanish penal system is more humane than the British."



Here is a choice tit-bit for Britain's Black Marketeers and their wealthy customers:—

"Valencia . . . . . is also famous for paella. This last, to my taste, is the best of all the famous Spanish dishes. To make it in England you must first buy a plump chicken on the Black Market . . . . . By the Law of England in this Year of Grace, 1948, it is illegal to serve paella in any hotel or restaurant because in these places no meal may consist of both flesh and fish."

Perhaps Dr. Sutherland does not realise that this law of England, which denies him paella as his wealthy Spanish friends like it, was devised in a sincere effort to ensure a just distribution of food during a shortage caused by a war for which the champions of his hero, Franco, were responsible.

The most monstrous section of the book is that which deals with the incident which shocked the civilised world—the bombing of Guernica by German 'planes. Here is the substance of Sutherland's account:—

"The facts were investigated by a Commission of two magistrates and two civil engineers . . . The Commission found that . . . . . the town was bombed intermittently by aeroplanes . . . . . the total casualties were less than a hundred . . . . . the town was actually destroyed by the Reds within . . . . . the town was destroyed by fire . . . . . damage to the streets was caused by subterranean explosions at nine different points . . . . . each explosion occurred at the same distance from the nearest manhole of the main sewer."

The farcical nature of such a Commission is, despite the capital "C," obvious: it was composed of the only kind of Spaniards free to hold office or walk about—Franco's supporters. Against this, here is an account of the incident made up from reports sent to London by the correspondents of *The Times*, the *Daily Express*, the *Star*, and Reuters, who were actually in or near Guernica at the time.

"Guernica was destroyed on Monday, April 26, by an air raid which lasted with little intermission from 4-30 p.m. to 7-45 p.m. . . . First of all, small parties of 'planes threw hand-grenades at people who, terrified, rushed to shelter in 'refuges' or cellars. Then, as the monster bombs tore buildings vertically from top to bottom and penetrated refuges beneath the houses, those who were not trapped in them streamed out of the town and were machine-gunned as they ran by the fighting 'planes working in line . . . . The destruction of a large part of the town was completed by incendiary bombs which set fire to whole streets."

The reader who is especially interested in the Guernica episode is recommended to read "Searchlight on Spain" by the Duchess of Atholl, or to turn up newspaper files and comb the libraries for authoritative information.

Doubtless the "unsympathetic" reader will be mildly amused, as I was, by the occasional querulous note that creeps into the pages of "Spanish Journey." Towards the end of the book Dr. Sutherland complains with an aggrieved air that "the B.B.C., in their antipathy for Franco, had adopted methods alien to England's reputation of fair play."

After reading the book one is surprised that Dr. Sutherland can conceive of England acquiring a reputation for anything fair or decent!

F. L. MAYELL.

### COLOURED BOOKS

THESE volumes are not necessarily printed in various hues, but the typical coloured bindings denote the nature of the special context, as formerly did the covers of official yellow books, blue books, or the notable black

book, besides the red book. The book of reference, here considered, is very purple, a colour not pornographic, but showing something unusual for specialists, as officials, or keepers of consciences in a religious sense.

This Purple Book has two parts: I, the Mishna, which is the text; II, the Gemara, comprising the explanatory sentences; and these two parts, as a whole, make up a collection of very ancient traditions in learning, ceremonies, botany, arts, and some customs relating to the sexes.

Such is the Talmud, or Jewish Bible, the manual of divinity and law for Rabbis, directing their teachings as legislators and spiritual guides for the faithful within the synagogues.

Moses wrote 13 copies of The Talmud, one for each of his 12 tribes and the thirteenth copy to be kept in the Ark of the Lord.

There are two Talmuds: the Jerusalem and the Babylonian, which contain curious revelations, orders and treatises, divided into chapters and again subdivided; a mixture of miscellanies for the Jew about facts, fasts and feasts, duties of men and women, marriages, disorders, nuptials, damages for losses, interest on money, idolatry, baths, leprosy, clothing the body, and some holy ritual. The Jews declare that all other scriptures are water, but The Talmud is wine, so delightfully refreshing that God spends nine hours daily studying The Talmud. Saint Jerome, a champion Father of the Roman Church, declares this purple Talmud to be "old wives' tales." Both Jerome and Rabbi Juda are right, for it is the great antiquity of The Talmud which makes it so fascinatingly curious to read and being such a marvellous compilation, it should be known to classical scholars, remembering "the ancient of days" and modern customs are not alike.

