

# THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXX.—No. 37

[REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL  
POST OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER]

Price Threepence

## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### The Dogma of the Assumption

THE somewhat stagnant sea of contemporary theology has now been stirred out of its current somnolence by the unexpected pronouncement that the Church of Rome, the most powerful and widely-diffused of the Christian Churches, is about to proclaim a new canonical dogma, the dogma of the bodily "assumption" of the Virgin Mary into Heaven. This auspicious event—which Mr. Pickwick would surely have defined as this "suspicious" event, perhaps more accurately—is due to take place upon November 1st of the present "year of Grace" 1950, when Pope Pius XII will solemnly proclaim the new dogma in St. Peter's Square, Rome.

For the benefit of those readers of this journal who, born and bred in a Protestant land, are unacquainted with the niceties of Catholic dogma, we may begin by explaining the precise content of the dogma which, after November 1st, 1950, must be believed by all the Roman faithful under pain of the greater excommunication in this world and of Hell-fire in the next.

According to the dogma, the precise formulation of which has not yet been given to the world, but belief in which as a non-obligatory "pious opinion" has been pretty general in the Catholic Church since the middle ages, the integral and unconserved body of the Virgin Mary was "assumed" into Heaven shortly after death and there united with her immortal soul. The exact date of this startling transaction is unknown—even to the Catholic Church, but there can, henceforth, be no doubt about the actuality of the event. Cardinal Baronius, an eminent Church-historian of the counter-Reformation (17th century), calculated the date at A.D. 48. Had Baronius been elected Pope, as he very nearly was, it is stated that he intended to proclaim the dogma. As it was, at the General Council of the Vatican (1869-70), which proclaimed the Dogma of Papal Infallibility, 197 of the assembled prelates at the Council presented a petition to the then Pope Pius IX (1846-78) requesting the Pope to proclaim the Assumption as a dogma of the Church. The enforced adjournment of the Vatican Council, due to secular politics, however, prevented this from being done.

The official proclamation of the Dogma of the Assumption does not actually make much difference to the current teaching of Catholicism. For the belief in the Assumption has been practically universal in the Church for centuries, and the Feast of the Assumption has been celebrated continuously since the seventh century. The traditional date of this Feast is August 15th, a date better known in secular history as that of the birth of Napoleon, who was certainly no saint, but who had at least this advantage over the Blessed Virgin that he was actually born on that date, August 15th!

It is, in a sense, a tribute to the important current role played by the Vatican in the Christian universe that the announcement of this new dogma has aroused widespread interest amongst other Christian Churches. The

Archbishops of Canterbury and York, on behalf of the Church of England, have issued a formal disclaimer. According to their Graces, the Anglican Church only accepts as canonical, dogmas which can be "proved" from Scripture. It would be interesting to know how they would defend the doctrine of the Trinity upon such an assumption, since the few references to it in our New Testament are regarded by the overwhelming majority of Biblical scholars, even Christian ones, as fraudulent interpolations in the original text? (We would, incidentally, also like to hear what Dr. Barnes has to say about this pronouncement of his ecclesiastical superiors.)

As was only to be expected, most of the Nonconformist (Protestant) Churches agreed with Canterbury and York in their repudiation of the new Roman dogma, though one misses the old ferocious denunciations of the "idolatry" of the Virgin by the Roman "Scarlet Woman" which stirred the Protestant pens of a bygone age. Is this surprisingly mild attitude also a sign of the times and of the growing power of the Vatican in the Christian world? The Anglo-Catholics are frankly annoyed, since the new dogma puts a fresh obstacle in the way of their cherished scheme of "reunion" with Rome: the not-at-all modernist *Church Times* even goes so far as to say that the Dogma of the Assumption represents a gift-horse to the Marxist critics of Christianity, in that it cannot be defended by Reason and—or History—does this indicate that, in the opinion of the Anglo-Catholic organ, the other Roman dogmas, for example Papal Infallibility, and the Immaculate Conception, can be defended by "Reason and History"?

From the point of view of Catholic dogma, the forthcoming proclamation of the Assumption represents the third to be proclaimed by the Pope apart from a General Council, and in pursuance of his "Infallibility," so far, the dogmatic sequence is, the Immaculate Conception (1854 by Pius IX), Papal Infallibility (1870—Pius IX), the Assumption (1950—Pius XII), this very modest list, incidentally, indicates the traditional caution of the Vatican in announcing new dogmas: the popular Protestant idea that Papal Infallibility means a new dogma every day, is not borne out by the above meagre list.

When we turn to the historical evidences for inflicting a new dogma on mankind under pain of eternal damnation, we can only report that, like the proverbial snakes in Ireland, there just aren't any! The Virgin Mary is mentioned in the Gospels as the mother of Jesus several times and, accordingly, believers in the historical existence of Jesus will, presumably, accept her historical existence also. (According to one such account in the Gospels, Jesus does not seem to have been on very good terms with his mother.) The Virgin Birth is, of course, mentioned in the prologues of two Gospels, *our* Matthew and *our* Luke. But it cannot have formed part of the original Gospels, since the (contradictory) genealogies given in *our* Gospels, both trace the descent of the Messiah Jesus from the national hero, King David,

through Joseph and not Mary, and cannot have ever heard of the Virgin Birth.

As regards "evidence" for the actual Assumption, or for its date and place, there is no evidence at all apart from "the tradition of the Church"—and how much is that worth? Apart from our Gospels, Mary is never explicitly mentioned in the New Testament: "Paul," the Founder of Catholic theology, never mentions her by name.

