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## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### A God Who "Also Ran"

IN a recent issue of *The Times* (January 1, 1951) there was an interesting description of a newly-discovered pagan shrine on the old Roman wall near Newcastle-on-Tyne. This shrine, which was founded in the early third century and abandoned a century later, was dedicated to the God Mithras, "the unconquered sun" (sol invictus), the image of whom, in the act of slaying the Bull, the blood of whom redeemed mankind, adorned every Mithraic sanctuary, though in this case it appears from the archaeologist's report, to have been destroyed and the whole sanctuary to have been deliberately desecrated upon its destruction—perhaps by Christian hands?—prior to its final abandonment about the time that Constantine staged his memorable "conversion" to Christianity.

The discovery of this long forgotten and disused sanctuary affords a vivid reminder of the fact so often insisted upon in the columns of this journal, that gods, like the men and women who create them, are mortal beings who have their allotted span and then cease to be. Like their human worshippers, they belong to a certain period in human history, they correspond with the emotional needs and material and intellectual outlook of the period and, when the appropriate social climate changes, they change along with it. Human history sees them begin and human history sees them end; mankind watches them wax, pays a brief adoration to them, and then sees them wane, and ultimately forgets all about them. For all things that arise, must also pass away; all created things are mortal, including the gods—those awe-inspiring and yet pathetic reflexes of the hopes, fears, and ambitions of their worshippers, who are also their creators.

In the case mentioned above, we are afforded a very vivid reminder of the truth just indicated. For the God whose shrine upon the old Roman wall, the recent excavation of which is reported in *The Times*, was, in his day and generation a very great God, indeed, whose memory recalls an historical era in which the religious and theological future of civilisation stood, so to speak, at the cross-roads, and took, indeed, centuries to make its ultimate decision which way to go and which God to adore. For Mithras, "the unconquered sun," the Divine Bull-slayer, was for several centuries the major Divine rival of Christ. Indeed, there were times when it seemed that the proverbial toss of the coin would alone decide which of these potent Oriental Gods, Christ, the Son of God, or Mithras, the Sun God, would ultimately prevail. For each, alternatively, received the homage of emperors and the adoration of armies. Each had the same Birthday, December 25.

Indeed, A.D. 274, when the Emperor Aurelian first proclaimed December 25 as the public holiday that it has since remained, it was in honour of Mithras, and not of Christ, that he did so. In appears, in fact, to be almost

certain that Christmas Day was, originally, the anniversary of Mithras, which the Christians later "borrowed" from the rival creed of the Bull-slayer. And it may well be that "the blood of the Lamb," in which the Christian believer is asked to bathe metaphorically in order to wash away his sins, was originally taken over from the more robust "blood of the Bull," in which the Mithraist believer was literally bathed upon admission into the Mithraic Church, also "for the remission of sins."

One can say, in fact, that, for a period of about two centuries, c. A.D. 150-350, the odds between Mithras and Christ becoming the supreme Divinity of the Roman Empire were about even; if anything, they were, perhaps, slightly in favour of Mithras, who appeared upon the Roman scene rather earlier than Jesus, and whose military ethics seem to have at first met with more favour among the warlike Romans than did the milder ethics of "the meek and lowly Jesus." Unlike Jesus, it does not seem that Mithras was ever regarded as anything else but a God.

The worship of Mithras was an ancient Persian cult which dates back some centuries before the Christian era. It is stated to have reached Rome in the first century B.C., after the Roman victory over the King of Pontus, Mithradates, whose name implies that he was a devotee of the Persian God. The Mithraic Church seems to have had an elaborate theology and ritual and to have practised a severe military ethic which gave it much support in military circles; it is in this last respect significant that, as in the case just cited, most of its surviving relics are found in connection with military establishments. We read in Tacitus of a battle in a Roman civil war (in A.D. 69) being temporarily interrupted when the Eastern legions saluted the rising sun with the clashing of weapons, probably an indication of the prevalence of the Mithraic cult. Several Roman emperors, from Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius, to the great Diocletian, the Pagan persecutor of Christianity, were Mithraists. The military emperor, Aurelian (A.D. 270-275) officially proclaimed Mithras as the "Divine Protector of the Roman Empire," and even Constantine seems to have, in fact, gone on worshipping "the unconquered Sun-god" equally with the Christian Son of God down to the end of his days.

That the ultimately victorious Christian Church actually regarded the Mithraic cult as its principal rival may be reasonably assumed, if only from the complete extermination of the rival sun-religion by the triumphant Christian Church after the final victory of Christianity in the fourth century; not merely were the Mithraic altars systematically desecrated and devastated, as in the example just given, but the whole religious literature of Mithraism has disappeared, and even its theology has to be inferred from circumstantial evidence. This appears to have been very similar to that of Christianity, which, no doubt, "borrowed" heavily from the older Faith. "The cup of devils" referred to by the "Pauline" writer and by later Christian apologists like



Justin Martyr, seems to refer to some Mithraic communion-rite analogous to that of Christianity. In both creeds, baptism was given in the name of a Divine Redeemer.

No doubt, had Mithraism survived, learned professors in "our old universities" would now be diligently turning out bulky tomes commenting on the writings of some now forgotten Mithraist "St. Paul," or writing at enormous length upon some now vanished Gospel of "Mithras, our Blessed Saviour." Whilst a "Mithraic Evidence Society" would point out that the slaying of the Bull is "the best authenticated fact in human history," duly recorded on the B.B.C.

Alas, poor Mithras! For history has little mercy on the vanquished, gods or men. Christ, his Divine Conqueror, is still there—for how long remains to be seen. But Mithras, "the unconquered Sun," has been conquered by time. *The Divine Bull Slayer is a God who "also ran."*  
F. A. RIDLEY.

### ANCIENT PERSIAN AND GREEK

UNTIL the opening of the 19th century of our era we depended for our knowledge of old time Persia upon Greek writers who usually dismissed that country as a barbarian domain. Then, a century and a-half since, the linguistic Grotefend claimed that the decipherment of an ancient Persian inscription in a then unknown language yielded the words: "Darius, king, son of Hystarpes" and "Xerxes, son of Darius." Thirty years afterwards this discovery was verified when Henry Rawlinson, a British Army Officer, who was intensely interested in Persia and its memorials, noted a rock in Behistun nearly 500 ft. high which bore a lengthy inscription. By 1843 he completed his translation of this inscription, while other information he brought to light confirmed the statements of Herodotus who, long treated as a fabulist, was then restored to his previous standing as a reliable recorder of his experiences abroad.

Despite the fact that Greece and Persia were at variance and that Hellenic civilisation was imperilled by the Eastern monarchy, three Greeks of outstanding distinction, Alexander the Great, Xenophon and Herodotus, knew and admired the dwellers in what we now term Iran. A people of Indo-European stock, the Persians made notable contributions to horticulture, while, as Prof. Legge urges, their military capacity is clearly shown by their independence from Rome, while we recall the melancholy fact that the great Emperor Julian himself, as late as the fourth century A.D., died when at warfare with the Persians.

In his instructive *Ancient World* (Cambridge University Press), Dr. Glover does full justice to Persia's contributions to culture. "To begin with our gardens," he observes, "the Persians were lovers of flowers, of the rose, perhaps, above all. But the lilac is Persian, as its name tells us, and so is the tulip. . . . The peach is Persian, its very name is a worn-down attempt to say so; and the orange reached Europe as the 'Median apple.'"

Cyrus was the chief founder of the Persian Empire and it was, indeed, the most powerful State prior to that of Rome, and it was sustained for two centuries, while Alexander's Grecian Empire fell to pieces at his death. Darius was less successful than Cyrus as a soldier, but proved an abler administrator. As Glover states: "He organised the provinces and had an eye for trade and

prosperity; he dug a canal to connect the Nile with the Red Sea, and gave his empire a gold currency of very remarkable purity."