The "waters of jealousy" for testing chastity together with commands for clothing, or rather the formula for female un-dressing are ample in rabbinical instructions, equally for pregnant women and those babes at the breast. On divorce there are various regulating adulteries and "burning the soup"!

Punishments for men, women and animals, unnatural crimes are similar to those ordered in the Mosaic Pentateuch.

There is a publication, "Gems from the Talmud," carefully compiled for popular reading; but the esoteric hidden gems which are for rabbinical training and guidance are not as pearls for the populace. This class of literature is necessary to be studied for its comparative values from secular view points, and it is a privilege for professors of languages and ancient oriental customs to gain knowledge of this secret Jewish literature.

But, among the erudite philosophy of hebraic lore there is abundance of fairy tales; for example, Solomon's adventurous encounter with the Devil, each striving for possession of a magic seal-ring, to obtain which the Devil was securely chained in a pit and kept there until the ring was on Solomon's thumb.

King Solomon was a notorious sorcerer and, to add power to his necromancy, desired secret knowledge from the Devil who agreed to instruct Solomon, if he returned the sea-ring and would release the captive from chains and the pit. The bargain was agreed, and immediately the Devil received the ring and was liberated, he summoned Aschmedai, a prince of darkness confrère, who swallowed Solomon, and then flew to the firmament of heaven, which height gave him a world-view. Solomon was precipitated 4,000 leagues to earth. Aschmedai then assumed King Solomon's likeness and occupied the throne. Because of this talmudic panto-



mime transformation, Solomon proclaimed, "this is the reward of all my labour," as stated in Ecclesiasticus, I, 3.

And when Aschmedai reigned over Israel he cohabited with Solomon's queens and concubines, who noticed their embracer's chicken-like feet, and when this was made known to the rabbins, they were horrified because they knew that the feet of devils were like cock's feet. Now, at this time, there appeared a beggar, a diviner of evil spirits, whom the rabbins took to the King's Palace, where Aschmedai sat upon Solomon's throne, and immediately the beggar confronted the devil-monarch, a hideous screech deafened the people assembled, and during the tumult Aschmedai vanished and the beggar was instantly metamorphosed into King Solomon; who, ever after this devilish torment, had a deadly fear of evil spirits. To guard himself against their diabolical powers, his royal bed was nightly guarded by valiant men of Israel, as it is written in "Canticles," III, 7.

WM. AUGUSTUS VAUGHAN.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### SQUARING THE CIRCLE

Sir.—On Easter Sunday when the Pope celebrated High Mass in St. Peter's before a congregation of about 50,000—with 200,000 more of the sheep outside in the square, he wore a triple-jewelled crown on his head, and was dressed in white with a five-yard train. He was carried into the basilica on a chaise decorated with white ostrich feathers, symbols of his pontifical power. The Pope was then carried up to a golden throne, draped in white silk, where he received high Papist dignitaries in scarlet robes.

Whilst behind the "Iron Curtain" in that Proletarian Paradise, Russia, the Patriarch Alexius celebrated midnight Mass before a congregation at the Orthodox Velaklovsky Cathedral, Moscow. The Patriarch wore silver and gold brocaded robes, and a magnificent crown studded with diamonds, rubies, emeralds and topped with a diamond cross.

How can these hang-overs from Barbarism and the Dark Ages square themselves with the alleged sayings of Jesus in the New Testament? I think it is important that we should remember some of these sayings. In Matt. VI, 25-34, we find the following:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . (this, presumably, includes Patriarchal crowns, silk robes and Papal Palaces).

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on . . . And why take thought for raiment? . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow."

These sayings attributed to Jesus are stupid, but, at least, they show that the gospel writers and early Christians did not expect or wish their disciples and followers to live like the Vicars of Christ; the "Holy Fathers," or like the Patriarchs of Moscow.

