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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Freethought and War

ONE of our minor tragedies is the way in which so much of the best Freethought writing has virtually disappeared. Lost in the old volumes of the *National Reformer* and *The Freethinker*, to mention only two of the journals devoted to Freethought, are countless articles which read as fresh to-day as when they were written, not only in style, but in thought. G. W. Foote, James Thomson, George Jacob Holyoake, Charles Bradlaugh, J. M. Wheeler, and many lesser writers, unselfishly devoted their lives, not merely to the "best of all causes," the liberation of the human mind, but they dealt with many other pressing problems, sometimes of temporary need, sometimes of universal application.

Take the question of war. From the dawn of history mankind has been never free either from war or the threat of war. Ancient civilisations practically disappeared, nations were "liquidated," the horror and terror of war brought almost infinite suffering everywhere—famine, fire, rape, looting, slavery, torture, mass executions, followed war everywhere, and we are still as far from genuine peace as at any time in man's history.

It is a bitter thought; but whatever may be urged against Freethought no one can say that the problem of war was not courageously faced by our leaders and universally condemned in scathing books and articles and pamphlets.

Look at G. W. Foote's pamphlet *The Shadow of the Sword*, written in 1885, and perhaps quite forgotten to most if not all readers of this journal these days. Foote did not mince his words. In scathing terms, he indicted war, and it may be true to say that this pamphlet of only 16 pages is one of the bitterest he ever wrote, and no one more than Foote could write more bitterly. Here are his first words: "The man-eating monster of fiction is terrible enough to romantic young minds under the spell of the story teller, but he is almost genial and harmless in comparison with the real Ogre of war. Generation after generation this frightful monster gorges himself on human flesh and blood solacing his intervals of human satiety with the wine of human tears. . . ." What he would have said had his powerful pen been with us now after two World Wars one can only guess; perhaps he would have despaired of writing altogether.

War is with us now, and the threat of a bigger war is darkening human liberty and thought. War and terrorist revolution are now the trump cards of "ideologists." War, we are told, is the inevitable prelude to the "dictatorship of the proletariat" when the overthrow of the "capitalist" class must be thorough and complete. Then will emerge a "governing" class composed of the "workers of the world" only, until every trace of the Ogre of Capitalism is destroyed for ever, and a period of perfect peace will be ushered in when there will be no wars and no government. It is a beautiful picture and is about as silly and naive as are almost all Utopias.

That there are people who can talk like this—I have heard them on the radio—is one of the saddest commentaries on human intelligence I know. There are many causes of war and revolution, some of which may be due to Capitalism, but no more so than to Socialism and Communism and Fascism. The rejection of Totalitarianism by peace- and liberty-loving people may bring us a war. The struggle for existence, that is, the struggle for food and a better standard of living, may bring us to war. Malthus, 150 years ago, gave war as one of the results of what he called "over-population," and in spite of the many attacks on his theories, notably by Marxists, he has never been proved wrong. Foote, Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, Mill, J. M. Robertson, were all Malthusians, recognising the terrible effects the pressure of population has on the means of subsistence. The reply that there may be plenty of pie to-morrow, but unfortunately none to-day, is about the extent of the best of the arguments against Malthus.

The great Freethinkers named above were all, in addition, strongly opposed to Totalitarianism, no matter what it was called by ideologists—Socialism, Communism, Fascism, Marxism, Nazism, or what not. They knew well what absolute power meant, whether in the hands of the proletariat or their leaders. And needless to say, they all hated war.

What can we who share their views do about war? What can be the position of, I will not say Atheists, but Freethinkers?

We are a very small number lost perhaps in the shrieking and yelling of ideologists; surely we can support, at all costs, the only body which has, as its own great ideal, the prevention of war.

After the close of the First World War the League of Nations was formed with the express purpose of eliminating war from mankind; and had it been properly supported and vigorously led, war as such, might well have been banished for ever. But, as is well known, dictators like Lenin, Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini, with their own peoples solidly behind them, and ready to go to war at a word from them, were far too strong to be removed. The Second World War brought disillusionment to the followers of Hitler and Mussolini, but I am by no means certain that, given another great "Leader," whether he would not be followed into war just as enthusiastically if his followers had some assurance that most of the fighting, looting, raping, torturing and mass-murdering, was done in somebody else's country.

To stop this, there can be only one way, and that is, to support wholeheartedly, the United Nations, the body set up by most of the peoples of the world to stop war. I am of the opinion of Bertrand Russell that if a nation, any nation, wants to bring about war, it should be stopped at all costs—if there was no other way, then let us use the atom bomb.

The war-mongers must be taught a lesson. War should no longer be tolerated by civilisation. I am not interested as to who "dominates" the United Nations.

but I prefer being dominated by any democratically led country to being led by a Totalitarian one. I prefer free elections and a Government in which an Opposition can play a vital part.

I do not believe for a moment that it is possible to give the world—yet—any body which can be perfect or which can always give unanimous decisions. And I say quite seriously that if Freethought is to survive, it should ally itself with the one body pledged to promote peace and abolish war—the United Nations.

H. CUTNER.

STRANGE STORIES OF SAVAGE AFRICA

MR. F. KAIGH'S *Witchcraft and Magic of Africa* (Lesley, 1947, 12s. 6d.) surveys the religious scene of the Dark Continent from the standpoint of an occultist. In a foreword to this volume, Montague Summers cites a succession of eminent men of the past who firmly believed in the reality of wizardry and he affirms that the tales of lycanthropy long since recorded have now been verified by Mr. Kaigh, who positively witnessed a native man and girl, during the frenzy of a dance, "turn into Jackals before his very eyes."

After this astounding statement the reader is prepared for startling revelations and he is not disappointed. Yet, at times, when considering the quantities of whisky consumed by the witch doctors and the author and his friends themselves, one wonders whether any of them were sufficiently sober to observe anything accurately. For in the chapter on Propitiation there is described a resurrection even more remarkable than that of Lazarus. In this case also, the corpse was in an advanced stage of putrefaction. Yet, after the customary ceremonial, the dead chief not only reappeared and sat on his throne, but responded to the officiating witch doctor's request to eat, and imbibe beer. Indeed, Kaigh solemnly avers that "this is no mirage, no conjured-up ectoplasmic simulacrum. I saw him as clearly as the noonday sun." And, he proceeds, that previous to this experience, he regarded all concerned as the product of witch doctor's trickery.

Another of these remarkable occurrences is that of a wandering cranium of a baboon, the most maliciously destructive of African animals. The natives believe these animals sometimes capture natives and interbreed with them. To protect the crops from their depredations boys are employed to scare them. One so employed was never molested by the beasts, and Kaigh concluded that they had forsaken his area and he was transferred to another district when the destructiveness of the baboons became so serious that the boy was recalled. He was an unprepossessing, stinking creature who wore peculiar amulets "strangely unlike the usual ones so frequently worn as charms against sickness, snake bite, spirits and the devil knows what else." Some of these amulets were shown to Lokanzi, a famous witch doctor, who deemed them evil but said no more.

After dissension on the compound, this suspected boy was denounced by the others as a witch and was boycotted. Payments were made for every baboon killed, but the ostracised boy had never slain one and Kaigh charged him with cowardice. This was not resented and Kaigh lost his temper and threatened "to shoot him in mistake for the baboon he resembled." This threat caused the boy to rush away just like the animal he resembled, screaming its cry as he ran. Later, the head of an old male baboon crashed into Kaigh's dwelling when the baboon boy reappeared claiming the money for

the slain animal. After the boy's departure the head was found standing upright and grinning. Kaigh and a friend were bewildered and alarmed; fortified themselves with whisky and waited impatiently for daylight. Then: "The boss houseboy came in with the breakfast. He looked at the bottles on the floor, then went out again—sensible fellow!"