Persia's religion, so unlike Greek polytheism, deeply impressed Herodotus. He noted the absence of temples, altars and statuary. Anthropomorphism was unknown and in place of gods and goddesses the Persians venerated the sky and its deity, Zoroaster, and this ancient cult is still the creed of the Parsis of Bombay the descendants of the Zoroastrians who fled from Persia when the Moslems conquered the country. "It is interesting to note," Glover remarks, "that Persia gave one of the last great rivals to Christ to the Roman Empire, the sun god Mithras; that Mani, who founded the Manichaeans, who so much influenced St. Augustine, and who are still mentioned in the Anglican prayer book, came from Persia; that when Mohammedanism conquered Persia, it took another colour from the Persians, who are heretics (Shia) to this day; and that in the 19th century, Persia gave the Bahai faith to America." Moreover, proceeds Glover: "No oriental people has as yet so much influenced the West with its literature as Persia has through its poets—Hafiz, Sadi, Firdausi, and not least Omar Khayyam—though the Persians do not rank Omar as high as the English do since Edward Fitzgerald's translation."

Despite their valour the Persian hosts were almost invariably outwitted and overcome by their Greek antagonists. But, as Herodotus avers, in their last battle with the Spartans their enemies were protected with armour, while the Persians fought in linen apparel. They were archers and the Spartan swordsmen were victorious.

Cyrus conquered Babylon but left a subordinate to overcome the Greek colonies in Asia Minor, which he captured, one by one. Had the Greek city communities united, the disaster might have been averted. And it was the dissolution of the Athenian confederation, of a later time, by Sparta and its allies that led to Greece's downfall when the Romans became the leading military Power.

Cambyses succeeded Cyrus and added Egypt to Persian dominion, but unlike his predecessor who respected the religion of the Egyptians, he treated the priesthood and its gods in unseemly fashion. According to tradition, Cambyses was stabbed to death in revenge for his killing of Apis, Egypt's sacred bull.

The story of Persian aggression against Greece has been told for all time by Herodotus. He tells us how the immense Persian armament marched across Asia until it reached the Hellespont, passed over a bridge it had constructed, and passed through Thrace. This huge array was provisioned by a fleet which threatened Greek communications and all Greece was alarmed by the impending invasion while some of the City States even proposed surrender to their assailants.

Then a furious storm destroyed a considerable part of the Persian fleet, only to be followed by another destructive gale. Also, Xerxes' army was delayed by the celebrated narrow pass of Thermopylae which the Greeks still held. For a time the immense Persian army proved unavailing. Few only could attack and a handful of Spartans defended the defile. But a traitor showed the enemy a path across the mountains and the Greek position was turned. Still, King Leonidas and his heroic supporters defended Thermopylae until all were slain. Xerxes, however, had gained the pass, although at heavy cost, but restraints were now removed and the Persians



marched to Athens which was taken and destroyed by fire and a message sent home by Xerxes announced his triumph.

But the sea fight of Salamis was yet to come, and in this the Greeks were victorious. The destruction of the Persian fleet which supplied their army with food left the land forces largely unfed. Retreat became inevitable and with many disasters the remnant of the Persian army at last reached home.

Mardonius, a Persian satrap, still commanded a force in Thessaly and Greece was again invaded. But the Greeks now took the offensive, and we read that: "On the same day two decisive battles were fought. Mardonius and his army were destroyed at Plataea . . . and a great naval victory was won by the Greeks at Mycale."

The path was now prepared for the future greatness of Athens—the Grecian educator and the intellectual centre of the ancient world. Persia also enjoyed a period of prosperity, but the day was not far distant when Alexander the Great would overrun Asia as far as the Indus Valley and spread Greek culture in many lands where its influences, or even existence, had been previously unknown.

T. F. PALMER.

### THE STONE OF DESTINY

THE stealing from Westminster Abbey of the Coronation Stone or, as it has been called "The Stone of Destiny," has afforded many people the best laugh they have had for years in these grim times.

Church, Press and Radio united in a scream of horror at the sacrilege. The Press particularly, excelled itself over this latest sensation. The *Sunday Dispatch*, the paper owned by Lord Rothermere, offered a reward of £1,000 for the recovery of the Stone. Editors could not find words strong enough to condemn this appalling deed. The Stone, which was originally stolen from the Scots by Edward I, has been kept in England ever since, and now some enthusiastic Scot has stolen the stolen property. What an indictment of our so-called civilisation! Thousands of people behaving like a mob of ignorant savages who have discovered that their totem pole has been stolen.

The Very Rev. Canon Alan Campbell Don, Dean of Westminster, reported with sorrow to the King that the Stone, which incidentally weighs 4 cwts. had been stolen, just as if it was a stone out of a ring. Thousands of police in Britain whose job ought to be to watch and capture criminals, are engaged in the hunt which has already cost thousands of pounds. In all this welter of hysterical insanity, it was a relief to turn to the *Sunday Express* (December 31) to an article by John Gordon, the Editor, which he headed "Hush! Hush! You Mustn't Laugh." Here is an extract from his article:—

"Here is a bit of sandstone, venerated for centuries because important Scottish bottoms settled themselves upon it in the days of Auld Lang Syne, and later some even more important bottoms in England decided to continue the practice.

No doubt it was very naughty to purloin the Stone from a church. Though of course it may be argued that it was equally naughty of Westminster Abbey to harbour stolen property.

For the Stone, as even Westminster Abbey admits in its history books, belongs to Scotland and was purloined

from that poor, brow-beaten subject land by the wicked English. Further back still there is some evidence that the Scots, in turn, purloined it from Ireland, which gives that land of long memories still another historic grievance to cherish."

Even the B.B.C. forbade any of their comedians to joke on the subject—so silly because the whole incident is the best joke we have had for years.

The Dean of Westminster told us on the radio: "This is the most devastating thing that could have happened." Now the Dean is a Scotsman himself, so may see the joke later.

If millions of people in England are shocked at the theft, there are thousands of Scots who are jubilant with delight and don't hesitate to say so. In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, Mr. A. I. Milton, Hon. Secretary, Dumfriesshire Branch, Scottish Convention, says that he rejoices at the removal and he says that flags ought to be flown in honour of the event. He sums up by saying: "It was unseemly that it should be desecrated by detention in a museum of ecclesiastical horrors and in the proximity of so many of England's buried blackguards, including the one who stole it."

We are told that Scotland Yard, our Criminal Investigation Dept., has assured us that they will leave no stone unturned to trace the miscreants. Up to the present their sleuths, despite day and night vigils, have had no luck.

The *Times* Leader writer says: "It has been the blackest Christmas ever. One of the most sacred relics of the British Empire has been soiled by the hands of thieves . . ." And all this fuss over 4 cwts. of sandstone!

The Church is certainly busy these days advertising their complete lack of humour and their stupidity. We have the Church of England telling us that pinching 4 cwts. of sandstone is "the most devastating thing that could have happened," and we have had the Church of Rome informing their dupes that they have authentic information that the Virgin Mary, still as the Virgin, with all her bodily functions unimpaired, left probably on an aeroplane flight to Heaven. Although we laugh at these incidents, there is a tragic side to it all. That so many people can be upset and worried because somebody stole a lump of sandstone, and that millions of people believe the story about the Virgin's flight.

These incidents may be quite all right for fairy stories for little children, but it is a terrible condemnation of the childish mentality of folk who can believe such rubbish.

F. A. HORNIBROOK.

### RIPENESS

Full life the product is of arduous years,  
Of winter frost and summer's burning sun;  
Of fears and failure, love achieved, joy won;  
All salted often in the brine of tears.  
Only by living can one prove that fears  
Are half extinguished in a fight begun;  
That failure prelude is to great things done;  
That tears dry up as exultation nears.