Last, but the reverse of least, why is it only now, in 1950, that the dogma of the Assumption is proclaimed? As we remarked before in these columns in connection with Fatima, the Virgin Mary represents a trump-card in Catholic theology, which Rome only plays upon important occasions.

We can only suggest two reasons: (a) to consolidate the Faith in face of the impending clash with "Atheistic Bolshevism;" (b) to indicate in a spectacular manner to the other Christian Churches that any alliance Rome makes with them, as at present against Communism, is one of convenience only, and that the Vatican still remains the repository of Christian Truth; the Pope remains the Infallible Head of "the one True Church," and no alliance with Infallibility is an alliance between equals!

F. A. RIDLEY.

## MATERIALISM AND PSYCHOLOGY

DEAN INGE, a leader of Modernist theology, asserting psychology as the sphere of the theologian, said modern psychology is a psychology without a soul. This astute theologian proclaimed himself a follower of Plotinus, whose philosophy was a psychological mysticism. And if the ordinary man thinks of psychology as bunk or as mysterious, it is not to be wondered at. For the subject is confusing to psychologists. Gardner Murphy tried to grapple with this confusion in his *Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology*, with the complexity of an enormous amount of research in the past three centuries.

The impact of the empiricism of physical science on the theology and metaphysics of the Middle Ages led to careful consideration of the "almost imperceptible" and an attempt at mathematical precision, while the notion of structure and function led to what can only be called "physiological" psychology. With the development of the historical or evolutionary method of classification in biology came a new technique in a genetic consideration of animals and of children, and the idea of progressive development was applied in the complications of mental abnormality as well as education, in a "psychiatric" approach, while deliberate experiment led to an empirical psychology.

This genetic technique leads up to consideration of the group in mob psychology and folk lore with complications arising in social anthropology and the intricacies of symbolism. What Murphy called a "fascinating" chapter in the history of psychology is the development from a mystical "magnetic attraction" passing through a cult of animal magnetism and mesmerism, leading to a study of hypnotism as a neural function, giving a new psychiatric technique in the treatment of abnormal psychology leading to that of psycho-analysis and dream psychology, while a more direct consideration is shown in "suggestion" which leads to another technique in "auto-suggestion."

The physiological approach leads to an objective "behaviourism" while the other leads to consideration of

aesthetic and emotional merits of religious mysticism. While attempts at mathematical accuracy involve experiment in memory tests and intelligence tests in education and industrial psychology, the use of mechanical devices is extended to electro-magnetic equipment to get more precise observation. At the same time theological and metaphysical considerations involve reason and will, intuition and instinct, in theoretical controversy, complicated by an "unconscious will" or an "unconscious mind" and involving "dissociation" "split consciousness" and "dual personality."

If scientific empiricism began as a challenge to metaphysics in England and psychiatry as a practical application in France, experiment in Germany led to a "natural philosophy" psychology, in contradistinction to a metaphysical approach, so applying synthesis rather than analysis, in a "gestalt" psychology. If social conditions involve idiosyncracies so that to the psychiatrist the abnormal is the type of the normal, so also here, as with idetic vision, visualisation is the basis of verbalisation, and the apparently unusual becomes the foundation of the usual, and a complementary unification is attempted to find understanding, rather than explanation.

It seems almost as if the wheel has come full circle, and Gardner Murphy, in his summary, while surveying the changes in attitude and the many various attempts to find a technique, says that, although considerable advance has been made it has barely scratched the surface, and the early optimism of psychologists has been replaced by a sense "almost of despair" and he ends wondering if the next century of research will have dispelled this despair. He does not essay any generalisations as he was fully occupied surveying such a tremendous amount, as well as variety of, research, and he is to be complimented on attempting a useful and unbiased historical survey.

It is perhaps, not surprising to find him treating his subject from the point of view of the expert, the doctor, or the teacher; not the patient, pupil or learner. But proof of the pudding is in the eating, and it has been said, every man is a psychologist to the extent that he tries to understand himself or his fellow men, and the change in understanding over this historic period is quite noticeable. But the development plainly shows the futility of the physical or the physiological approach, whether this arose in the Christian body and soul animism obsession, or in a desire for something concrete, something tangible, something to catch hold of, in a realm of phantasy and illusion.

But it is remarkable that we should come back to the question raised in Locke's famous essay, which was *Concerning Human Understanding*, and it would seem that all these centuries of painstaking research was needed to show the irrelevance of metaphysical assumptions involved. We are told of Hume's metaphysic being challenged, as if his rejection of self, innate reason, cause and effect, were of no avail, and as if basic theological assumptions are substantiated in modern problems of personality. This seems to revive a mystical technique, but it also seems strange that our psychologist should not have seen another "fascinating" chapter, in the passing of the cult of mysticism.

Historically we observe a social process. But what is possible in physics is impossible in psychology and vice-versa. These two processes are opposite in character. In physics we have a build-up from basic criteria, but in psychology the reverse, in a progressive elimination of unwanted assumptions. But these are the basic assumptions of religion and a comprehensive understand-

ing of psychology needs an understanding of religion. But rejection of the body and soul animism does not entail a denial of the psychological aspect of experience, and to hold only to the physical is to lose sight of half of experience, and a denial is not an understanding.

H. H. PREECE.

## NIEMOJEWSKI AND ASTRAL WORSHIP

A COMMUNICATION has reached me from Dr. Antoni Czubrynski of Poland, on the work of A. Niemojewski, who, early this century, wrote a study of the Jesus problem from the standpoint of sun and astral worship, under the title of *God—Jesus*.