Our author consulted his favourite witch doctor concerning this weird phenomenon and he agreed as a friend to enter the spirit realm to slay the evil shades of the baboon boy and the headless baboon. This, however, was a very arid enterprise, and much whisky was essential to its success. "It was a full week," we learn, "before he would attempt his psychic journey and every day before the projected journey seemed to be a thirstier day than before. There was no doubt that he liked his whisky—or rather my whisky. I often wonder how many others committed the penal offence of filling him up in response to his persuasive tongue. He said none, but he was a congenital liar."

Kaigh condemns the official British attitude towards the Zulu and other black peoples. He avers that: "pseudo military prisons throughout Africa are crammed with bewildered men and women too, who, by obedience to their own laws have contravened the white code." He urges that, if European influences have proved salutary with the few natives they contact, the mass of the people remain unaffected. Not only have the civil authorities failed; the missionaries also miscarry. "Up to recent years," it is stated, "the whole educational establishments for native Africa were mission-sponsored and run. And yet they, too, have failed. Ask any employer of native labour. Times without number I have seen them refuse to sign on 'mission boys.' I admit that after some horrible experiences I was one of the refusers. The mission boy far from being a Christian is, with the exception of one solitary tribe, the only heathen in Africa."

The witch doctor is apparently the most powerful personality in black Africa. He works in secret and lives in constant antagonism to the white officials. But he is so venerated and feared that the natives rarely, if ever, betray him, for his services as surgeon and doctor are greatly esteemed. They are also astute business men who compel their clients to pay heavily for their services. They practise many methods "apart from the decoction of poisons, in which they are veritable Borgias, which are very difficult to pin on them in a court of law." These soothsayers and sorcerers form an exclusive caste, hereditary in character, and apparently undergo a long course of initiation as all are elderly or middle-aged practitioners.

Kaigh deals in detail with the many weird customs of the natives. The smelling out of witches and their ordeals, trials, confessions and punishments are all reviewed. It is noteworthy that the ashes of the burnt bodies of convicted witches become the sole property of the witch doctor for which he pays nothing. He converts the ashes into potent medicine for which the most exorbitant prices are charged. Kaigh admits that witch doctors' trickery is of a very high order, sufficiently high to delude any average European, especially a susceptible surgeon, such as our author obviously is.

T. F. PALMER.

If you can convince me of an error, I shall be glad to change my opinions; for truth is my business, and right information hurts none. He that continues in ignorance and mistake is he that suffers harm.

Marcus Aurelius.

MOTHER LOVE

I

ALONE but expectant a woman sat on a rickety chair at a table in a one-room apartment of a tenement house. The sounds of the narrow sidestreet floated up to her ears unheeded. She was too used to them to notice them as anything but normal. Small children playing noisily or quarrelling shrilly; women who sounded as if disputing loudly but were merely exchanging greetings or gossip from opposite premises or shouting warnings and corrections to unruly youngsters; occasional passing vehicles; these were the main elements to be heard, with a rumbling background, a deep wavering hum of traffic along the main road where this sidestreet debouched into it.

Raising her head from her supporting hands the woman looked round the room. What she saw was one grimy window with a dingy muslin curtain dangling across the lower part. The view above was of roofs, chimney stacks and grey smoky sky. Similar lack of colour and light was the inside feature of the apartment. A smoke-stained ceiling and wallpaper whose pattern had faded to the same dirty yellow all over; paintwork a dull brown; a patch of linoleum on the board floor and a rag rug before the fire and at the side of the bed, drab to tone with all else in the room and outside.

The clothing of the big double-bed at one side of the room was in need of laundering; the brass rails and knobs on the iron bedstead tarnished.

A kettle stood steaming on the small open fire. Crockery, knives, bread, butter, a cake, a pot of jam, milk in a chipped jug and sugar in a cracked basin were casually distributed about the bare table.

Another small chair and a padded easy one with the seat sagging, a sugarbox of coal and a washstand with basin and ewer under the window completed the furniture. At one side of the fireplace was a cupboard from floor to ceiling. The only picture was a cheap oleograph of the Virgin and Child over the bed.

Facing it on the mantelshelf was a spotted mirror flanked by a pile of miscellaneous small articles, among them a worn brush and comb.

The woman matched the room. Her shabby clothes were shapeless and faded like her face and hands and worn shoes. Pushed hard back to a knot her hair was mousy. Irresolution marked her features, the lips slack over irregular teeth and the grey eyes tired. Now and again she raised them to look at the door, meanwhile listening intently for any sound in the street coming near to the bottom of the stairs, her eyes widening and her mouth opening slightly when she heard footsteps.

Eventually her vigil was rewarded. Two pairs of shoes padded on the uncarpeted stairs. One step was heavy and plodding, the other light and springy. As a soft knock tapped on the door Mary Delaney rose up and opened it.

II

Outside stood an elderly nun and a girl about sixteen years of age clad in a dark brown dress and beret with a navy blue coat. The Sister smiled, but her young companion remained serious of visage, almost sulky. Except for that it would have been a pleasant face, calm-eyed and regular of features with the clear complexion of youth, though too pale. It had more even firmness of mouth and jaw than her mother.

Cried the latter affectedly, "Saints be praised! Come in both of ye. I've thought of nothing else all day, looking forward to this moment."

The nun entered the room and stepped aside for the

girl, who came in slowly. Her mother threw her arms around her neck and kissed her with displayed affection, exclaiming, "Lovely it is to have me own child in me arms again."

There was no roused response from the maiden, she receiving the demonstration passively with no change of facial expression, merely setting down her small suitcase on the floor.

Stepping back her mother continued: "Heaven be praised but ye're looking well, Cathy, as I might expect with the good sisters looking after ye so kindly. Say ye're glad to see me, as I'm overjoyed at seeing ye."

"Yes," whispered the girl inertly.

"I'm making ye welcome, but ye're not me," burst out the woman impulsively.

Said the nun: "It's all so fresh and strange she hasn't got used to it yet, and we've travelled. She'll be better when she has settled in and rested."

"Of course. I'm not doing what I ought," declared Mary Delaney hastening to the fireplace. "I'll mash a pot of tay at once. Ye must both need it."

"No," said the nun decisively. "I must go. I shall just be in time to catch the next train back."

"Not so soon," protested Mary Delaney. "I can't let ye go so quick and with no refreshment."

But the nun kissed Cathleen who took it quiescently yet with no return as she had done her mother's salute, neither was there any sign of a smile on her face or brightening of her sullen eyes.

Holding out her right hand the nun said, "Goodbye. I'm sure ye're pleased to have Cathleen back home."

"I'm delighted," gushed the woman. "It's wonderful how good you've been, and her now such a bonny girl. Thank ye and the Holy Mother with all me heart."

She bent over the nun's hand as she shook it, like deprecating her own presumption and admiring the other's condescension.

After seeing the visitor downstairs Mary Delaney came back to find her daughter standing in the same spot as she had left her, a line of contempt curving her lips as she looked coldly at her mother.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

(To be concluded)

LET'S HAVE A NEW TUNE, GENTLEMEN!