Such knowledge is the guerdon of the old,  
A compensation for their youth long lost;  
Experience we win, it is not sold;  
Our mellow sunshine, reached through heat and frost.  
Resolve to live, be patient, and be bold,  
Then will you win, but first must pay the cost.

BAYARD SIMMONS.



## THEY LIVE IN CAGES

### I

SETTLED in his comfortable seat Kinbar Martian drew from his pocket a notebook. It was bound in material similar to the casing of the long fish-shaped projectile in which he was returning to his own planet.

The man gave one final glance at the silvery translucent walls enclosing but leaving space all round him. In the external blue-blackness Kinbar Martian could see innumerable stars, his own planet perceptibly larger as he set his course toward it. Behind earth looked a patchy, badly illumined moon.

What an extraordinary place the terrestrial globe was! Its peoples uncivilised; its most advanced nations and finest individuals barely on the fringe of culture, having only glimpses of how life should be lived in intelligent activity interspersed with happy leisure.

Opening his notebook, Kinbar Martian read tiny characters nearly invisible to human eyes.

Cages. Earth mortals encage each other and themselves at the least pretext and on all possible occasions. So strong is this tendency that sufferers from it boast of it, pointing with pride to cages they erect.

It appears hereditary and historic. Their archæologists discover their ancestors thousands of years ago lived in caves. Many have been opened. They are dark, cold, wet and inimical to living a decent life.

Yet their descendants show inclination to be troglodytes, excepting they construct enclosures instead of taking them ready-made or hollowing them out.

Offenders against their laws are immured in prisons. Eccentric people are confined in asylums, now renamed mental hospitals. This last word is also used for huge buildings in which sick, injured and feeble old persons are kept and treated.

Prisons especially resemble caverns. Of immense thickness of walls, heavy doors locked and bolted, small windows of thick glass and barred keep prisoners away from fresh air, scenery and sunshine, thus lessening their likelihood of reforming into useful citizens. Hospitals and similar institutions are not so forbidding, but none of them is light and airy enough.

That is strange, because the earth people have glass. Not only are their windows too small; they do not realise, have no idea of glass as the main building material. They go on building with brick, stone, slate and tiles when all those are replaceable by glass and similar mediums of which they have perspex and others. So their buildings could be flooded with light and sunshine during the day.

### II

Earthmen show little desire for such. They exclude light, hide from it even when pursuing pleasure. In theatres and cinemas audiences sit in darkness and like it. Especially the last, for they queue for entry to film shows on bright fresh sunny days, preferring to sit in gloom and fug watching innumerable pictures flicker across screens accompanied by unnatural noises.

Their libraries, art galleries and museums are shrouded in gloominess which makes reading, studying pictures or examining exhibits depressive, penance instead of delight.

When they foregather to eat and drink sociably their hotels, inns, taverns, public-houses, restaurants, cafés, clubs and all such places of resort are characterised by the same cagelike conditions of heavy walling excluding light and air.

Most likely this love of shut-in semi-darkness is not so much heredity or ignorance of the value and pleasure of open air existence as convention. It seems enforced

upon their children early, before they have a chance to rebel against it or escape it.

From the age of five earth children are compelled to spend hours a day in schools, orphanages, colleges and other institutions whose peculiarities I need not particularise as they are those of the buildings into which their parents crowd, lacking the two essentials of lightness and airiness.

Attenders at places of worship show greater exclusiveness there than in other aspects of their lives. Not only are they separated into sects, but the churches are heavier and gloomier than secular buildings. This is emphasised by use of coloured and stained or tinted and grey-tinged glass.

At work men and women labour in mills, factories, forges, shops, warehouses, stores, offices, sheds, nearly always in conformity with their prevailing rule that light and air, especially direct sunlight, must be reduced to a minimum.

This reaches its culmination in mining, earth people being so uncivilised as not to be able to use natural forces of their planet to accomplish mechanical operations.

They seem afraid to do so. This is understandable because tribal warfare continues ferociously in which government-dictated scientists and technicians waste their energies on perverting natural forces into destruction and killing rather than constructive improvement and progress.

Hence they build caves in which to shelter when seized by one of their periodical manias or orgies of slaughter and smashing.

### III

Pausing in his recollections Kinbar Martian looked again at his notes.

Strongly stressed therein was Dwellings.

Most important: he reflected. My fellow Martians will want to hear that in detail. They'll be shocked. The millions of little houses and tiny rooms were incredible. Most of them overfilled, largely with stuff unneeded or rarely used; floors, walls, ceilings and furniture dingy of hue. Cellars underneath recall their owners' former caves; so do the houses themselves.

All windows are too small. As if that was not bad enough they are obscured by curtains, blinds, shutters, pot plants, statuettes, and often outside there are overhanging trees and creepers.

Before they touch their public buildings—necessary as that is—earth mortals should completely replan their homes in large habitation blocks or units, using transparent or at least semi-transparent materials, leaving themselves ample space with full inward flow of sun and passage of air.

Kinbar Martian looked again through the envelope of his conveyance, so light and translucent as to be nearly invisible, a film of bubble delicacy.

He thought: Can we teach the earth people better? I don't dare to take any of them to Mars. My people would be horrified, and I fear contemptuous. But some of us must return to earth and instruct its natives.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

## SABBATH HEBETUDE

IT stands to reason that the celebration of the "Lord's Day" ought to be a matter of rejoicing; the Puritan tradition in these isles to keep Sunday in the way of the Jewish Sabbath is a monstrosity.

Saturday is the "day of Saturn," Hebrew "shabbathay," meaning "the Seventh"; it is the "seventh day" on which God ended his work and



rested, Saturn, the planet farthest away, is "the seventh," visible in a dim, greyish glimmer; hence the notion of Saturn being a bilious old man with black looks. Saturday, the day of his "reign," has therefore been considered an ill-starred day on which no work can succeed. Cuneiform tablets call the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th day of the lunar months the "UMU LIMNI" = days of misfortune; on these—they state—you must not "eat anything fried or roasted, not change your dress-coat nor wear white garments, make sacrifices, mount a car, or pass justice; an oracle shall not be consulted, the surgeon shall not visit the sick, no wish can be realised."<sup>(1)</sup>

Later these "umu limni" or "Bad Days" (UD.HUL.GA'L), due to the fact that everybody was dispensed from work, were considered as being holidays SHA-PAT-TUM (from shabātu = to atone, expiate). Concurrently the Hebrew verb *sābath* = to rest and celebrate. As a consequence, Saturn became the champion of the tillers and slaves; in a year whose first day falls on a Saturday, the "slaves, Greeks and all such ne'er-do-well people, will benefit," assert the Arabs.

A Talmud *haggadah* has it that Moses called on Pharaoh to ask for a weekly holiday on which the Jewish slaves in Egypt might rest. When the king allowed him to have his choice of the day, Moses answered: Let it be Saturday, the day on which no work can succeed.

With Jesus clearly being a solar god, the Christians could no longer respect the Saturnalian weekend. In Matth. xii, it is recorded how Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn, plucked ears and even healed a man.<sup>(2)</sup> He is to die on the eve of sabbath in order to have his due resurrection on Saturday, the "dies domini" (Spanish domingo, French dimanche). Easter Sunday is the proper day for the resurrection of the annual sungod, anniversary of the Creation, and the Saturday before is termed "*Sabbatum sanctum* in the R.C. church."<sup>(3)</sup> This is the quietest day of the whole

(1) Saturn is the god of Death. The dead are allowed to roam about after the Winter solstice, when Nature is dead. The Teutons were afraid of them during the "Twelve-Night"; the last 5 days of the *Maya* year were called "*rail cutab*" = Days of Dolour (or Doom), when all protective forces were impotent against *Guayeyab* or *Man*, their Saturnine god. The Mayas did not eat during these days, all fires were extinct, hardly anybody dared go out, work, nor even comb their hair or wash themselves. All kinds of lethal accidents were expected for the first day in particular. The idol, crowned with garlands, was given first place at the altar, but as its destructive power was said to decrease gradually, it was later put to humbler ranks and finally stripped of its ornamental garments. At last the demon was thrown into a corner under invectives where it remained for the year. *Pop*, the first month of the new year, was already the era of *Tzultaca*, the benevolent god.