One day these, and all other parasites will become useful members of society, doing useful work, and taking from society only what they need for their needs. The day is coming!—Yours, etc.,

PETER E. NEWELL.

### MATERIALISM

Sir.—May I once again encroach upon your space in order to reply to R. Turner's letter, *The Freethinker*, March 2, 1950. Originally, it was, I believe, a Mr. Smelters who introduced the term "clap-trap." He had shown that hostile writers, by using a "clap-trap" definition of materialism, could easily dispose of the Aunt Sally which they had put up, i.e., their own definition. It was to guard against this that I was indeed honoured to use Chapman Cohen's definition of Materialism.

I have great respect for Chapman Cohen, and I owe not a little to his writings. I emphatically repudiate any innuendo that I referred to the definition I used as "clap-trap." Mr. Turner is at liberty so to call it, if he wishes. I note he does not put any alternative definition forward.

I must place upon record my deep appreciation of Mr. Turner's humour when he says "Materialism is easily understood by the man in the street and that must be its interpretation."

It is precisely because I think that men (and Mr. Turner) are a little better, or at least, more susceptible to ideas, than lumps of iron, that I took the trouble, albeit a pleasure, to write the article he complains of.

Mr. Turner will, of course, realise that to apply any concept of mechanism to nature is to use an extended analogy. Mechanism is a notion originally used as a method of interpreting the Universe, similar to the Rutherford-Bohr conception of the atom. Thus, Dorothy Emmett says "mechanism" is a regulative principle, that is to say, a guiding principle of method rather than an explanation in the realistic sense."\* Burt reminds us "we must beware of turning a method into a metaphysic."†

One wonders at the source, and nature, of Mr. Turner's information when he states "Everybody with the exception of idealists, metaphysicians and some philosophers understands the meaning of mechanical and material." I would point out that the problem is not one of understanding, but one of judging the validity of extending, as a metaphysic, a purely anthropomorphic aid to the understanding.

Mr. Turner may be aware of the pertinent objections which can be brought to bear against mechanism from an epistemological aspect. At present I am engaged on W.E.A. work but in a week or two I hope to submit an article detailing such objections.—Yours, etc.,

VERNON CARTER.

\* *The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking*, McMillan, 1949.

† *Metaphysical Foundation of Modern Science*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949.

### SECULAR EDUCATION

Sir,—I am sending the following letter to a score or so papers, etc., also to B.B.C. "Air Space" (West.):—

"Frequently teachers are called upon to teach what they do not believe, in religious lessons, at State-supported schools. Often, also, children are taught certain things as being true, which they subsequently find to be otherwise. Should not the curriculum for such schools be restricted to purely secular subjects?"

Maybe other militant secularists would like to send a similar letter to their local papers, and thus stir things up a bit. We ought not to "Let sleeping dogs lie"—always.—Yours, etc.,

C. E. RATCLIFFE.

### ON FLOGGING

Sir.—Current arguments against flogging and other punishments for crime, consisting as they do mainly of denials of any deterrent effects and emphasis upon the barbarism of retributive penalties, should be extremely painful to all orthodox Christians. Indeed, blasphemous; for Christians of the orthodox tradition must believe that God punishes after death by everlasting torture, so as to deter the living from sin and at the same time to satisfy a divine and therefore perfect justice.

This is an obvious and a pertinent contemporary reflection; yet yours is almost the only periodical in Great Britain that would dare to publish it.—Yours, etc.,

LOUIS MARLOW.

## LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

### OUTDOOR

Blackburn Branch (Market Place).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. J. CLAYTON.

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. HAROLD DAY.

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. EBBURY. (Highbury Corner).—7 p.m.: Mr. L. EBBURY.

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

West London Branch (Marble Arch, Hyde Park).—Sunday, 4 p.m.: Mr. C. E. WOOD.

### INDOOR

Irish Rationalist Society (The Singing Kettle Café, 13, Lower Leeson Street, Dublin).—Sunday, 3 p.m.: "Supplement to Rationalism," Mr. THOMAS F. H. JACOB.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "Wordsworth Centenary," Mr. S. K. RATCLIFFE.

West Ham Branch (Loco. Men's Institute, 62, Forest Lane, Stratford, E. 15).—Tuesday, April 25: A Meeting.



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