AN outcry of righteous indignation over my sacrilegious article on Esperanto was to be expected; I was, however, disappointed to find that none of my many critics has ventured beyond the well-known generalities which can be offered in support of any "interlanguage." I gave chapter and verse why and where I disapproved of the Zamenhof method, yet my specified arguments have not been disproved. As a Freethinker I have always welcomed a salutary discussion and do not insist on being infallibly right. Alas, I've still to wait for a new tune!

Zamenhof's forerunner was Father Martin Schleyer, a German Catholic priest, whose invention, called *Volapük*, spread like wildfire; to-day, it seems difficult to explain the amazing—though short-lived—*Volapük* craze in terms of its intrinsic merits. And I can't help thinking that Zamenhof's system—so rigidly consistent ("logical") in form and so incredibly inconsistent in essence—may one day take a similar turn.

I have been reproached for stating that "Basic Latin" had a "great advantage over all its competitors," as it aimed at a vocabulary of Latin elements which enjoy

widest currency in the living European languages. Zamenhof's vocabulary consists of a collection of arbitrarily chosen roots (*venko*=victory; *fosilo*=a spade; *bedaur*=regret). "School" is one of the most international words (in German "Schule"), yet in Esperanto it is—*lernejo*! The consistency in word formation, however, is responsible for a number of horrors, e.g., *knabino* (from the German word for "boy") = girl; *patrino*=mother. By addition of about 50 derivative prefixes, suffixes and infixes, the root becomes inflated and deformed until its meaning may not easily be recognisable. The five letters with caret over the letters impede writing and typing. To be true, Esperanto has a phonetic spelling; yet this applies to nearly any Continental language.

Like a modernist churchman, one critic admits that some improvements in Esperanto are feasible, "but I doubt whether it can be bettered." We Freethinkers do not accept anything as an immutable gospel, we have to be contented with it as it stands. And as most modern philologists are agreed that Esperanto contains a good many elements that go against the grain, they are looking for a system that manages to combine naturalness with regularity.

The October issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan*, the official organ of the American Fraternity for Men in Education (Homewood, Illinois), contains a précis of a "Report on the Problems of an International Language," prepared by a special committee of the Swiss Secondary Teachers' Association.* This report appears to fully vindicate my viewpoints.

The desirability of a world language is one thing, but the craze that this interlanguage cannot be anything better than Esperanto is another thing. As, in fact, Esperanto can scarcely be said to be the ideal form of a planned language, already in 1924 a research body of scientists was formed, the International Auxiliary Language Association (I.A.L.A.). Their aim is to present the international vocabulary standardised in its most general form with only such complements of words as are supported by natural languages. Both naturalness (embodying traditional patterns of ethnic means of speech) and schematic regularity are sought.

The languages primarily considered were: English, French, Italian, and Spanish-Portuguese. If a word occurred in three of these four groups (called control languages), it was adapted at once; if not, other languages, especially German-Dutch, and Russian, were consulted. In fixing the form, the method was to find out the common denominator of the cognates in the various languages, or the prototype from which the variants in French, Italian, etc., have developed. The guiding idea in devising the grammatical structure was to go to the Romance languages for the forms, but to English for simplicity.

The argument that any planned language will foster international friendship and mutual understanding puts the cart before the horse. On this score the American paper states:—

"Nobody but a fanatic will claim that the adoption of a world language would be ringing the millenium. The true causes of war to-day are not to be sought in linguistic differentiations. Some of the fiercest wars of the past have been waged by peoples or factions speaking the same language. On the other

hand, Switzerland has proved that language frontiers need not be barriers to mutual understanding and close co-operation. . . ."

Thus all hopes for a neutral constructed world language stand or fall with the prospects for a Europe united by a democratic constitution based on intelligent provision of linguistic problems which democratic co-operation must surmount.

PERCY G. ROY.

[We are sorry, but for the present this discussion must close.—EDITOR.]

CHRISTIANITY AND DISEASE

THE customary persistent claim by clergy and apologists that Christianity originated hospitals and was first to aid the sick poor is disproved by the Christian W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* articles *Archiater* (chief physician), *Medicina*, and *Valetudinaria*; and by the article on "Hospitals" by Sir H. Burdett in previous issue of *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Lecky's conciliatory flattery is refuted by his own record of facts, and by Sir Samuel Dill and by G. Boissier, both unlike Lecky, authorities on ancient Rome. The present *Ency. Brit.* on "Hospitals" says: "In spite of contrary opinions the germ of the hospital system may be seen in pre-Christian times. The temples of Saturn are known to have been in existence some 4,000 years B.C., and that these temples were medical schools in their earliest form is beyond question." *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, edited by the same Christian W. Smith, and by S. Cheetham (2 vols. 1875) gives no pagan record. "Archiater" in Smith's *Dicty.*, 1865 ed., pp. 119-120, shows the *archiatri populares* attending the people, elected by the people, and paid by government. They were established for the relief of the poor, and each city was provided with 5, 7 or 10, according to its size, Rome having 14. "Medicina," pp. 745-7, shows, in Egypt, records of cases hung in the sanctuaries, and in Greece, the first body of doctrine known, that of Hippocrates ("Father of Medicine," 5th cy. B.C.). The Aesculapians were in a manner the hereditary physicians of Greece and founded certain medical schools, e.g., Rhodes, Cnidus, and Cos, the birthplace of the great Hippocrates. "Medicus" (p. 747) gives the famous Hippocratic Oath. Romans derived their knowledge of medicine from the Etruscans and the Greeks; Smith's *Dicty.*, 1914 ed., p. 917, gives *Valetudinaria*, i.e., an infirmary. A detached building or room was commonly found in large houses for the reception of sick slaves. Jerome mentions that Fabiola, A.D. 380, provided the earliest mention of a Christian infirmary or hospital for the poor. In A.D. 372 Basil established a hospital at Caesarea for the reception of poor travellers or pilgrims—the idea probably derived from the Greeks. The Greek State physicians, who treated the poor gratuitously in return for their salary, had not only their medicines and surgical appliances but a room or a suite of rooms from the State. Constantine the Great, Emperor 306-37, placed Christianity in the saddle, and the Roman Empire was wrecked in beginning of 5th century. Apologists omit to state that by the year 400 all the temples of Rome were closed or destroyed and the priests of Aesculapius suppressed, and, as Smith points out, the Christian hospitals were built because the temples of Aesculapius were closed. Mr. J. McCabe quotes the chief authority on hospitals to the 19th cy., the Christian French C. Tollet: "He sketches the large provision for the sick of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, he notes how in the 4th and 5th centuries, when the Church was wealthy

* For further information of the report; address the World Organization of the Teaching Profession, 1201, 16th Street, New York, or their branch in Scotland, 46-47, Moray Place, Edinburgh.

and had to replace the priests of Aesculapius, it founded a few hospitals; but he confesses that from the 6th to the 12th cy.—the real Christian Era—the record is almost blank. Sir Hy. Burdett in "Hospitals," *Ency. Brit.*, told, after describing the older civilisations, that the Buddhists of India were so zealous in founding hospitals that by A.D. 260 the system was "so extensive as to be quite comparable to modern institutions." He then tells of the early Christian hospitals, and passes diplomatically over the miserable blank of the Dark Age. The next bright spot is the new Arab Mohammedan kingdom in the East; Haroun al-Raschid (763-809) enacted that every mosque should have attached to it a medical college and a hospital, and there were in addition numbers of free hospitals in the Arab cities. (*Blue Book* No. 1218, p. 23). As for the Eastern Roman Empire, which was not invaded and wrecked, Mr. J. McCabe shows reason to think "that even here the old generous provision for the sick was miserably replaced" (p. 22). The Arab "strict cleanliness and hygienic habits shamed Christian Europe into some sort of reform of its ways . . . some sort of reform, for the hospitals of medieval Europe, outside Moorish Spain, were atrocious, as Tollet observes . . . I have a large work, with 150 medieval illustrations on medicine and surgery in the Middle Ages (Hermann Peter's *Der Arzt* . . . (1900), but I spare the reader the horrid details." (p. 24). And remember that "At the end of the fifth century the Roman Church was completely organised" (*Cath. Ency.* IX, 61).