(2) Medical attendance is expressly named among the 39 kinds of works which must not be undertaken on a Sabbath. "Whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 31, 15; 35, 2). However, it was precisely at a Sabbath that the priests carried the ark round the town of Jericho and blew its towers to smithereens! (Jos. 6). In point of fact, the working population could not afford to rest before the days of Nehemiah (cf. Neh. 13, 15-20) and in the country they even held fairs on Sabbath days. It was only during the Captivity that a gang of zealots took the vow to enforce the strictest observance should they be delivered. And for this, Britons have still to suffer!

(3) On this day Jesus was certainly dead. Saturday as the day of the God of Death is in Rumania consecrated to the memory of the dead; and the Catholics in certain parts of Western Germany kindle lights by night for the departed spirits.

ecclesiastical year when, in the first years, there was not even any church service. St. Cyprian, in an homily for that day, is quoted as having stated (*Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten II, 169f.*) that "Christ, the sungod, was bound to come to grief" in the way of Simson, another solar god.

After the final secession from Judaism of the Christ sect, the sabbath was superseded by Sunday, but still some sabbath notions lingered on; however, the absolute "observance" of the sabbath was certainly not introduced before the 4th century;<sup>(4)</sup> there is proof for it only from the days of the Emperor Leo III (714-741): The Reformation did not accept a divine order of absolute observance; only the Adventists try to reconcile the notions of the Saturnalian Jews with the solar basis of Christianity. 1 Corinthians 16, 2 decrees as day of rest the "first day of the week," as the Paulinian heathen proselytes stuck to the pagan tradition of Sunday being the day of their chief deities.

As every Sunday is a day of Resurrection *en miniature*, it is, one should think, absurd to wrap it in utter gloom.

P. G. ROY.

(4) Emperor Constantine, in his decree from 7th March, 321, wanted anybody in town to observe the "most venerable day of the Sun"; yet the agrarian population was exempt so as not to "miss any chance offered by Heaven."

## NIETZSCHE ON CHRISTIANITY

I CONDEMN Christianity: I bring against the Christian Church the most terrible of all the accusations that an accuser has ever had in his mouth. It is, to me, the greatest of all corruptions, it seeks to work the ultimate corruption, the worst possible corruption. The Christian Church has left nothing untouched by its depravity, it has turned every value into worthlessness, every truth into a falsehood, every integrity into baseness of soul. Let anyone dare to speak to me of its *humanitarian* blessings! Its deepest necessities range it against any effort to abolish distress, it lives by distress, it lives by distress to make itself immortal. For example, the worm of sin: it was the Church that first enriched mankind with this misery—the "equality of souls before God"—this fraud, this pretext for the *rancunes* of all the base-minded, this explosive concept, culminating in Revolution, the modern idea, and the notion of overthrowing the whole social order—this is *Christian dynamite*. The humanitarian blessings of Christianity forsooth! To breed out of *humanitas* a self-contradiction, an art of self-pollution, a will to lie at any price, an aversion and contempt of all good and honest instincts! All of this is, to me, the humanitarianism of Christianity. Parasitism as the only practice of the Church, with its anæmic and "holy" ideals, sucking all blood, all love, all hope out of life; the "Beyond," as the will to deny all reality; the cross, as the emblem of the most subterranean conspiracy ever heard of—against health, beauty, well-being, intellect, kindness of soul, against *Life* itself.

This eternal accusation against Christianity I shall write upon all walls, wherever walls are to be found, I have letters that will be visible even to the blind: I call Christianity the *one great curse, the one intrinsic depravity, the one great instinct of vengefulness for which no means are venomous enough, nor secret, nor subterraneous, nor petty enough; I call thee the one immortal blemish upon the human race!*

(From F. W. Nietzsche's *The Antichrist*, translated by H. L. Mencken.)

Contributed by J. R. M.



### ACID DROPS

At long last the B.B.C. arranged for a religious scientist and a religious theologian to have a discussion in order to prove that there was absolutely nothing in religion to which science could take the smallest exception. Canon Ramsay and Prof. Coulson were to provide the antidote to the poison of Mr. Fred Hoyle and Prof. J. Z. Young—and, of course, they just sweetly re-echoed each other's childish platitudes. The *Church Times* does not appear to be impressed with their performance. They were "too much in agreement," nor did they address "quite the same audience" as Messrs. Hoyle and Young. In other words, their "discussion" was a complete fiasco. What else could one expect?

The B.B.C. Report, which has just been published, has quite a lot to say about religious broadcasting. It takes the stand that "this is a Christian country"—which, in law at all events, the famous Bowman Case blew sky high. However, it deprecates "narrow doctrinal views" and recommends "broad spiritual values," a distinction known perhaps to some of the members who framed the Report, but to whom else? In any case, it dismisses "the Rationalist's claim for opportunity to discuss religion as we are citizens of a Christian country." In other words, if Rationalism were given a chance to broadcast, "it would go far to destroy" the value of religious broadcasting.

The truth is that the B.B.C. religious staff is dead frightened, and the Committee under Lord Beveridge is equally scared, that once the truth about religion and Christianity is competently broadcasted the Churches will get a blow from which they will never recover. That must, it is suggested, never be allowed to happen. The bigots have a stranglehold on the B.B.C., and we Freethinkers can do nothing but plod steadily ahead. That the pious are really frightened can be seen from this Report.

Although Roman Catholics are always boasting about their "conversions" they have to admit now and then their "leakages"; and now Catholic children are being implored to "reconvert" their parents. The Liverpool Federation of Catholic Teachers is greatly disturbed and is trying to create a "school religious atmosphere" by making "our Lord himself the centre of all teaching." The children should know the answers to "attacks on their Faith." This is very funny for, as is well known, nobody runs away from an attack on the Faith as quickly as a Catholic teacher. He has as much idea of answering a sceptic as has a Zulu. This Federation suggests a syllabus for keeping the children up to scratch—one long horror of superstition and fatuity.

Ceylon is supposed to be a free secular State, but an attempt is now being made to give it Buddhism as a State religion. The reason given by the Minister of Health. Mr. Bandaranaike (who is described by opponents as a pseudo-Christian posing as a Buddhist) for this, is that Ceylon has nearly five millions of Buddhists. He is being opposed because it is feared that he wants to sweep the country with a "religious and racial" campaign. So, after all, Buddhism in Ceylon can go the way of all religions—in bigotry, intolerance, and humbug.

The "revelations" by the ex-Communist, Mr. Douglas Hyde, about Communism, just published, will no doubt

cause a lot of stir, but the *Universe* complains that his entry into the Church of Rome is being rather ignored. It admits that both Catholicism and Communism have a "coherent" philosophy, but there is an important difference. Catholicism has "the sacraments." And while so many ex-Communists admit that their "God" has failed, no one can imagine an ex-Catholic making a similar admission. Really! But surely the fact that so many Catholics become Freethinkers is proof that they are certain that their one-time God *has* completely failed.

We note with joy that there may be some Catholics who, tired of being called Papists, want to retaliate by calling their opponents "Prots." Why not? It is quite wrong to imagine that the quarrel between Prots and Papists was more or less amicably settled when Catholics came into civil rights with Cardinal Wiseman. The fight is still on, and as far as we can see will go on as long as Christianity lasts. And we are bound to admit that the "Prots" are not liked by Anglo-Catholics either.