Dr. C. is, he tells me, the "unique disciple and follower" of Niemojewski, who later wrote more volumes on the problem and, in fact, more or less changed some of his ideas; so much so that he withdrew his first book from circulation.

Dr. C. helped Niemojewski in his work, and between them they wrote four volumes: *Introduction to Astral Worship*, *Astral Worship in the Old Testament*, *Astral Worship in the New Testament*, *Bibliography on Astral Worship* (about 1,000 pages in all).

They both came to the conclusion that while the actual writing in the Bible is based on sun and astral myths, this does not mean that the personages described did not have a real existence. That is (as far as I can understand the worthy doctor, for his English is almost unintelligible), the sacred narratives tell the stories about both historical and mythical personages in terms of myth.

Thus Jesus was really an historical person, though the Gospel writers worked in as many astral myths as they could to describe his adventures in going about "doing good." It appears also, Dr. C. assures me, that a friend of Jesus called Joseph ben Iona, left a papyrus manuscript which was discovered by Prof. Juan Valdez of California in Jerusalem, and published in 1925. It proves that Jesus was a man and not a God, and it shows the apostles as first-class astral worship believers and writers.

Dr. C. has a copy of this four-volume work in manuscript, and would like it to be published—and indeed it is a pity that any work of scholarship such as this cannot be produced. But the grave international situation, which has now lasted for so many years and which looks like becoming graver, makes it impossible for any publisher to risk his money on what is after all an academic discussion. Besides, a thousand pages in the Polish language, full of technical words, would want a very capable translator, not very easy to get.

In the meantime, this journal would gladly publish any article from the pen of Dr. C. if he cares to submit it—though I hope he will not mind my saying that his English is quite impossible to understand when dealing with some particular and detailed aspect of the myth problem. If he can write good French, I could translate it.

I should like to add, however, that I totally disagree with him on the historicity of Jesus, who is, in my opinion, quite unhistorical. I have even come to believe that the whole of the twelve Apostles and Paul are equally mythical. As for the story told by Joseph ben Iona, it is just sheer fraud. Christianity is sun and astral worship with phallic elements grafted upon it. If Dr. Czubrynski can produce any evidence to prove that there was a Jesus Christ, I should like to study it. So far, I have come across no such evidence.

H. CUTNER.

## THE KIRK AND "KRIEGSPIEL!"

AN arresting title, methinks! Let us see.

After all, the clergy and Mars are not strangers to each other. No need to delve into historical evidence.

Sometimes, however, the priesthood "butts in" to instruct a general, or even give him orders. An example of this can be seen in the case of the battle of Dunbar, which was noted by Milton in a line of his poetry.

On the Pentland hills a Scots army was entrenched. In the plain below facing them was Cromwell and his army. It was a case of "Your move, please!" The general of the Caledonians desired Cromwell to attempt to storm his position. Cromwell saw it meant probable defeat—if he did. A good general can always see what can be done, and cannot. When Cæsar invaded Germany he only went in far enough to achieve his purpose—and then he went back to the Rhine. Napoleon went to Moscow, and . . . To return to Dunbar:—

Cromwell was waiting for the enemy to come down and offer battle. The opposing general, who had seen service in Germany, figured he had better not.

Here comes in the Kirk.

A group of "meenisters," Presbyterian, a black-frocked covey of crows, from time to time, were wont to invade the general's quarters and urge him to descend and destroy the enemy, especially Cromwell, that "son of Beliel."

Aware that he had to endure clerical interference, although unwilling to do so, he politely listened—and did nothing they wanted done.

Cromwell, seeing that the enemy would never come down, determined to entice it to do so. He made ostentatious parade of departure to other fields of campaign. The Scots general perceived it, and thought the best thing to do was to ignore it. Not so, the "meenisters!" Nor, probably, the army. Now was the time to jump on Cromwell's back!

The crow group of clergy made for the Scots general. "What was the 'gane' to let that 'son of Beliel' get away like that? The 'guid Laird' would surely call him to account on the Day of Judgment for impious dereliction 'o' dooty!" An harassed man can only stand so much!

The general issued an order. Down came the "braw Scots," but in inspired disorder. The inspiration was a probable victory. Cromwell was satisfied to see the descent of the foe. "The Lord," he said, "hath delivered them into our hands." He had! "Yes, suh!" He had!

There is a fine picture in the Tate Gallery showing Cromwell and his Ironside cavalry, swords drawn, chanting a Psalm prior to charging.

As usual, Cromwell's cavalry swept the field. Probably the most chagrined spectators were not the Scots general and his staff, but the hoodies, whom the general consigned to Sheol, even, the chances are, to Gehenna!

GEORGE F. LAWS.

"Doyle's own notion of a materialist was a person who disbelieved in a life beyond the grave. Yet it could easily be shown that most materialistic people are those who are so much in love with themselves, their power, their pleasure, their comfort in this world that they believe devoutly in a continuation of these blessings elsewhere; whereas the spiritual people are those who, having gladly sacrificed the material advantages of this life for its immaterial beauties, are not interested in the persistence of personality and face extinction without a qualm. It is usually the earthbound egotist who longs to be immortal."—*Conan Doyle*, by Hesketh Pearson, page 174.

## ACID DROPS

"Picture Post," which now and then devotes space to Rome and its claims, is always strongly supported by Rome's sheep. In a recent issue, it publishes a letter from a satisfied reader who now, like Oliver Twist, wants more articles on the same lines. And we are sure plenty of space will be given free and freely to advance the claims of the Vatican. There is no other system in the world which can command such space and authority in the press for "nix" and which almost always gets away with it.