Dr. White says that Hippocrates "quietly broke away from the old tradition, developed scientific thought, and laid the foundations of medical science upon experience-observation and reason so deeply and so broadly that his teaching remains to this hour among the most precious possessions of our race. His thought was passed on to the School of Alexandria, and there medical science was developed yet further by such men as Herophilus and Erasistratus" (*Warfare* II, 2). "He had especially declared that demoniacal possession is 'nowise more divine, nowise more infernal, than any other disease'" (*Ibid.*, p. 37). "In 5th cy. B.C. Hippocrates of Cos asserted the great truth that all madness is simply disease of the brain. . . . In the first cy. A.D. Aretaeus . . . reached yet more valuable results . . . then Soranus" (*Ibid.* p. 98). "Then Galen; in 3rd cy. Celsus Aurelianus elaborated the great idea which, had theology, citing Bible texts, not banished, would have saved 15 centuries of cruelty" . . . "In 6th cy. Alexander of Tralles, in 7th cy. Paul of Aegina under the protection of Caliph Omar" (p. 99).

Christians for many centuries fought the development of medicine and surgery and insisted upon trusting to prayer, anointment and holy relics against "demoniacal possession" as the cause of disease. St. Ambrose declared that "the precepts of medicine are contrary to celestial science, watching, and prayer." Demons were commonly believed to be the cause of disease, storms, and pestilences. Healing relics provided great revenue. "Pestilences are the harvests of the ministers of God" (Charlevoix), bringing gifts of laud, money, or privileges to churches, monasteries and shrines. The Bible teems with texts about devils, spirits, demons, etc. "Theologians laid stress especially upon the famous utterances of the Psalmist that 'all the gods of the heathen are devils'" (Psalm XCVI, 5, devils now 'idols'), and of St. Paul that "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils" (1 Cor. X, 20) (*White* I, 382). We have repeated appeals to Scripture and especially to the case of King Asa who trusted to

physicians rather than to the priests ("he sought not to the Lord," II-Chron. XVI, 12-13)—and so died.

Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) was hostile to the development of medicine. In beginning of 12th cy. the Council of Rheims interdicted the study of physic to monks: many other Councils enforced the decree. Pope Alexander III (1159-81) forbade monks to study or practise. In 13th cy. Fourth Council of the Lateran forbade surgical operations. Pope Honorius III (1277-81) reiterated decree. In 1243 Dominicans forbade medical treatises (*White* II, 36). A few strong churchmen and laymen made efforts for reason, but tide of theological thought for belief in demons was too strong in Abelard, Aquinas, St. Vincent of Beauvais (W. II, 103-105). Re Jews' early lead in medicine, Popes Eugene IV (1431-47), Nicholas V (1447-55), and Calixtus III (1455-8) especially forbade Christians to employ them (W. II, 44). Andreas Vesalius (1514-64) founder of modern science of anatomy, risked the most terrible dangers from the Church (W. II, 50). "The belief in miracles for more than 20 centuries has been the main stumbling block in the path of medicine" (W. II, 66).

The Christian treatment of lunatics has long been barbarous and shameful; they regarded lunatics as tabernacles of Satan.

The "odour of sanctity" reminds one of the ordure of sanctity in the cases of the saintly faith of filth of St. Hilarion, St. Anthony, St. Abraham, St. Sylvia, St. Euphraxia, St. Mary of Egypt, the unspeakable St. Simeon Stylites (b. ca A.D. 403) and his Pillar saintly successors up the the 12th century of the great unwashed.

GEORGE ROSS.

The Editor of "The Churchman," the Reverend F. Colquhoun, M.A., has made it quite clear in the *Christian* why there can be no re-union with the Church of Rome which he calls "unreformed" and "a schismatic and heretical body." He is—incidentally like the Jews—bitterly opposed to a religion which admits a Goddess. The Pagans could not imagine a religion without a male and a female—Jupiter and Juno, Venus and Adonis, Osiris and Isis, and many others; in fact, they readily invented a Goddess if their God hadn't one. As Popery is based on Paganism, we need not be surprised to find the couple called "Jesus and Mary," though Mr. Colquhoun simply hates the idea of "setting up a 'Jesus and Mary' Church" as he calls it. He needn't worry. It was set up many centuries ago.

COLD WAR

This War Dance,
Of Russia, Britain, America, and France,
Deserves a passing glance.

Savages,
Working up intently martial rages
In systematic stages!

Such are these,
Scattering war-cries on every breeze,
That hostile blood may freeze.

Distorted faces,
Jerky limbs that lack the gentle graces
Of stately dance and paces.

Hideous yell
From foam-flecked lips world-ruin doth foretell:
Bloody and flaming HELL.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

ACID DROPS

The Church of England and the Nonconformist Churches, which have long been at loggerheads, are now trying out a way to see if it is possible for them to come together. As things are very desperate for Christianity as a whole, if some semblance of unity could be arranged, both sides would feel the benefit; but it looks as if "episcopacy," that is, that the Nonconformists must work under bishops, will not be easily swallowed by that august body. Another bar to unity is that both sides are finding it difficult to learn exactly what the other side believes. The Church of England is so broad that it can maintain within its ranks the most bigoted "Anglo-Catholic" side by side with such an unbeliever as Bishop Barnes.

We would dearly like to know how many of the intelligent members of these various Churches really believe that "the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required or necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." Do these people believe that the Scriptures are "Holy," that belief in them will bring "eternal life," or even that anybody on either side knows what "eternal life" really is? Will the Churches agree on marriage and divorce? Will they, in short, agree to anything at all? Or to put it another way—does either really *want* agreement? We know not.

Those Christians who are always blaming all the "evil" in the world on to "Atheistic Communism" seem never able to explain why, all the same, Christianity has such a fascination for Communists. Recently, 25 Communists were "dared" to go to a mass audience for Holy Year pilgrims at St. Peter's. They were led by priests after they had jeered at the Holy Year, but when they heard the Pope speak, "the Communists broke into loud shouts of 'Viva il Papa'"—and so all was well. We have an idea that it would not be so easy to get 25 Atheists cheering the Pope.

One Member of Parliament, at any rate, is not frightened of "Communist Materialism," as he calls it. He is Mr. Richard Stokes, a staunch Catholic and Socialist, and our Minister of Works. He says it is not so much "Communist Materialism against American capitalism" as "the forces of Materialism against the Catholic Church," and it is up to members of his Faith to see it proclaimed throughout the world "to the advantage of the whole of mankind." Mr. Stokes knows that the real enemy is not Communism, but Atheism.

We called attention the other week to the so-called discussion on religion between two R.C. priests at Farm Street, one taking the side of the Church, and the other that of the "sceptic." Needless to point out that the Church was bound to win, but it appears that its champion, Fr. Broderick, gave a terrific drubbing to Fred Hoyle, Prof. J. Z. Young, Bertrand Russell, and Marxism—among other opponents of the Holy Church—and that the discussion "sparkled" with wit, causing ripples of laughter through the church. After such a drubbing, is it any wonder that Fr. Christie, who spoke for all sceptics, found his confidence "ebbing"? Did anybody outside a lunatic asylum expect anything else?