It is not always a quarrel between Papists and Prots which gets publicity; there is the one between Christians and Christian Unitarians. The latter cannot swallow the "Incarnation" and the "Virgin Birth", but some modern churchmen think that this should not debar them from joining the Church of England. The Rev. G. R. Jones, as a good Unitarian, finds that he simply cannot swallow the Virgin Birth, though he is ready to believe the Incarnation because we are all Incarnated—somehow. In any case, if Mr. Jones can swallow God Almighty it surely is a very small step to believe in the Virgin Birth—or, for that matter, Aladdin's Lamp?

Ever since the Call to Prayer for the first Sunday in January was made, we have wondered what extraordinary benefits would accrue. So far it is true only the meat ration has been reduced, cuts in lighting and transport services have followed, while the retreat in Korea and longer casualty lists have come from the war front. Perhaps if the Call to Prayer had been for more Sundays there would have been correspondingly more calamities, but one never knows. We understand that Methodists in particular wanted this Call to Prayer—we wonder what they have to say now?

So after all we are a Pagan country! The R.C. Bishop of Nottingham, Dr. Ellis, told some Ukrainians living in Nottingham, "England is a very pagan country. The people, for the most part, although they are good, have no religion." What Dr. Ellis obviously meant was that, for the most part, the English people were not Roman Catholics; for most of them we think would rather commit murder than say that they had no religion. And perhaps it would be true to add that a small minority would also rather commit murder than say that they had religion. So where are we?

Mr. Justice Finmore has discovered that "our prisons are full and our churches are empty." That is probably true, but he might have added that the prison population are generally very religious. He would, indeed, have found that a Freethinker is so rare a bird in prison that the authorities have always refused to make any special provision for his opinions as they do for religious criminals.



# "THE FREETHINKER"

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London, W.C. 1.  
Telephone No.: Holborn 2601.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

A. STEPHENSON.—We hope to deal with the points you raise again in an article; but in the meantime it would clear the air, so to speak, if you gave us your definitions of both "nature" and "mind." The writer you refer to does not believe in an entity called "mind," but only in "a bundle of sensations."

Will correspondents kindly note to address all communications in connection with "The Freethinker" to: "The Editor," and not to any particular person. Of course, private communications can be sent to any contributor.

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).

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.

Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.

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

## SUGAR PLUMS

On Thursday evening, February 8th, London readers will be flocking to the "Freethought Forum," organised by the Executive of the N.S.S. in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, W.C.1. But that is not enough; how many Christian friends can you bring armed with questions on religion, non-religion and Sunday Amusements? A panel of speakers will be ready to answer the questions. It is hoped that all London readers will help in this excellent opportunity for rousing public interest in those questions. Proceedings begin at 7 o'clock and admission is free.

For fear of releasing more snow through vibration, and thus adding to the avalanche horrors, church bells in the Austrian Tyrol have remained silent, but the risk to the living is now to be taken by peals from the church bells on behalf of the avalanche dead. When religion is in, the senses are out.

The fight for Sunday opening of cinemas at Honiton and Seaton will go on. So far only one vote—58 to 57—turned down the proposal at Seaton, but at Honiton the voting was 21 to 8 against. It is now to go before the local government electors who will settle the matter. It is obvious that, on most occasions, an ordinary public meeting is simply packed with a crowd of Sabbatarians who generally yell themselves hoarse with joy when they can prevent other people going to a cinema. It is good to add, however, that when the electors get their chance, almost invariably they vote for Sunday opening.

## SPIRITUALISM AND SIR. A. CONAN DOYLE

WHEN Houdini, who had done so much to expose Spiritualistic fraud, died, Sir A. Conan Doyle wrote two articles in the *Strand Magazine* which proved how much the great story teller had declined through his championship of Spiritualism.

Not being able to explain how Houdini performed his illusions, Sir Arthur worked them up just as he did a Sherlock Holmes story, dramatising the incidents so that it looked as if Houdini was really a medium. In fact, if one took the famous writer as an authority, there is hardly a medium or an incident in the history of Spiritualism which is a fraud. All, all are genuine. He actually quotes two complete frauds as Mrs. Deane and William Hope as genuine. They were exposed time after time.

One of Houdini's most mysterious illusions was walking through a brick wall. There are two or three ways of doing this—it is a brilliant piece of stage conjuring—but Doyle was quite convinced that Houdini dematerialised himself on one side of the wall, went through it, and then materialised himself back on the other side. Then there was the message which Lady Doyle (who was a medium) got through from Houdini's mother. It came in perfect English, and Houdini was obliged to point out that his mother did not know a word of English—she was an Austrian and quite unable to learn it. Sir Arthur was no more discomfited than was Mrs. Besant when it was proven that the Mahatma Letters, which she confidently told the members of the N.S.S. were genuinely wafted from the Himalayas, were in actual fact written by Mr. Judge. Doyle blandly told Houdini that his mother had been taking lessons in English during her sojourn in Summerland. But one has only to read these *Strand* articles to see how tremendously the author of *The White Company* and a dozen other fine tales had fallen from his high estate.

In one of his last books, *The Edge of the Unknown*, which shows his usual credulity, he appears carefully to have avoided mentioning the name of Joseph F. Rinn whose *Sixty Years of Psychological Research* I have already referred to in these columns. Yet in the *New York Journal* for 1924 will be found the following:—

"Not long ago when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who was probably the world's most noted convert to Spiritualism, was in this country, a friend of mine, Joseph F. Rinn, offered him 5,000 dollars if he, Rinn, couldn't reproduce every feat performed by a spiritualistic medium . . . Rinn, who admits trickery out and out, denounces all mediums as either frauds or self-hypnotized. He asserts that not a single proved message has ever come from beyond the veil."

In the light of this, Doyle's *Edge of the Unknown* is put forward as a work in which survival is not merely proven, but the evidence is so abundant that the author could have given us, no doubt, fifty similar volumes. Ghost stories galore, living fairies, and psychic explanations of all sorts of things, are the stock in trade of such credulity as distinguishes Sir Arthur and many similar "investigators."

One of his most popular books was *The Wanderings of a Spiritualist*, and at the hands of Rinn it received a very severe criticism which was published in the *New York American* for April, 1923. The critic showed up some of the spiritualistic marvels as sheer fraud. And it is needless to add that Doyle never accepted Rinn's challenge to duplicate by "magic" anything done by mediums.

Some years before this, the well known author and journalist, Filson Young, had thoroughly exposed some



of the "genuine" phenomena which had impressed Doyle, who never forgave him; and in the *Wanaerings*, there is an account of a sitting with the Australian medium Bailey whom Doyle implicitly trusted, in spite of the fact that the medium had been shown as an utter fraud. In the end, Doyle had to admit that he could not acquit Bailey with "tampering with the truth" and he adds, "But one has always to remember that *psychic mediumship* has no connection one way or another with personal character, any more than the gift of poetry."—That is how the great champion of Spiritualism manages to dispose of fraud.

One of the biggest swindlers of them all was the spirit photographer William Hope, and Doyle got particularly ratty when Rinn characterised Hope in this way. In the end he offered Rinn 1,000 dollars to produce a photograph under the test conditions accepted by Hope. Rinn replied that he would pay Hope's expenses to New York and give him 10,000 dollars to produce a spirit photograph under his (Rinn's) conditions. And in addition, if Hope did produce a spirit photo under these conditions, Rinn declared he would accept Sir Arthur's challenge and also produce a spirit photo.