**The Rev. C. G. Bolam**—who is a Unitarian—does not agree that the teaching of Jesus is so beautifully "simple." "We can no longer accept the notion," he declared in the *Inquirer*, "that by taking a sentence or two from the sayings of Jesus, we affirm the foundation content of religion." This will be sad news for all true believers—to say nothing of many of our reverent Rationalists. But all will be well if we realise "the essential maturity of Christ." But is not such a realisation delightfully "simple"?

**Television now**, according to the *Church of England Newspaper*, is going to be the means whereby millions of people will be drawn to Christ. It is truly pathetic to see how these pious journalists are anxious to rope in everything for religion. Have not all the people who pay their broadcasting fee the same rights? We are told that "television has twice in recent months taken its viewers to morning prayers"—a gross abuse, in our opinion of a State-run concern. The above journal wants church services to be a regular feature—anything, anything, but the plain, simple and beautiful message of Jesus in church.

**Sir Henry Self's Presidential** address at the Modern Churchmen's Union Conference proved his "modernism" by insisting that "man to-day is religious." Unfortunately religion is a wee bit "archaic" and "outmoded"—so he prefers to resign himself to "an unhappy agnosticism." Well, we are bound to admit that agnosticism *per se* may be a little "unhappy," but most of those who profess it seem far happier than the average followers of the Man of Sorrows. Sir Henry appears to think that if only the Gospel were "reformed" in some way, Christianity would be saved. The truth is, of course, and both he and Dr. Inge know it quite well, Christianity, the true brand born of the Gospels, and the teachings of Jesus, is *dead*. And no "reform" can save it.

**It is really too bad.** First, the Pope is about to proclaim as a dogma, the Assumption of Mary and thus upset all chances of a reunion with the Church of England, apart from forcing the Archbishops of Canterbury and York into angry disclaimers; and second, Dr. Fisher has now to deal with the "heretics" in his own camp. For the Pope, Dr. Fisher is a heretic and for the Archbishop Dr. Wright is another. How splendidly these Christians agree with each other!

**Dr. Wright throws** overboard the Virgin Birth—like many other good and fervent Christians. Dr. Fisher considers it an "historical fact." Why any Christian whatever should jib at the Assumption and accept the Virgin Birth is assuredly one of those mysteries which only Christianity can produce in such abundance. Both are insults to intelligence but where Faith reigns, what

matters such insults? Anyway, Dr. Wright has been we believe, sacked.

**The Pope's** latest Encyclical condemns Atheism, of course, whether in "historical or dialectical materialism or existentialism." Other things may be real enemies but the greatest must always be Atheism—and quite rightly. It is Atheism, far more than any other "ism" which is the enemy of all religion as it gives the only logical reply to supernatural pretensions.

**But what about Evolution?** It used to be condemned completely—as it is now by many Bible believers. But the Pope is now a little more cautious. He says, "The teachers of the Church permit this to be the object of research and discussion by those competent in science and theology." No complete condemnation here. And why? Because Evolution has won all along the line, a depressing thought for all anti-Evolutionists.

**But it is interesting** to learn that while the first eleven chapters in Genesis "do not conform" exactly to "history in the true sense," yet they do give a "popular" description of "the origin of the human race and the chosen people." It isn't really true and it is really true—you can take your choice. In either case—so long as you believe in the Church of Rome—you will be saved. It is just as simple as that.

**A lady**, Miss Vera Barclay, has written *Darwin is not for Children*, a "challenging book," we are told by the publishers, Messrs. Herbert Jenkins, Ltd. We are quite sure it is "challenging" for children and for similar infantile minds. Miss Barclay evidently imagines that religious anti-evolution tosh will displace evolution. She has a lot to learn—a h-ll of a lot!

**The irrepressible Dean Inge** still appears to enjoy himself flaying some of the primitive beliefs of his colleagues and we sometimes wonder if he is not a little more outspoken since he retired from office. For instance, at Cambridge, he told the Modern Churchmen that they "ought to be thankful that the hideous hell-fire theology is no longer heard in our pulpits." He did not add that Christians ought to be thankful to the early Freethought pioneers who cooled the fires of hell and civilised their religion. Perhaps the Gloomy Dean regards the Freethinkers' efforts with some uneasiness, for the more civilised religion becomes, the less religious it will be.

**Mr. Kenneth Day**, founder of the Brighter Sunday Association, now renamed, The Sunday Freedom Association is hiring a West End theatre in November for a mass meeting to protest against the Sunday Observance Acts. Mr. Day complains that Parliament gave him little support last year, and the Home Office were not interested. His last hope is to organise public opinion so that the authorities will be forced to change the law. Of course, "public opinion" in this case does not include the National Secular Society whose offer of help when the Association was formed last year was ignored, after (we suspect) Misery Martin had proclaimed that the N.S.S. were a lot of wicked atheists.

**The Rev. F. Gardner** must regard churchgoers as a bunch of masochists, for he informed the General Assembly of the United Free Church that the least popular service in the church was the prayer meeting. He nevertheless appealed for more members to join the Prayer Union.

# "THE FREETHINKER"

Telephone No.: Holborn 2601.

41, Gray's Inn Road,  
London, W.C. 1.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

"RIPLEY PRINTING SOCIETY."—Thanks for *Gazette*. See obituary notice.