What can be called very simply, thoughtless grovelling, has lately been attacked by a London vicar, the Rev. D. F. Strudwick, who hotly objects to the "undevotional fashion in which some of his congregation kneel to pray."

We sympathise with his annoyance. On the rare occasions in which we have been in a church, we also have seen the careless and quite irreverent way so many people wait their prayers to God Almighty. Grovelling should be done completely—how otherwise can the Lord believe the sinful supplicant is sincere? As Mr. Strudwick points out, "the Church of England must teach her faithful to kneel and pray" even if it wears out one's best trousers or the most expensive nylons. Good for you, Mr. Strudwick!

The Church in its report on Gambling and Sex condones betting when it is "limited to what takes place on the course." When a man *watches* a race it appears there is "some recreational value." And the Stock Exchange "is not gambling." Of course, it is just a coincidence that these are the recreations of the rich, and it is another coincidence that Football Pools and "off the course" betting, which the Church roundly condemns, are the recreations of the poor.

We have often wondered where all the Christian information regarding Angels came from, so are not surprised to learn (from the learned priest who answers questions in the *Universe*) that all we know comes from what the Church teaches. "Angels," we are definitely told, "are also raised to a supernatural state by grace and are subjected to a test. Those who passed were then admitted to glory." The sort of questions on the test papers do not appear to be known, nor are we told whether the competition is great, and how many marks are needed to pass. However, one question has slipped by the Heavenly Iron Curtain—it is about the Angel's readiness "to adore the incarnate Christ." What happens to Angels who fail to pass? Do they come back to earth and apply for Ration Books?

Irish bishops are delighted at the "marvellous progress" made by Roman Catholicism in England—though this may be because they never hear of the moaning and groaning by our own bishops on the "backsliders" and the "deserters." Still, a little backslapping does no harm, and the sheep follow their shepherds with touching devotion, even if one of them or, perhaps, we ought to say if dozens fall by the way. Does anyone seriously believe that conversions have gone up by leaps and bounds since the Assumption of Mary was made a dogma—or are likely to?

The discussion in the House of Commons as to whether "fun" should be allowed on Sundays during the Festival of Britain Exhibition is a sad commentary on the intelligence of our legislators. Why the Exhibition should be open at all on the Lord's Day is a question they did not dare to face—though they were obliged to oppose our Sabbatarians whose sole object on Sundays is to force everybody to be as gloomy and miserable as possible. However, we shall have the pleasure of telling overseas visitors that, at the Exhibition, nobody will be allowed to have any fun at all if the bigots get their way.

Even the Rev. Frank Martin in the *Sunday Graphic* seems more than sick at the threat to sanity by some of his fellow Christians. He has found out that the Christian Sunday they want is the Jewish Sabbath with its idiotic prohibitions, and he admits that Englishmen have always been a headache to Sabbatarians; and he thinks it doubtful if church attendances were ever better than now. He wants religion kept out of this "fun fair war." Congratulations on a sane attitude.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

PAUL VARNEY.—You surely cannot expect us to print a letter full of personal abuse. If you have any arguments, please couch them in proper language and keep them short.

G. BROOK.—So sorry we could not use your interesting letter; but we agree with you that the cry of "blatant atheism" against the B.B.C., when it produces dozens of religious services and broadcasts every week, is sublime impudence.

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

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.

Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.

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

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).

Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only and to make their letters as brief as possible.

SUGAR PLUMS

Do either or both of these two items need your immediate attention? If so, order your Greeting Cards with a Freethought message now, single design or assorted; and send for tickets for the G. W. Foote Centenary Dinner, 15s. each, cash with order, stating if any vegetarians, or hotel accommodation is required. The Dinner takes place on Saturday evening, January 13, 1951, in the Charing Cross Hotel, Strand, London, W.C.2.

A group of The Humanist Fellowship exists in Liverpool, and on Sunday, December 10, Mr. C. Bradlaugh Bonner, M.A., will address them in the Cooper's Hall, 12, Shaw Street, Liverpool 6, at 7 p.m. Admission is free and there is a general invitation for all those readers who wish to be present.

The Marriage Law Reform Society is prepared to send a speaker to address Freethought audiences. N.S.S. Branch Secretaries interested should write direct to that Society, at 17, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

If it is not a new "Life of Jesus," then it is usually the same thing under another name. Here is a book published by the S.C.M. Press at 12s. 6d., called *The Man From Nazareth*, written by the American, Dr. H. E. Fosdick. Its purpose is to show what Jesus looked like to his contemporaries, and it includes some of the latest "information that has come to light" during the past 50 years. One pious reviewer tells us that, in his first chapter, Dr. Fosdick "deals devastatingly and unanswerably with those few critics" who say Jesus is a myth. We like the word here "unanswerably." The idea that Dr. Fosdick or indeed any Christian could answer John M. Robertson is fantastic.

We hope to deal, however, with this book when we have read it, for there is nothing we like better than an "unanswerable" presentation of the Christian case. The Student Christian Movement Press are constantly putting out these unanswerable apologetics but most of those we have seen are the last word in muddled thinking.

WOULD ROME PERSECUTE ?

It is a matter of common knowledge amongst students of history that the secular civilisations of classical and modern times have been separated by, as it were, a deep chasm, which was represented by the medieval Catholic civilisation that stretched from the Fall of Rome that marked the end of antiquity, to the Reformation, with which the modern era began. The distinctive feature that marked off medieval times from both ancient and modern lay, pre-eminently, in the unchallenged supremacy enjoyed continuously throughout this entire era by the Church of Rome. For the whole of medieval life and society proceeded upon the assumption that the truths of Christianity far surpassed all other truths in importance and that, outside "the one true Church" of Christ, the centre of which was in Rome, there was, to quote directly from the ecclesiastical canon, "nulla salus datur" ("no salvation given." In this world, also, the same universal rule applied. If there was to be no mercy given to the apostate and the heretical perverter of the Truth in the vastly more important world that lay beyond the grave, neither should any mercy be shown him here; the Catholic Church and the Catholic State were under no obligation to be more merciful than God!

Religious intolerance thus became the rule, the distinguishing feature of medieval times. The heretic, the rebel against God and His "one true Church, could expect no mercy; the cultural laissez-faire, the broad religious toleration that had marked classical civilisation in its prime, was sadly to seek throughout the "Age of Faith." Nor did practice lag behind theory. From the definitive triumph of Christianity at the end of the fourth century, right down to the Reformation (and in Spain down to the French Revolution) "heresy" remained the crime of crimes, to be not only destroyed but to be physically annihilated by the avenging and obliterating flames. "Heresy" and heretics were the cheapest fuel available in the "Age of Faith!"

In this work of physical extirpation, both Church and State took part; the Church "examined" the heretic—often a polite euphemism for the most excruciating torments. But it was the State, "the secular arm," to which the Inquisitors finally delivered their victim as incorrigible, to be executed without delay—and without the shedding of blood; a polite euphemism for death by fire. Thus the whole of Catholic society combined to annihilate the enemies of God and to obliterate the critical intellect as a social force. Such was the unchallenged theory and invariable practice of European society for a millenium. Society and salvation both required the heretic's destruction; to be sure, the point of view of the consistent Inquisitor has been expressed in a powerful scene in *St Joan*, by that great dramatist whose recent death we are now all deploring, George Bernard Shaw.