This challenge at last produced a lengthy reply from Doyle who, as usual, roped in a lot of well-known Spiritualists to testify to Hope's complete honesty—Spiritualists like Mrs. de Crespigny, Miss Searcher, Mr. Hewitt McKenzie, and lots of other credulous believers who had as much chance of exposing a cunning rascal like Hope as the average servant maid. But nothing would induce Doyle to accept Rinn's challenge.

It was the same with the fraudulent medium known as Eva C. whose speciality was "ectoplasm" and who fooled dozens of scientists as well as Doyle. The curious thing about her is that she gave some forty sittings to the Society for Psychical Research and no ectoplasm whatever turned up (or out). Still, she completely fooled both Schrenk-Notzing and a Madame Bisson who published a book on the subject. Some of the photographs of Eva making ectoplasm are perfect examples of the contempt Eva had for the two investigators. One of these actually shows a cutting from the French paper *Le Miroir* above the ectoplasm—proving that the medium simply cut out a picture from the newspaper, smeared it with whatever she used as ectoplasm, and then triumphantly produced it as a "materialisation." For sheer cheek and impudence that would be hard to beat. Yet Doyle really believed all this as genuine manifestations of the "psychic."

In his book, Rinn gives copious details of his controversy with Doyle and with many other "investigators." And he proves beyond a shadow of a doubt how hopelessly incompetent are most scientists and credulous believers like Doyle to conduct any investigation of this kind. Over and over again Rinn offered to pay all expenses and a big sum as a prize if any medium could produce evidence from the "other world" or produce phenomena which he could not duplicate by "magic." His challenge was never accepted, but from the way that Doyle boasts about Spiritualism in his *Edge of the Unknown*, one would think that getting evidence for survival was so easy that it was sheer ignorance to question it.

One point I want to make clear again. I do not say that every medium *consciously* frauds, or that every phenomenon produced by mediums can be explained away quite easily. What I maintain is that so far no evidence has been produced for what we call "survival." That is, as far as it is humanly possible to know, no evidence

has yet been produced to prove that when we die, we live on in another "sphere," or whatever it is called. And the reader will find all this very clearly discussed in *Sixty Years of Psychical Research*—a book all interested in Spiritualism should read.

H. CUTNER.

## NEW EVIDENCE ON EVOLUTION

IT is something new for His Majesty's Stationery Office to issue a booklet on the evolution of mankind. While this brochure, *History of the Primates*, by W. E. le Gros Clark, does not give us any new revelations of a startling nature, it performs a useful function in bringing the subject up to date with the latest fossil finds in Africa and elsewhere. The American continents still remain bare of any traces of prehistoric man.

Evolution is a theory, a working hypothesis; its momentum is so gradual as to be incapable of demonstration. History of the human race does not go back more than 7,000 years, far too brief a span to render perceptible the process of evolutionary change. Only such a period as the Eocene, lasting some 25 million years, "would have provided sufficient time for the development of generalised lemurs and . . . tarsiers." Our evidence of the evolutionary process is "indirect," that is, circumstantial; it rests on anatomical characters whereby "it is possible to make certain theoretical assumptions," on the study of fossils and on investigations in the biological laboratory.

It is hardly necessary to tell readers of *The Freethinker* that man is not "descended from monkeys." All existing types of any class of animals, such as the Primates, are "the terminal products of evolution, which still survive." Shrews, lemurs, tarsiers, monkeys, gibbons and apes are as much the final outcome of prehistoric forbears as is man himself. Like flowers varying in height, size, etc., but all springing from the same root, they are parallel productions, not graduations in biological development.

The Primates, to which family Man belongs, are by origin arboreal creatures, as, indeed, are "the prototypes of Mammals as a whole." Primates have their habitat in tropical or semi-tropical regions, and recent discoveries confirm the theory that man originally came from Africa and not Asia. Accurate vision was a requisite of arboreal life, as a sense of smell was a more important factor for ground residing mammals; hence the development of the by-focal, close-set eyes of the Primates and of the extended snout of ground animals.

Mr. Clark adds that "the demand for skill and cunning in arboreal life" (p. 31) was a reason for the expansion of the brain early in the evolutionary life of the Primates. I do not follow this argumentation, for it is surely obvious that the dangers on the ground are greater than those in the trees. And, by the same reasoning, birds should be the most intelligent of animals. Further, the author states that *all* mammals were originally arboreal; why then did not the brain start expanding in earlier forms than the recently arrived primates? Finally, man's intellectual development made its most marked expansion *after* he had ceased to be arboreal.

Mr. Clark, in fact, later contradicts his own assertion when on page 72 he remarks that "the evolutionary development of the limbs appears to have outstripped the brain," and still more emphatically on page 82 when he says "the limbs of prehistoric man must have reached the completion of this evolutionary development long before the . . . brain." In short, as fossils go to prove,



the human foot came before the human brain in the evolutionary scale.

Recent excavations in Kenya and other parts of Africa have unearthed a variety of ape forms, dating from the Miocene period (about 30 million years ago); these vary from small gibbons to large gorilloid apes. "It is a matter of great importance to determine whether any of these Miocene apes can be regarded as the actual ancestors of the human stock." But Mr. Clark is exceedingly cautious in drawing any such conclusion, and contents himself by saying that it might well be so. In his final recapitulation, in fact, he admits that "the most conspicuous hiatus in the series" of the descent of Man is the step from these prehistoric apes to the first *homo*. The "missing link" is still missing, apparently.

Advance, however, has been made in our knowledge of "first men." Again our oldest specimens come from Africa, the *Australopithecus* (Southern Ape) being found in Bechuanaland and near Johannesburg. While this animal had a brain capacity of only 600 cubic centimetres, as against the 1,350 c.c. of modern man, he undoubtedly walked erect "almost as Man does to-day," and had his head set on his spinal column much as modern man has. He did not know the use of tools or fire. When he lived precisely is uncertain, though it is estimated that these fossils can be a million years old. In size he was about the stature of the African Pigmy. It is at this point that our author makes his observations on the prior development of the physical over mental characteristics in Man: "the most surprising feature of their whole anatomy is the combination of a brain of simian dimensions with limbs . . . of human type."

The next landmark in human evolution appears to be the *Pithecanthropus*, of which the Java and Pekin fossils are representatives. The race is estimated to have lived some half a million years ago, and shows a 50 per cent. increase in brain mass over the *Australopithecus* with its 900 c.c. of grey matter. This animal was under 5 foot in height, that is to say, comparable with the modern African Bushman. An advance on his predecessor, he did know how to make tools and the use of fire; he had also developed cannibalistic habits.

The brochure then comes to *homo sapiens* himself. Extensive remains of primitive man, his tools and habits, have been discovered. These are called after the locality where their remains have been found—the Abbevillian, Acheulian, Mousterian and Aurignacean races, the last living between 100,000 and 70,000 years ago, and famous for its cave drawings. A fairly recent discovery (1935) is that at Swanscombe, Kent, of a fossil human, possibly 250,000 years old, that is, a type of *homo sapiens*, who has seen the light of day these 300,000 years.

While the modification of the limbs from those of arboreal apes to those of man would seem a normal and logical evolutionary trend, the question of brain development is harder to account for. "In spite of much speculation," says our author, "nothing certainly is known of the fundamental cause of this expansion."

Mr. Clark has disappointingly little to say about the Cro-magnon man. It has always been my opinion that this species, with its finer cranial structure and larger brain, was one superior to *homo sapiens*. There is nothing in evolutionary theory which insists that *homo sapiens*, the survivors, was intellectually the most promising of his kind. When we contemplate the grand experiment of civilisation on which Man has embarked, this thought that it is a *homo* of second-rate quality who

has survived, might indicate the cause of his apparent increasing inability to master his destiny.