We regret we cannot insert any of the letters received in connection with contraceptive slot machines. Most of their writers think these columns are open for avowals of Free Love for both sexes, and so have utterly disregarded the question of these machines. In any case, we think the subject has been discussed sufficiently by both sides.

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 FRIEDENKER (Switzerland), DON BASILIO (Italy).

## SUGAR PLUMS

Bradford Branch N.S.S. reports the drawing to a close of an open-air season during which some good hard work has been done in the car park. The brunt of the speaking has been borne by Mr. Harold Day, the Branch President, and he is to be congratulated on his enthusiasm and loyalty to the movement. We understand an indoor syllabus of lectures is being arranged to be held in the Mechanics' Institute. It is hoped that readers within range will consider it a duty to support and encourage the branch activity.

From South London comes a report of a very successful combination of the South London and the Lewisham Branches for open-air work during the season now closing. Meetings have been held regularly in Brockwell Park, audiences have been improving, new members have been made, and many have been the appreciative remarks made concerning the quality of the lectures given. The vitality of Freethought in South London is being rapidly restored and the message sent out to unattached Freethinkers is, "come in and have a go."

We are asked to announce that there will be a Weekend Conference of the Ethical Union at High Leigh, Hoddesden, September 16-18. Programme: D. H. Stott, Finding a Treatment for Juvenile Delinquency; Dora Russell, New Frontiers of Feminism; Hector Hawton, The Prospects for Humanism. There will be a social event with music. Inclusive charge, 32s. 6d. Apply: 4a, Inverness Place, W.2.

The *Church Times* reviewer is by no means impressed with Mr. E. Glover's *Freud or Jung*, which tries to show that in psycho-analysis Freud is always right and his rivals Jung or Adler almost always wrong. It is a pity that Mr. Frank Kenyon's *Psycho-Analysis a Delusion* is not much better known. As the aforementioned reviewer insists, "Psycho-analysis is not yet a science but a complex of warring sects," and "Until the psychologists make peace with one another, their pretensions add up to nonsense." Mr. Kenyon is in very good company.

## SAY WHAT YOU MEAN

INTERROGATED in argument, Joad used to say, "It all depends on what you mean by so-and-so"; his attitude to the definition of terms was fundamentally sound. Unfortunately clear speaking and clear writing are scarce commodities.

In a little book published in 1947,\* the late Mr. Gowans Whyte has given us a study of common errors in the construction of sentences and the use of words; his examples in most cases are taken from the work of professional writers. It is a reflection on our education that Mr Whyte was compelled to point out, and comment upon, the errors. Most of us speak and write so badly that we are unaware of constant mistakes. However, the author is such a kindly and witty critic that he makes his task very enjoyable. To give an idea of the style of this book, I quote the first few paragraphs:—

"The Russians are not content with driving off the enemy's attacks; they are attacking themselves."—*B.B.C. News Bulletin*.

"Miss Florence Horsburgh, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Food, cooks and queues herself."—*Evening News* (London).

These are examples of a very common error. The pronoun introduced for the purpose of giving emphasis is separated from the word to be emphasised. In both cases the displacement makes the sentence nonsensical, the Russian forces being represented as committing mass suicide while driving off the enemy, and Miss Horsburgh as performing a complex sacrificial operation.

So much for our author; for what follows I alone am responsible. I am so constantly hearing and reading involved, ambiguous, and misleading sentences, that mention of some of them may interest readers. We will skip very obvious blunders like "his boots needed mending badly," and "what that naughty child wants is a good spanking." No prizes are offered for reconstructing these sentences.

I pick up a weekly paper, an advertisement catches my eye:—

"LEARN TO PLAY THE PIANO BY POST."

Inside the paper, I read the life story of Andrew Carnegie, the multi-millionaire. Early in life he was so poor that "he had only one shirt and a pair of socks to his back."

In the "Readers' Letters" department of *Reynolds*, a lady suggests that "Mr. Churchill should be told to retire in no uncertain fashion."

Let us come nearer home. I give the first paragraph of an article in *The Freethinker* of August 13, by T. D. Smith:—

"TEACHERS AND RELIGION"

I notice in the papers recently that an M.P. has been asking for the sacking of those teachers who do not believe in the Christian religion on the ground that they are not competent to teach what they do not believe."

What the writer conveys is that teachers do not believe in the Christian religion on the ground that they are not competent to teach what they do not believe.

Here's a sentence from the preface to *Androcles and the Lion*, by Bernard Shaw:—

"ANDROCLES AND THE LION"

Later on, when the new sect conquered the Gentile west, where the dispute had no practical application,

\* *Anthology of Errors*, by Adam Gowans Whyte, B.Sc. Price 5s. Chaterson, Ltd., 5, Johnson's Court, Fleet St., E.C.4.

the other ceremony—that of eating the god—produced a still more disastrous dispute, in which a difference of belief, not as to the obligation to perform the ceremony, but as to whether it was a symbolic or a real ingestion of divine substance, produced persecution, slaughter, hatred, and everything that Jesus loathed, on a monstrous scale”

I may be told that there is a comma after “Jesus loathed,” but the sentence is of clumsy construction, and all ambiguity would be removed, by putting “on a monstrous scale” after the word “produced.”

Mr. Joseph McCabe frequently has me guessing. In *A Rationalist Encyclopædia*, look up the article on Lourdes. You will find this sentence:—

“The widow of one of the officials, Baron Massy, handed a correct manuscript account of what really happened to the Jesuits, and they suppressed it.”