The Reformation put an end to the Middle Ages and tore the Church, "the seamless robe of Christ," asunder. As a result of the emergence of new social factors, religious persecution gradually declined in the Reformed Churches and may, we think, now be said to have been virtually discarded in Protestant circles; no doubt, under a great deal of pressure from without.

In the Church of Rome, however, which still, to-day, remains by far the most powerful and aggressive of the Christian Churches, though suspended in practice by forces beyond the Vatican's control, the theory upon which religious persecution was based, is still taught by high-ranking ecclesiastics with the warm approval of the Papacy; as recently as 1910, within our own lifetime, we find one of Rome's leading authorities defending with medieval logic the medieval right of the Church to inflict the death penalty upon heretics. Moreover, far from being shocked by this medieval anachronism, we find one Pope congratulating the author and another subsequently conferring upon him the highest dignity at Rome's disposal, a Cardinal's hat. From which it would seem to follow that, whilst the conditions imposed upon the Church by (what a modern Pope described as) "these unhappy times," forbid the actual infliction of the death penalty upon rebels against her authority, yet she has not abated any of her former claims in this last respect.

In 1908, the Roman authorities were engaged in a vicious "heresy-hunt" against "Modernism," the attempt then made by a group of scholars and liberal Catholics to induce the Church to bring its medieval teachings into line with the findings of modern science and historical research. "that compendium of all heresies," as the then Pius X described it. In this year, as part of the anti-Modernist campaign, there appeared in Rome a monstrous tome of theology bearing the formidable title, "De progressu et stabilitate dogmatis," which may be Englished with essential accuracy as, "About tradition and development in their relation to dogma." The author of this weighty tome was a French priest of the Order of St. Mary, an eminent theologian who was a Professor of Dogmatic Theology in the "Sacred College for the Propaganda of the Faith." Two years later, in 1910, a second edition appeared at Rome, with an introductory letter from the Vatican, which declared that Pius was "ardently gratified" (*vehementer gratificatum*) by the author's arguments and conferred a special blessing upon him. A later Pope, Pius XI, made the author a Cardinal, thus indicating the official approval by the Vatican of the author's interpretation of Catholic Dogma.

In his book, Fr. Lepicier defended with medieval logic—and at medieval length—the traditional dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, as revised by St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, against the Modernists. In the course of his work, Fr. Lepicier traversed the whole of the vast corpus of Roman Dogma with scholastic thoroughness and defended the medievalistic interpretations.

In chapter (*articulus*) 6, section 10, page 95, our methodical "Defender of the Faith" arrived at the vexed question of religious persecution, which he then proceeded to defend with the thoroughness which is the hallmark of scholastic theology and theologians. Chapter 6, section 10, bore the self-explanatory title: "The true law of the Church allows the sentence of death to be pronounced against heretics" (*Ecclesiae verum jus competit in haeretici poenam mortis decernendi*). This section, in itself sufficiently revealing, is followed by two further sections bearing the also self-evident titles (section 17): "Heretics and apostates may be compelled to return to the Faith" (*Haeretici et apostatae cogi possunt ut ad fidem revertantur*), and (18) "Apostate rulers may be deposed from office by the authority of the Pope" (*Principes apostatae ab imperio possunt deponi auctoritate summi pontificis*).

The above theses are then "proved" to the author's satisfaction and to that of Popes Pius X and XI, who endorsed the author's doctrine, in page after page of rock-like Latin prose, the massive logic of which is buttressed by a whole array of quotations from the Doctors of the Church, including the greatest of all, St. Thomas himself, who came out unequivocally in favour of the death penalty for obstinate heretics.

We may summarise Fr. Lepicier's argument upon this last point, since his dissertation is too long to be quoted in full; in section 10 (chapter 6), which is entirely devoted to this question, our theologian argues:—

The Church is by definition (her own) "a perfect society." As such, she cannot lack the power to inflict upon rebels against her authority—that is, against unrepentant heretics—any of the punishments at the disposal of "imperfect societies," such as secular States and their criminal courts. This includes, of necessity, the right to inflict the death penalty, which, however, our author goes on to argue, will actually be executed by the secular State, once the Church has pronounced the sentence. This was, of course, the actual practice of the medieval Inquisition. Granting his self-assumed premises, the reverend theologian's logic would seem to be impeccable, as so often in Roman theology.

Such is Rome's latest authoritative pronouncement in favour of capital punishment for "heretics." It has never been withdrawn, nor, to the best of our knowledge, have Cardinal Lepicier and his book ever been disavowed. On the contrary, this modern apologist for the Inquisition and its *auto da fes*, died in the odour of sanctity and in possession of the highest honour that the Vatican can bestow. Are we not justified in assuming from this that, even if debarred from using it now, Rome still keeps the death penalty in cold storage for use in future "Ages of Faith?"

Whether such "Ages of Faith" will ultimately recur does not, fortunately, depend solely upon Rome and, at any rate at present, any such recurrence appears to be definitely unlikely. The fires of Smithfield seem to be relighted and we shall all probably die in our beds! But Rome has relinquished none of her claims and these claims logically involve the use of physical coercion, extending, if necessary, to death. Catholicism is, just now, busily engaged in asserting a new-found passion for human freedom; which makes it all the more necessary for Freethinkers to bear the above facts in mind. "Forewarned is forearmed!"

F. A. RIDLEY.

THE ELUSIVE PSYCHE

WHEN William McDougall first defined psychology as the positive science of behaviour he little dreamt of the later emergence of a system of psychology which concerned itself with nothing but behaviour, and which sought to eliminate the soul. This new system of psychology—or Behaviourism, as it was significantly called—held that the living, behaving, knowing organism was a self-sufficient subject of study, and that the concept of mind, formulated by Descartes, as an actor in charge of behaviour, was wholly redundant.

Prof. Gilbert Ryle, in *The Concept of Mind* (Hutchinson's University Library, 334 pp., price 12s. 6d. net), follows on somewhat similar lines but, while apparently accepting the theoretical teachings of Behaviourism, he, like McDougall before him, seeks to avoid its materialistic implications. Consequently, he does not so much attack the concept of Mind, as rather

the specific theory about it which has been handed down from the time of Descartes, and to which he refers as "the ghost in the machine." But the fact remains that it is this "ghost in the machine" theory that contains all that is commonly understood by "Mind," and it is difficult to see what object is served in the attempt to destroy it and to replace it by the concept of another "Mind" which, so far as we can see, has nothing whatever to do.

As Professor Ryle truly says: "Descartes left as one of his main philosophical legacies a myth which continues to distort the continental geography of the subject." According to this myth every human being has both a body and a mind. Human bodies are in space and are subject to the mechanical laws which govern all other bodies in space. But minds are not in space, nor are their operations subject to mechanical laws. It is assumed that there are two different kinds of existence or status. What exists or happens may have the status of physical existence, or it may have the status of mental existence. It is a necessary feature of what has physical existence that it is in space and time; it is a necessary feature of what has mental existence that it is in time but not in space. What has physical existence is composed of matter or else is a function of matter; what has mental existence consists of consciousness, or else is a function of consciousness. The evidence adduced recently by Freud seems to show that there exist channels tributary to this stream, which run hidden from their owner. Such, in brief outline, is the theory bequeathed to us originally by Descartes, and which Professor Ryle describes with, as he himself says, "Deliberate abusiveness," as "The dogma of the Ghost in the Machine."