Some such doubt seems to worry the mind of the author of this pamphlet, and his concluding paragraph is worth quoting in full:

"If Man has gained his intellectual dominance over his fellow creatures by concentrating his evolutionary energies on the development of his brain, it remains to be seen whether he can now maintain his position by contriving a method of living in orderly relations with members of his own species. If he fails to do so, he may yet follow the example of many other groups of animals which have achieved a temporary ascendancy by an exaggerated development of some particular structural mechanism. He may become extinct."

P. C. KING.

## A CELESTIAL COLLOQUY

A CONVERSATION, it may be observed, not in heaven, but about it.

Accosted by the itinerant devotee is a rather diverting experience. I was standing, ruminating at a corner road near Spokane, when one, intent on saving souls, thought it opportune to accost a wayfarer taking a pause by the way. He approached me.

"Good-day, brother. Are you saved?"

"Say, stranger," I said, "What the deuce are you bent on saving me from? Come across, for the Lord's sake!"

"Brother," he intimated gravely, "you have put it well. It is for the Lords' sake, and your own, that I address you."

"Thanks, ole timer," I retored, airily. "I've got enough on mind concerning my mundane welfarer to leave aside any possible one in imaginary hereafter."

"You talk like a materialist."

"That's good enough," I opined. "We have a body of matter that needs material clothing, food, and shelter. The pious go in for that as much as the worldly. Look at that dollar-grabbing Billy Sunday, saving souls so much per dollar! Gee whiz! I would not let this lucre-loving gospel sharp save any soul I've got, for my own self respect."

"He is an exception," admitted the exponent of faith. "but then that money is devoted to the Lord's cause."

"As you say. In any case it must puzzle the recording angel. That busy employee of the Lord has to scratch his head, now and then, to size up the Lord's servant here below, preaching the Gospel, saving souls, and not least, raking in the shekels. Anyway, all he has to do is to consult the Lord himself, who knows everything."

"This sounds like mockery. You may as well say straightway that you are an infidel."

"Which I will! Yes, my Christian brother, I am a Freethinker. What have we—set free from religious dogma and absurdity—to do with gods, angels, heavens, hells, and all such human-invented rubbish?"

"Farewell, infidel! It looks like we will not see each other in heaven."

"Well," I suggested, laughing. "There are only a few destined, as is supposed, to be so fortunate. Adios, hombre!"

It may be noted that the term "hombre" is pretty current in the western United States.

GEORGE F. LAWS.



## LANGUAGE ASSOCIATIONS

THE article of Mr. W. A. Vaughan, December 24 and 31, and that of Mr. P. G. Roy, December 31, are of great interest. Sir Wm. Jones in 1786 declared that the similarities between Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, German, and Keltic could be explained only by the hypothesis that these languages had a common origin. F. Max Müller derived these languages from some 800 original Sanskrit roots in all; for example, from root gna, to know, the Latin nomen, originally gnomen, a name, from nosco, I know—what you are known by; also Latin nobilis, noble, worth knowing. The Orthological Society made out a list of some 850 words in basic English to serve as a universal auxiliary language.

Bopp, by his *Comparative Grammar*, placed comparative philology on a scientific basis. Cuno was the first, of many, to insist on the axiom that race is not co-extensive with language, and Oppert has said, what many now assert, that there are Aryan languages, but there is no Aryan race. Isaac Taylor, in his *Origin of Aryans*, gave a diagram of probable language connections (1889 ed., p. 269), and said, "Much of the mythology of ancient Greece . . . must have been obtained from Babylonia through Phoenician channels" (p. 301). Of interest, here, are Mr. Macleod Yearsley's remarks in *The Literary Guide*, May, 1927, regarding the works of Dr. L. A. Waddell, who, in his *Sumer-Aryan Dictionary*, seeks to place his discovery of the Sumerians [Southern Babylonians] as the Early Aryans on a solid and unassailable basis; demonstrates the Sumerian origin of the ancient Egyptian language and its hieroglyphics; and shows that about 75 per cent. of our common English words, not to mention many in Latin, Greek, and French, are derived from the Sumerian." Further, in "L.G.," August, 1927, Mr. Yearsley comments on Dr. Waddell's *Aryan Origin of the Alphabet, Disclosing the Sumero-Phoenician Parentage of Our Letters Ancient and Modern*, that "the alphabet was traditionally supposed to have been invented by Cadmus of Thebes [ca. 13 cy. B.C.]. Dr. Waddell's discovery is that Menes and some, if not all, of the pre-dynastic kings were Sumero-Phoenicians and Aryan in race, which agrees with Petrie's theory that the alphabetic signs or letters were not derived from any picture or hieroglyph writing, but were older than picture writing. (*The Formation of the Alphabet*, Sir W. F. Petrie, 1912.)"

James Patterson in his *Scottish Language*, 1855, claimed therefor an Icelandic or Scandinavian origin. Dr. Waddell in his *British Edda* claimed that the Edda is not Icelandic but British in origin, "counter to all accepted theories." Professor Whitney states: "A trustworthy estimate of the words found in our great dictionaries makes nearly five-sevenths of them—mainly words of learned use—to be of classical derivation, and only about two-sevenths native Germanic." Thomas Stratton in his *Celtic Origin of Greek and Latin*, 1870, gives some 90 pages of words to prove his title's claim. A Cambridge writer makes an all-sufficient original claim for Anglo-Saxon. Canon Taylor had said, "The fact is, we have no reliable Anglo-Saxon dictionary."

"Surnames ending in son are quite unknown in Anglo-Saxon" (Marsh). The name Billing, or Billington, or Billingham, is simply an example of the Anglo-Saxon patronymic ending in ING, corresponding to the Scottish MAC and the Irish O' or MAC. The word KENT is given in H. Morley's *English Writers*,

vol. I, p. 245, not as an English but a British word. When did Kent become "the Garden"?

Languages are as mixed and confused as "races." Sergi in his *Mediterranean Race*, 1901, p. 198, pointed out that there is no fixed criterion of race. Professor Elliot Smith says that Dr. W. H. R. Rivers "prepared the way for the elimination of much of the darkness and the learned nonsense from ethnology," and Dr. W. P. Pycraft of the British Museum said in 1925 that "their conception as anthropologists of 'races' and 'species' and 'somatological units' was in a state of mush. There was not one of the schemes of the classification of man . . . which would stand the test of criticism." The "barren science of ethnology" has been very prolific in producing Teutonic trumpeters and Saxon horn blowers, in the "vulgar theory of race" hymns of self-adulation, as being of the master race. Historians, bishops, politicians, publicists, glibly display the "learned nonsense." The best exposition and exposure of that creed is given in J. M. Robertson's sociological study, *The Saxon and the Celt* (University Press, London, 1897).

GEORGE ROSS.

## BEWARE OF THE POPE'S BLESSING

CARDINAL LAURI, on his return to Rome after attending the Free State Eucharistic Congress, reported to the Pope that "Ireland is the most Catholic country in the world, and the Irish people more attached to Rome than any other nation." The Pope said that he shared this view. It was also stated that he (the Pope) "intends to confer on Ireland a canonical title similar to those conferred years ago on France, Spain and Austria."

Now, whether Ireland is to be congratulated on receipt of these titles may be judged by the facts:—

The Pope conferred the title of "The Golden Rose" on Bombo, King of Naples, and in less than a year he lost his crown and kingdom. The Pope also sent the Golden Rose to Isabella, Queen of Spain, and in a short time she lost her crown. The Pope sent the Golden Rose to the Empress Eugenie of France, and in less than a year France was overthrown by Germany; the Emperor lost his crown and died in exile, while his son fell in South Africa. The Queen Regent of Spain, and King Alfonso were blessed by the Pope. They promptly lost Cuba and the Philippines. The Emperor Maximilian of Mexico was blessed by the Pope, and soon afterwards was killed by his people. The Pope specially blessed a steamer filled with pilgrims en route for South Africa in 1870—it never reached its destination and every soul perished!