Assuming for the moment that I was a foreign scholar not well versed in the vagaries of English writers, I might be in doubt as to who handed the manuscript, and to whom. Was it a widow called Baron Massy, and what bearing on the legend has “what really happened to the Jesuits,” and who suppressed what?

Correcting the mistakes of other persons is a delightful way of making enemies. The other day my daughter said, “When I was first married,” and when I asked how many times she had been married, she was not amused. She got her own back a little later when I slipped up badly myself. Our cat recently had four kittens. I was unaware of the age of the little ones, and seeing the girls busy with animal food, I naively asked, “Are the kittens eating themselves yet?”

Apart from actual errors in grammar, and faulty construction, sentences may be so long and involved that an unnecessary strain is put upon the reader.

I have just been reading in the *Radio Times* an article on the forthcoming Edinburgh Festival, written by J. Murray Watson, editor of *The Scotsman*. Seldom have I read anything more lugubrious. If Edinburgh school-teachers want to punish their boys, I would suggest that they set them to analyse and peruse the work of Mr. Murray Watson. Here is a sample sentence:—

Another interesting revival is Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, to be produced by the Old Vic in the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland, where Lindsay's satire previously held the stage or rather the open platform, and it is an interesting speculation whether the experience will lead to the revival of this mode of presentation of suitable plays elsewhere and to a return of a more wholehearted style of acting and production.”

There are umpteen other sentences, equally long and tortuous, in the article. I know now why Glasgow folks hate Edinburgh.

Home again to *The Freethinker*, to a recent article by F. A. Ridley, on *The Egyptian Jehovah*:—

“How wide, in fact, was the gulf between the religion of the pre-exilic Jews preserved by the Egyptian Jews two centuries after it perished in Judea itself, and post-exilic monotheistic ‘Judaism,’ as finally moulded by Ezra and Nehemiah in the 5th century B.C., was decisively indicated when ‘the Jewish army’ received, at its own request from Jerusalem, Nehemiah's representative Hananiah, who, as our documents record, in 419 B.C., paid a visit to Elephantine.”

There is nothing grammatically wrong and nothing obscure, yet when I had gone over a page to finish the

sentence, I found I had to go back again to straighten it out. It may be considered a small point, but had the same matter been distributed between two, or more sentences, the meaning would have been apprehended instantly. I would lay it down that if an intelligent reader has to go back over a passage or paragraph to puzzle out a meaning, then the writer has failed in some particular.

J. EFFEL.

## ONCE AGAIN

IN a letter (*The Freethinker*, July 30) J.R., referring to a statement in my last article, poses the following questions: “When Greene said ‘his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide,’ why does Mr. Yates say he referred to Shakespeare's work as a playwright? Considering that Shakespeare's first ‘invention’ was published after Greene's death, how could anything that Greene wrote furnish evidence for ‘Shakespeare's dramatic authorship’?”

At the risk of unduly prolonging the controversy I will answer them.

The poem of *Venus and Adonis*, “the first heir of his invention,” as its author calls it, was registered on April 28, 1593, or eight months after Greene's death. How long before that it had been composed is unknown.

In his book *The Art and Life of William Shakespeare*, Hazelton Spencer says—“Some have inferred that the poem antedates his earliest plays and even that he wrote it in the country, and brought it along with him to London as a kind of literary passport. In styling it his eldest born child he is thinking of publication. . . . It is inconceivable that this teeming imagination brought forth nothing till its owner was nearly thirty. It is much more likely that Shakespeare was writing verses in his late teens, and verses and perhaps plays in his early and middle twenties.” Ben Jonson mentions *Titus Andronicus* in the Introduction to *Bartholomew Fair*. If Jonson is accurate this dates *Titus* not later than 1589, or three years before Greene's death, and four years before the publication of *Venus and Adonis*.

For decisive evidence, however, that Greene knew and referred to Shakespeare as a dramatic author, let us turn to his “famous allusion,” as a previous adverse critic (somewhat inconsistently) terms it. As its significance is always either ignored or belittled by the ante-Shakespeare cranks we will (craving the reader's sufferance) examine it a little closely.

In his *Goatsworth of Wit* Greene says: (1) “There is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers.” Shakespeare was neither a University wit nor, in the opinion of such, a properly cultivated poet; he was, therefore, as a dramatist, to be regarded as an upstart. That he collaborated in, or recast and furbished up, the work of other writers, is allowed by the best critics—hence the sneer, “beautified with our feathers.”

(2) “. . . That with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide.” It is incredible that Greene could have so closely parodied a line in *Henry VI* unless the play had been written and acted before he died. In quoting the line he substitutes only the one word, “player's.”

(3) “. . . Supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you.” To bombast means to stuff or pad, and is here applied to language inflated with pompous, high-sounding words. To bombast out a blank verse is not to speak such words as an actor, but to write them as an author. That such is Greene's meaning is shown by the following words, “as the best of you,” that is, the other dramatists, Christopher

Marlowe, Thomas Nashe and George Peele—all university men—to whom his exhortation is addressed. To say that it is an attack "not on the author of the play, but on an actor" is purblind perversity. What motive had Greene to attack Shakespeare in especial as an actor? There were other and more prominent players, as Burbage, Phillips, Kempe, etc.; but against them Greene makes only a general complaint of neglect while singling out the "upstart crow" for particular vituperation. Greene was a writer of drama, and if Shakespeare had been no more than an actor, there could have been no reason for the jealous animosity his outburst displays. It was Shakespeare's success as a dramatist that galled the talented, broken-down libertine.

(4) "... And bring an absolute *Johannes fac totum*." That is, a Jack of all work—an obvious gibe at Shakespeare as player and playwright.