The exposure of the above myth is not a difficult task and scarcely merits the use of the heavy artillery which Professor Ryle has brought to bear upon it. So far as the present exposure of the "ghost in the machine" theory is concerned he has but confirmed what earlier mechanists have already said. The bulk of his book is taken up with this task and his introductory promise that his book "offers what may with reservations be described as a theory of the mind" does not appear to have been fulfilled. The corpse of the "ghost" theory has been dug up to be reburied, but no new "psychic" theory has been created to take its place.

FRANK KENYON.

GOOD AND EVIL

ALTHOUGH I agree with John Rowland that writers in *The Freethinker* do not face up to the problems he raises, I am often exasperated by the ambiguous way he states his case. Apparently afraid to commit himself, not only is he vague, but with persistent evasion he dodges the issue, and so gets nowhere. I do not know if he thinks theological terminology is good literature and that such terms are the best with which to express his meaning, but plainly it is the use of such words that involves him in theology, which he seems to think is inescapable. But does not such a statement actually make the problem, and can it not be stated in any other way?

In his article "The Theology of Cripps" he gave a lengthy quotation from Sir Stafford's sermon to the effect that public responsibilities were so heavy that he felt the need for belief in God. But if Sir Stafford, or anyone else, finds such a burden too heavy he can resign and so leave it to someone else; after all he was under no compulsion to accept such responsibility. This is not a case of the Christian idea that we call "carrying a cross." Of

course, I am fully aware that a sense of frustration is only too common, but does John Rowland suggest that only a believer in God could accept such a responsible post? There have been many who have not avowed such belief.

I do not doubt Sir Stafford's desire for support or justification; he may have been giving a genuine expression to his feelings, but I see nothing in this to suggest good and evil. But John Rowland uses this to lead up to a challenge to those of us who had felt the conflict of good and evil within ourselves. I am not sure what is meant by this, but whether it is good literature or good theology I would say it is bad psychology. If it means those of us who have been subject to moods and uncontrollable passions, I might be one, for I have, for many years now, considered myself definitely schizophrenic, and have made some effort in trying to understand myself.

I am not, then, simply putting this as carping criticism but in a serious concern for the problem. To me the study of psychology concerns one's self, not somebody else, and if Sir Stafford needs a God it is his concern. For my part, a belief in God does not enable me to understand my own condition nor enable me to control my feelings. It is years since I learned how to deliberately cultivate that passionate condition known theologically as a spirit of righteous indignation, but I am often subject to uncontrollable emotion in circumstances where it is extremely undesirable, leading to embarrassing situations. The problem is my own, just as Sir Stafford's is his own, but I do not see good and evil in this either.

In concern for my own personal feelings I see no parallel between Sir Stafford's relations with a personal God and John Rowland's discovery of good and evil in himself. If I say I am exasperated at his article, it is my feelings I am expressing. I do not saddle him with the responsibility. So far as I am aware, I have never met him or made personal contact with him. I do not know him from Adam. I am plainly concerned here with my own feelings, with my irritation at his article, my reactions to black marks on white paper. I can feel no animosity to a man I do not know, and I cannot think of personal relations with a God I do not know, however Sir Stafford may interpret his feelings.

I can understand Coué, who said the patient must cure himself. To say the psychiatrist knows better than I about my own feelings would be, like saying God knows, an admission of ignorance. So, I am as interested in how John Rowland solves the age-old theological problem of evil as I am in more modern Freudian unconscious motives. But if I am not conscious of any such motives in myself, who is? The Unconscious is about as useless as the great Unknown of the Christian; and when Edward Glover, said to be our leading Freudian, says that the psychiatrist or psycho-analyst must stimulate the prerogative of the theologian, my only reaction is that of a gentle but incredulous smile.

The assertion of unconscious, or of supernatural motives, does not enable me to control my feelings. But as Sir Stafford's belief in God has reference to his feelings, my concern for my own condition does enable me to understand his sense of frustration, although I have never known such responsibility as he did in fact accept. But John Rowland, discovering evil in himself, is in a different position, for he only assumes the responsibility of saviour of humanity. If his self-imposed task of world reform involves him in distasteful feelings, he should learn to glorify suffering in the true sense of Christian martyrdom, and not simply appeal to a sense of frustration, in acceptance of austerity, as justification for believe in God.

The theology of Cripps, unlike the theology of Rowland, does not express the crude Christian idea of the conflict of good and evil in the soul, which concerns the same problems as the Freudian idea of repression. The idea of inhibition comes from Catholicism, and the idea in Shakespeare, that conscience makes cowards of us all, is the basis of Jesuitical casuistry in the study of conscience. But if the method of suggestion and auto-suggestion is the basis of ceremonial hymn and prayer, it is equally clear that the shame of conscience is different from the glorious certitude of righteousness. For if condemnation of evil is self-justification, to find evil in one's self is self-condemnation. The notion of good and evil is a two-edged weapon.

We all have some social responsibility. We are involved in public responsibility in greater or lesser degree. With personal responsibility as an aspect of our social life, the notion of good and evil, based upon pleasure and pain, is the worst possible concept, either for controlling our own feelings or for understanding our own behaviour. It involves our own personal feeling as well as the behaviour of others. And in moral judgment we are judge, jury, and—prisoner in the dock.

H. H. PREFACE.

SCIENCE, RELIGION AND MORALS

VIII—CHRISTIAN MIRACLES

(1) In the course of human history many religions have flourished each claiming to be the one and only true one.

(2) One problem of the enquirer is to find some criterion by which he may decide which, if any, of these is true.

(3) It was noted previously that claims to theopneustic authority was arguing in a circle and therefore invalid.

(4) Is there any other criterion by which humans may know that the claims of any particular religion are true?

(5) All through history one of the principal alleged proofs for this validity has been an appeal to miracles.

(6) On this subject there is so much confused thinking and talking that it is desirable to formulate a definition.

(7) In earlier times when Divine intervention was believed to be very frequent it meant an exhibition of this.

(8) The word miracle itself meant a wonder, a mysterious event for which no ordinary explanation is known.

(9) Such a definition is useless for present purposes since it would include any event those ignorant about it did not understand.

(10) If anything not understood is a miracle then these would be more common to-day than in previous ages!

(11) It is probable that at all times it was more or less vaguely believed that the cause of a miracle was extra natural.

(12) The decrease in alleged miracles has coincided with increased human knowledge of things which are wonderful.

(13) If an event is believed to be within the sphere of nature then it may be wonderful, but not a miracle.

(14) Here a miracle is defined as an event caused by the intervention of some extra-natural power into Nature.

(15) If an event is not a miracle its cause can be sought in Nature; in a miracle it is outside human knowledge.

(16) Christian miracles have a long history which is very confused, arbitrary, ill-defined and often nonsensical.

(17) They include events which can easily be attributed to natural causes; but also cases of gross superstition.

(18) The healing of illness by psychical methods has now become commonplace in general practice.

(19) The study of psychology and its correlative lines of investigation explain many recorded Biblical miracles.

(20) All that need be considered here are those events which Christians claim to be due to extra-natural causes.

(21) It is unnecessary at the moment to discuss Hume's well-known and seemingly irrefutable arguments.

(22) Here the allegation that the causes of miracles are extra-natural powers will be accepted tentatively.

(23) Then one is forthwith faced by another difficulty in agreeing as to what are these extra-natural powers.

(24) Christianity is a dualistic religion, that is to say, it presupposes personified powers of both good and evil.