Coming down to more recent times, the Pope conferred the title of the Golden Rose on Princess Ena of Battenberg on her marriage to King Alfonso of Spain. On their wedding-day, May 31, 1906, both were almost assassinated by a bomb thrown at their carriage, causing the death of several people. They afterwards lost their crowns. Perhaps most remarkable of all is the tragic story of Mussolini, the "Sawdust-Cæsar." The Pope blessed his military arms before setting out to bomb the unfortunate Abyssinians. Mussolini not only lost all his African colonies, but his own dead body was thrown on the streets of Milan like the dead body of a dog.

To bring the tragic record up to date we have only to recall the fate of an airship which crashed recently after a visit to Rome. There were over 50 persons killed! It would seem that the Pope's Blessing is more like a curse.

J. EFFEL.



## CORRESPONDENCE

## WHO WROTE ISAIAH?

SIR,—The Bible contains 66 chapters supposed to be written by Isaiah but in fact it has been proved that only the first 39 chapters could have been written by him as in later chapters there are references to events which happened after his death. It is known that Isaiah lived about 700 B.C. Yet in the first verse of chapter XLV there is a reference to Cyrus who lived 250 years afterwards—500 B.C.

I suppose why the Churches haven't put the later chapters of Isaiah under a separate heading instead of hoodwinking its faithful followers is only one more mystery surrounding it; surely "deceiving the multitudes" is a serious sin in the eyes of the Church?—or maybe only when someone else is committing it!—Yours, etc.,

J. G. BELLAMY.

## RUSSIAN COMMUNISM

SIR,—What sort of Freethinkers are they who so utterly fail to understand the present state of the world? Not to realise that Russian Communism is the most deadly insidious menace to civilisation and to everything human and decent the world has ever known; that the Kremlin with an efficiency never before equalled in the darkest ages controls the minds and the lives of several hundred millions of people; that over twelve millions are enduring the worse form of slavery the world has ever experienced; that not a thought or a word dare be uttered that the Kremlin does not approve; that everybody is under suspicion and spies on his neighbour; that the standard of life is forty per cent. lower than under the Czar; that all over the world Communists are plotting to disrupt and to impoverish; that Russia has no morality, that their mentality is that of the venomous reptile; that no country has ever behaved with more treachery; that the united nations of the world, led by America, are obliged to re-arm to save civilisation. Do not these quasi-Freethinkers ever read? Do they not, as Freethinkers, keep an open mind and always search and seek for fact and truth? It is the fear of the atom bomb that alone stops the millions of Russians under arms from sweeping over Europe and enslaving us! The atom bomb—yes, use it, and the hydrogen one too, to save us and civilisation from this awful fate. Do those who call themselves Freethinkers know what free thinking is? Certainly not, they ought to join Jehovah's Witnesses—who look forward to war as God-sent, preceding a long Heavenly peace for the faithful!—Yours, etc.,

M. BARNARD.

## PEACE AND WAR AND FREETHOUGHT

SIR,—I have waited until now to write on this important matter as per your issue January 7. There is nothing in this week's issue.

The resolution and Mr. Cutner's comments show to any thinker worth a pinch of salt what a ridiculous position Freethought is in. In the *Freethinker* correspondence has to be short, and space is not afforded for the subject to be fully dealt with, so readers must read between the lines. Often they read wrongly.

The principles state a lot of seemingly beautiful ideals but they ignore a lot of equally important principles, i.e. happiness, utility, morality, peace, work, self-government, progress, reason, knowledge, etc. But it ignores history, politics, economics, sociology and certain very definite departments of knowledge and experience. Hence Mr. Cohen's pamphlets *War and Civilisation* and *Socialism and the Churches* are not pushed, and the E.C. denounce only the atom bomb and Mr. H. Cutner is for it, because he is utterly ignorant of such subjects as he mentions, i.e. national crisis, aggression, war, United Nations, etc.

So you see, Sir, until Freethinkers are prepared to study these things adequately, and truthfully "seek to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action and speech," as per principle 2, Freethought cannot be really progressive but static, as actually happens.

Therefore, only Socialism (not Labour Party or Communist Party politics) can solve the problems because Socialism seeks to remove the Cause of War, competition, national rivalries, exploitation, gods, devils, ignorance and slavery (fancy freethought in a slave-owning community), i.e. capitalist society, and substitute a society based on the common ownership of the means of life for all. Then democracy will have a real meaning and freethought or god-killing will cease to confuse and confound the non-political, class split, eminent, unscientific thinkers in our midst.—Yours, etc.,

HAROLD SHAW.

## CONVERSION

SIR,—With regard to those Communists who have deserted the ranks of the Kremlin to embrace the equally authoritarian teachings of the Vatican, I should like to draw your attention to Douglas Hyde's account of his conversion, as given in his article "From Marx to Christ," from which I quote the following extract: "Then came the night when I admitted to myself that I believed in everything connected with Catholicism—except the first necessary premise, belief in God, which Communism had long since destroyed in me. I decided that only an act of faith could take me past that point. You cannot read or think yourself into such belief. Call it actual grace, call it what you will, it worked."

The article mentioned appears in a collection entitled "The Road to Damascus," edited by John A. O'Brien, and published in 1949. For the quotation see page 185. This work bears the imprimatur of the Roman Catholic Church and Hyde's preposterous assertion that he believed *everything* before accepting the basic premise of an omnipotent deity is, therefore, officially endorsed. The boosted *reason* of Rome seems to be more than somewhat lacking in the case of this much-vaunted convert. Not the fiction of grace but the reality of wish-fulfilment seems to have been in operation.

To turn to another topic, I do not think that I will be alone in saying that I should be pleased if "Hannibal" would quote his authorities for the facts contained in his article "The Virgin's Kiss" of January 7, 1951.—Yours, etc.,

E. G.

(Hannibal's authority is *Histoire Anecdote de l'Inquisition d'Espagne*, by Edmond Cazal. Paris, 1932.)

## "DISGUST"

SIR,—May I be allowed to express my disgust at the action taken by the N.S.S. with regard to the recent editorial by Mr. H. Cutner.

However much some readers may disagree with him, he should be allowed to express his views freely in this *forum* without being condemned by a religious conclave with bell, book and candle.

May I also be permitted to ask the N.S.S. a simple question? Are we allowed to blaspheme in these columns as much as we like against the Holy Ghost, but never against His Holiness, Karl Marx?—Yours, etc.,

J. R.

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

## INDOOR

- Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute, Science Room).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: Brains Trust, Mixed Team of Experts.  
Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, February 6, 7 p.m.: MRS. VIRGINIA FLEMING, "Life Without Revelation."  
Glasgow Secular Society (Branch of the N.S.S.) (McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: JAMES P. MORRISON, "The Mystery of the Earth."  
Leicester Secular Society (Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: T. D. MURPHY, A.M.I.C.E., "City Water Supply" (lantern lecture).  
Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12, Shaw Street, Liverpool 6).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: GEO. COLEBROOK, President, Freethought Society, Wigton, "Man's Debt to Revolution."  
National Secular Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Thursday, February 8th, 7 p.m.: A Freethought Forum. Questions on Religion, etc., answered by a Panel of Speakers. Please bring your questions. Admission Free.  
Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: MR. JOHN PECK, D.F.C. (C.P.), "Focus on Communism."  
South London Branch N.S.S. (London and Brighton Hotel, 139, Queens Road, Peckham, S.E.15).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: F. A. HORNIBROOK (President, West London Branch N.S.S.), "Freethought and Politics."  
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: DR. J. BRONOWSKI, M.A. PH.D., "Science and Ethics—the Underlying Concepts."



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