(5) "... Is in his own conceit the only Shakescene in a country"—an unmistakable sneering play on the dramatist's name.

If J.R. or any other anti-Shakespeare critic can (with all the assistance afforded by Sir George Greenwood's "two masterpieces") give us a more likely interpretation of Greene's "famous allusion" I, for one, will readily accept it. In the meantime, however, I have no hesitation in asserting my belief that, if the expressions which I have severally considered, do not point to Shakespeare, as a playwright, then they have no meaning, for there is no one else to whom they could apply.

A. YATES.

VICTORY

We've just taken a vote in our Borough,  
The padre was there with his tribe.  
We've conquered and crushed opposition—  
On our tablets these words we'll inscribe—  
"Hallelujah, Hosanna and Selah,  
Let the psalms of the righteous resound,  
The hosts of the Lord are triumphant  
They've got poor Old Nick gagged and bound!"  
"We'd have had sinful Sundays here one day  
But old Satan's course here, now, is run  
They wanted the Pictures on Sunday—  
We've dished it—and 'Misery's' won!"

ARTHUR E. CARPENTER.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE LATE HARRY EVETTS

Sir,—Please correct the statement in last week's *Freethinker* regarding the death of Harry Evetts, who died at Nottingham Road, Derby, and not at Nottingham, as stated; the mistake may be mine, for I may have omitted "Rd." in my letter. He was cremated at Nottingham.—Yours, etc.,

HAROLD STRANGE.

A CORRECTION

Sir,—As a regular reader of *The Freethinker* for over 20 years, perhaps you would insert the following correction. In your issue of this week, under the heading "Sugar Plums," your first paragraph refers to the many varied publications of the "Manchester Vegetarian Society," and in particular to Ivan Baker's latest compilation. I would respectfully point out that there is no such society as the "Manchester Vegetarian Society"—this should have read "The Vegetarian Society."

This is the original National Society—founded in 1847—whose headquarters happen to have been in or around Manchester.

This is but a slight alteration, though a very important one, as the Society is national, not local.

I thank you for your kind recommendation of the Society's varied publications—to anyone interested the Secretary would be pleased to forward literature, also to address branches of the N.S.S. upon subjects of food production, etc., which are of vital interest to each one of us in these days of increasing world food shortages.—Yours, etc.,

EDWARD H. KIRBY.

PARTHENOGENESIS

Sir,—The Bournemouth "Echo" of August 24 reports the statement of Dr. Wright, teacher at St. Augustine's College for students for priesthood, that even Christian scholars were now beginning to question the Bible story of the Virgin Birth; but that the Archbishop of Canterbury had announced that this belief was an essential dogma of the Christian Faith.

Now, in Genesis vi, 4, we are told that in the old days it used to be quite a common thing for the Sons of God (angels) to have children by the daughters of man, and the Holy Scriptures of certain of the older religions tell us that the Saviour Gods Buddha, Krishna, Zarathustra and Mithra were all born of Virgin Mothers conceived of Holy Spirits, so surely the Christian Saviour God would be expected to conform to this ancient tradition? It is an axiom that if a thing is true the more it is examined into, pulled to pieces and criticised the more clearly will its truth stand out, but this should not apply to our emotional beliefs. To the stake with these scholars!—Yours, etc.,

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

OBITUARY

FRED LEE

It is with regret that we record the death of Mr. Fred Lee at Alfreton, aged 84, on August 26. He was a life-long Socialist and Freethinker, and for many years a member of the Alfreton Urban District Council where he fought long and persistently for the opening of cinemas and recreation grounds on Sundays. He made no secret of his opposition to all religion and bigotry, and his colleagues on the Council all testify to his upright, honest, and straightforward character. A Secular Service was conducted by Mr. T. M. Mosley, at Wilford Hill Crematorium, Nottingham. Mr. Lee leaves a widow to whom we tender our sincerest sympathy.

T.M.M.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

OUTDOOR

- Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. H. DAY.
- Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Sunday, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Messrs. ROTHWELL and SHARPLES.
- Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. J. BARKER.
- Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Platt Fields).—Sunday, 3 p.m.: Messrs. C. McCALL, L. SMITH, R. BILLINGS and G. WOODCOCK. (St. Mary's Gate, Blitzed Site).—7-45 p.m.: Messrs. C. McCALL, L. SMITH, R. BILLINGS and G. WOODCOCK. (Alexandra Park Gates).—Wednesday: Messrs. C. McCALL, L. SMITH, R. BILLINGS and G. WOODCOCK. (St. Mary's Gate).—Lunch-hour Lectures every weekday, 1 p.m.: Mr. G. WOODCOCK.
- Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Saturday, September 9, 6-30 p.m.: Messrs. A. ELSMERE and T. M. MOSLEY.
- North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, 12 noon: Messrs. A. CALVERLEY and L. EBURY (Highbury Corner).—7 p.m.: Mr. L. EBURY.
- Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barker's Pool).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. A. SAMMS.
- South London and Lewisham Branch N.S.S. (Brockwell Park, Herne Hill).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: Mr. F. A. RIDLEY.
- West London Branch N.S.S. (Hyde Park, Marble Arch).—Sunday, 4 p.m.: Mr. C. E. WOOD.

INDOOR

- South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "Fifty Years of British Morals," Mr. S. K. RATCLIFFE.

£100 secures a 3-room Cabin standing in 1 acre of ground, 6 miles from a country town. Inquiries to: Box 114, Pioneer Press, 41, Grays Inn Road, London W.C.1.