(25) This is not in the abstract or ethical sense, but definite extra-natural powers which are themselves personified.

(26) Whatever modifications modern thought may introduce into this subject the views of Jesus seem definite.

(27) He stated clearly that miracles may be caused by God or by the Devil so that even the elect may be deceived (Matt. xxiv, 24, etc.).

(28) All that can be stated of alleged miracles, therefore, is that they are due to some extra-natural cause.

(29) They may be due to the personified power of Evil, the Devil, with the intention of misleading humans.

(30) It is not clear what criteria there are to distinguish good from bad miracles except pragmatic results.

(31) These dualistic demonistic beliefs of Jesus and Christian miracles are illustrated by that of the Gadarene swine.

(32) What was it that actually passed from the man (or two men) into the unfortunate and innocent swine?

(33) To suggest that this was a psychical transference seems to involve one in still further complications.

(34) If on the other hand it was a material transference, as stated, this involves one in other difficulties.

(35) Thus the miracles recorded in the Gospel story seem to require not only explanations but justifications.

(36) Jesus himself is recorded to have been rather scornful of miracles as savouring of magic and charlatanism.

(37) His disciples seem to have been anxious to preserve their special privileges to perform them from competitors.

(38) Modern theologians apparently realise these difficulties since their rejection of certain miracles is arbitrary.

(39) One gathers that in the time of Jesus allegations of even such miracles as the Resurrection of the dead were not uncommon.

(40) So much was this so that that of the many saints is casually mentioned without records of what happened afterwards.

(41) It seems clear, therefore, that when the Gospel Story was written the Resurrection of Jesus was only one of many.

(42) It was alleged to have been emphasised as a very special event by the occurrence of various physical miracles.

(43) These, however, as Gibbon pointed out, were not even mentioned by any other contemporary historian.

(44) In what essential features then did the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus differ from other such records.

(45) Here again one finds that it is not the historical events that really matter but their theological significance.

(46) The ever-decreasing number of alleged miracles since the time of Jesus is a significant factor.

(47) It is recorded that the power to perform miracles was passed on to the Apostles and apparently to others.

(48) Since then many miraculous events are alleged to have occurred, often through non-personal media.

(49) The history of miracles, and of relics as media, form a long and interesting study of human credulity.

(50) Yet the enigma of the subject apparently still remains, i.e., by what powers do miracles ever occur?

BOOKS RECOMMENDED AND REFERENCES
 "Supernatural Religion, by Walter R. Cassells, very full treatment of miracles (original 1874, republished 1902).

W. EDWARD MEADS.

CHRISTIANITY AND PHYSICS

TO find a lecturer in physics who eventually becomes a lecturer in divinity is a very rare occurrence. Yet this is what has happened to Dr. G. D. Yarnold. Once Senior Lecturer in Physics to the University of Nottingham, he is now Lecturer in Divinity to the Lincoln Diocesan Training College. His particular trend of thought therefore lends a very special interest to his book, *Christianity and Physical Science* (Mowbrays; 8s. 6d.). The main line taken in this interesting book is to argue that there is nothing, in spite of appearances and general opinion, in the scientific outlook to prevent a scientist from being a Christian believer.

Dr. Yarnold's point, indeed, is that the very fact that the average scientist works on the assumption of the general rationality of the world is a reason for believing that there is a controlling interest, a central power, which is what religious people call "God."

He also tries to show (and to a large extent succeeds in showing to many of his readers, at any rate) that there are matters not at all easy to deal with along the line of belief in values. Goodness and beauty are things difficult if not impossible to measure scientifically; yet, he says, they are realities which we all know in our everyday life. It is in this sphere of values that the religious person can make his influence felt. And the open-minded (which is not to say the empty-minded) scientist must be compelled to admit that there are immeasurable qualities that we recognise, even though they are always beyond our mathematics.

Now, as with so much that I have written recently, I know that there will be readers who will fervently disagree with what I have had to say about Dr. Yarnold's book. Yet I would urge the critically-minded especially to read it. There are points at which I would not agree with it, I might say. But there are also main points where I consider Dr. Yarnold is making a worthwhile argument easily understandable. And I think that the fact that a book like this can follow so closely Miss Quinton's *Scientific and Religious Knowledge*, of which I wrote here a few weeks ago, is an indication of a change in emphasis in the world of theology as well as the world of science. Some may disagree; but I suggest that few who read such books will not feel that the volumes in question have something to say which badly needed saying.

JOHN ROWLAND.

CORRESPONDENCE

PAPAL DOGMAS

Sir,—A short time ago to-day, I heard the profound message as delivered by his infallible highness the Pope to half a million listeners plus eighty Cardinals and Bishops. The gist of the message pulverises, explodes, debunks and damns all such puny heresies that have appeared in *The Freethinker* and such-like ignorant publications.

"The Moment of God's Providence has arrived to Proclaim the Bodily Assumption." What about it?

Last Thursday afternoon in Lessons for Schools on the radio I was driven back to the jungle and had to switch off.

The lesson was the Biblical Story of the Flood: "And the Lord said I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth . . ." and so forth, &c.

Can we, should we, sit idly by and hear our children's minds polluted by such drivel? You, sir, are the C.O. in these questions. Can we not suggest something practical to end all this? Writing to M.P.s I don't think would be helpful. This shakes me more than any assumptions. I should feel happy if something worthy could be done.—Yours, etc.,

THOS. SHORROCK.

BEHOLD A LEGEND

SIR,—Our thanks are due to E. R. English for his letter of November 12, and whilst too much time cannot be given to every instance of lying yet I think the following extract from "Vagabond Pilgrimage" by Frederick Cowles will show the extent this is carried on at Buckfast Abbey:—

"Those who believe that craftsmanship died a natural death . . . should visit Buckfast Abbey . . . Buckfast must always be placed in a category apart. It is a symbol of loving endeavour, stern purpose and glorious achievement. In 1882 . . . French Benedictine Monks purchased the site of a Cistercian Abbey. They found a few crumbling walls . . . concealing the foundations of the original Norman buildings. Patiently they excavated until the ground plan was laid bare and upon these ancient foundations they gradually built a new monastery. The work was entirely carried out by five or six monks . . . The church was begun in January, 1907, with only one monk to lay the stones and one to mix the mortar. In 1922 part of it was ready and ten years later the completed building, majestic as an abbey church . . . was solemnly consecrated."

There are other remarks "boosting" the monks for their bees and wine making, days spent in research and original literary work. One is in charge of the photo and curio stall.

I can appreciate how business-like they are in supplying information to people writing travel books and also how unscrupulous as to the truth.—Yours, etc.,

T. D. SMITH.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

OUTDOOR

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (St. Mary's Gate, Blitzed Site).—Lunch-hour Lectures every weekday, 1 p.m.: Mr. G. Woodcock.

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

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

INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: H. L. SEARLE, "Intelligence and Instinct."

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall Library, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Tuesday, December 12, 7 p.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, B.A., "Humanism as a Way of Life."

Glasgow Branch (McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: M. I. WHITEFIELD, "Freedom and Free-thought."

Liverpool Humanist Fellowship (Cooper's Hall, 12, Shaw Street, Liverpool, 6).—Sunday, December 10, 7 p.m.: CHARLES BRADLAUGH BONNER, A Lecture.

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: Mr. JACK LINESAY, "Culture in the Soviet Union."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: S. K. RATLIFF, "The Year in America."

West London Branch N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W. 1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: Elder JESSE N. UDALL (London District President), "History and Development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."

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