## HAWORTH TO-DAY

THERE is scarcely a part of the British Isles which is not holy ground to the literary pilgrim. One need only instance Dartmoor for the lover of the work of Mr. Eden Phillpotts, Exmoor for the admirer of R. D. Blackmore, or Cornwall for the supporter of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (to draw examples from the West), for it to be obvious that in these matters the person of literary interests has an added incentive to travel, even in what may appear to be areas of Britain already hackneyed holiday spots.

But, of all the places in England which still seem haunted by the spirit of the literary past (not even excepting Stratford-upon-Avon and what Mr. Ivor Brown called the "Shakespeare industry"), none can equal a bleak spot on the Yorkshire moors, a country parsonage from which, about a hundred years ago, there emerged a group of books that have since taken the world by storm.

Lovers of literature will perpetually argue as to the respective merits of *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, *Villette* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*; on one thing all will agree—that these products of the human imagination will always rank among the greatest. And that gloomy parsonage at Haworth in Yorkshire will, as a result, always be a spot to fascinate those with a touch of the literary imagination.

I went there for the first time this year. I think that readers who share my delight in the work of the Brontës will possibly be interested in what I found.

I was staying with relatives in Leeds. I went by 'bus to Ilkley, that delightful town where the main street leads straight on to the moors. From Ilkley I took another 'bus. In the front it bore the magic word "Haworth." It seemed to me almost as if one had seen a bus labelled "Wonderland," or "Lilliput," or one of the other magic kingdoms that wait for us inside the covers of a book. Still, it chuffed along the lanes of Yorkshire. The scenery, wild enough at the beginning, took on an even wilder aspect, and the bus finally stopped outside a rather dismal mill in a valley.

I had asked the conductress whether they went up the hill, for I had been warned that the church and the parsonage entailed a fairly considerable climb. She said: "If you want to go to Brontë you'll have to walk up, or wait for a special 'bus; they don't run very often." It seemed strangely appropriate that the top of the hill should be known as "Brontë." I wondered, however, what Anne, Charlotte, or the wild-imagined Emily would have thought had they known that in 1949 their part of Haworth should, in common parlance, be called by their name.

Up the hill I climbed. My wife struggled by my side. My small son, doubtless wondering why he should be brought to this odd place, danced on the pavement before us. The cobbled street was indeed steep. The houses on each side were neat and clean. Now and then one of them would break into a rash of picture postcards—one of the penalties of a place which had given birth to famous sons or daughters. But at the top of the hill we were rewarded.

The first building to come into sight was the Black Bull Inn, the place where Branwell Brontë, the enigmatic brother of the novelists, drank away his misery. Even here a notice stated that all who wished to examine the rooms with Brontë associations were requested to put a small sum of money in a box, the contents of which were to be devoted to a charity. All around were receipts indicating the sums of money that had been so spent.

I went into the Inn, as will be obvious from my knowledge of the charity box. I drank half a pint of beer to the memory of Branwell Brontë. The bar was a dismal place, I thought, all panelled in dark oak. It may have been rebuilt in the past hundred years (I did not inquire as to this), but it is not difficult to imagine the place as it must have been before electric light and similar modern conveniences came into being. Branwell must have sat there, drinking his heart away, watching the flickering lights on the dark walls, and, in the end, staggering back to the parsonage, where probably a wiggling from his stern old father awaited him.

For the parsonage is less than five minutes away. It is around the parsonage (now a Brontë Museum, in the care of the Brontë Society) that the life of upper Haworth revolves. It has been preserved with loving care as nearly as possible as it was in the days when the girls made their way down to the little Post Office and despatched their manuscripts to far-away London.

There are Brontë manuscripts (including some of the tiny notebooks in which they wrote some childish stories, notebooks which have lately been described by Miss Phyllis Bentley), much of the furniture of the original home, including the horse-hair sofa upon which Emily died, and even some of their clothes. The place has, of course, the atmosphere of a museum in places—especially in the room now equipped as a library, where there are copies of practically everything that has been written about the Brontës, an even programmes of the many plays that have been built around their lives. But some rooms seem almost as they were in the long ago. Dainty, delicate water-colours by the children are on the walls; there is one massive oil portrait by Branwell, characteristically of a brewer. Everywhere one is conscious of the Brontë atmosphere. And when one looks out of the windows on to the churchyard, where gravestones almost touch one another, so crowded are they, one realises how it was that the three Brontë girls were so pitifully conscious of man's mortality.

The church, I must confess, was somewhat of a disappointment. It was rebuilt after the Brontë connection with Haworth had ceased, and it has not the magic of the rest of the place. But Haworth, apart from the church, is still much as it must have been when the sudden chills of *Wuthering Heights* were first confided to paper.

All too soon our visit came to an end. We had tea in a "Brontë Cafe"; that name was one of the least felicitous of the touches which one met, inevitably, I suppose, in a place which has in a sense become the centre of a cult.

As we walked down the hill, past a delightful little park which has been made beside the road, we wondered. Did those girls know, in their Yorkshire fastness, that they were making works that would live? Or did they merely scribble their stories because they had that strangely-compelling urge to write which all born writers must know? One thing is sure. As long as men feel the desire to penetrate to the heart of a literary mystery, so long will they go to Haworth. And for anyone with a touch of imagination Haworth will continue to fascinate. I know that when next I am in the north I shall go to the grim old village again.

JOHN ROWLAND.

LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, An Anthology for Freethinkers.  
By William Kent. Price, cloth 5s., paper 3s. 6d.  
postage 3d