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## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### Debunking the Bible

READERS will perhaps remember an article I wrote last year dealing with *Worlds in Collision*, by Dr. I. Velikovsky, one of the world's best sellers. I had only a "digest" of the book to go by and I then felt that it was rather unfair to criticise a book I had not carefully read. However, it has now come my way, and I am bound to admit that *Worlds in Collision* has proved an extremely interesting work, and well worth reading. But why it should be cited by pious readers as a complete vindication of Bible "miracles" is something I cannot understand. In my opinion, Velikovsky has thoroughly debunked the Bible—more thoroughly, in fact, than many Freethought works.

In the first place, the Bible God, as such, has no place whatever in the book except as the silent old gentleman, perhaps, who gave the initial spin to our sun and planets. He is then very hastily dismissed by Velikovsky. The names of many Gods are given in the Index, but not the one known to us as Elohim or Jehovah. Next, as far as I can understand the book, what we have in the past called "miracles" in the Bible are very clearly shown to be merely manifestations of cosmic phenomena. When you read about a "devouring fire," or "stones falling from the sky," or "a day of thick darkness," or "the mountains will be melted," or "the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood," or about hundreds of similar threats and curses generally "prophesied" as the awful calamities which were going to happen to the Jews because they wanted to worship strange Gods, or marry out of the Faith, or as threats to Israel's enemies—it is quite wrong to imagine these things as mere threats, or inventions, or God's actual punishments. They all really happened, and their descriptions are strictly in order. The only thing which cannot be substantiated about them is that they came from God Almighty. To put it in a nutshell, the prophets and other writers in the Bible had been living in a time when there were "worlds in collision," and such things as the plagues of Egypt, the Pillar of Fire, the destruction of Sennacherib's army, are properly and truly reported. There was nothing miraculous about them.

Velikovsky goes into minute details, basing his story mostly on hundreds of writers of "myths" and "folk-lore." He proves (or does his best to prove) that Venus, for example, was a comet "offshoot" of Jupiter, and that about the period of the plagues of Egypt, this Earth of ours was actually passing through its tail. He shows (or tries to show) the part Venus played in mythology—most of which he looks upon as "cosmic" truth—that is, she was Isis, Athene, Lucifer, the Star of the Morning, and many other things, and that only when she had shed her tail did she become a regular planet. But while she was still a comet, and we were in close touch with her tail, all the dreadful convulsions of nature, the earthquakes, the reversal of our poles, the tilting of our axis, the awful results of which are so vividly

described by Biblical prophets as punishments to the Israelites for their backsliding and other sins—these all actually took place, and are described not only in the Bible but in the written records of many races, or in their traditions or memories. Velikovsky quotes them copiously sometimes gently correcting them. As an example of this, take the problem of Atlantis. Its destruction—if there ever was such a continent—is generally given as about 9000 BC., but he thinks there is here one cypher too many. As most of the cosmic havoc he describes from the Bible took place when we were so close to Venus, and which is described in the Bible as taking place about the year 900 BC., he insists that that was the date that must be given for the submersion of Atlantis.

To quote any of the innumerable passages from *Worlds in Collision* given as proof of his thesis, is far beyond me. To answer it in detail would require a far bigger book than Velikovsky's. But for Freethinkers, it surely is one of the finest vindications of our position ever written.

We have always maintained that the Bible, apart from some of its ethical teaching (which in any case must have been part of the ethics of many nations) was a book of myths and legends, that "God" the Hero (or the Villain) of the Bible was nothing but a figment of the imagination, that many of the stories were personified histories of astral and cosmic phenomena, and that "miracles" never happened.

Dr. Velikovsky very nearly confirms all this. I say "very nearly," for as a Jew himself, he cannot get away from the Jewish history in the Old Testament, and so believes in the story of the Israelites in Egypt, in their "exodus" and in the Red Sea crossing—though here, he is most careful to make it a "cosmic" phenomenon, and nothing whatever to do with God making it an occasion to show a "miracle" for the express purpose of impressing the Israelites with his greatness, and of drowning the Egyptians in his wrath at their presumption to pursue their one-time slaves. There is not, of course, one scrap of proof that the Israelites were ever in Egypt as slaves, or that they ever indulged in wandering for 40 years in the wilderness. Nor is there any evidence to show that the "ten plagues" were sent by God Almighty to vex the Egyptians because their ruler would not allow the Israelites to leave the country.

This is, in actual fact, conceded by Velikovsky, for he puts the plagues down to the terrible convulsions of nature which were bound to happen when we were passing through the tail of a comet with its head causing huge tidal waves, earthquakes, tempests, and other terrible calamities. God sending an Angel of Death to kill all the first-born of the Egyptians and their cattle he disbelieves as we do.

In other words, his book far from vindicating the Bible as the Word of God with all its Miracles, its Angels, and Devils, to say nothing of its divine threats to all unbelievers, proves that the descriptions of these things are only what we should expect from a number of

thoroughly frightened "reporters" trusting to memory or exaggerating what really happened.

It is a book that cannot be taken seriously, all the same. For example, what about its astronomy? Did Venus come into being as he describes? Was it originally a comet? Are the various detailed myths describing cosmic calamities in so many different parts of the world descriptions of the same kind of phenomena?

More than 1,000 reviews of *Worlds in Collision* have been written, some exulting that at last Bible "miracles" have been vindicated; others furious at the absurd theories put forward by the author—hysterical, denunciatory, in full approval, and so on. Perhaps Dr. Velikovsky has discovered something; perhaps he can be shown to deserve the denunciations of many scientists. I do not know enough of Astronomy, Geology, or Physics, to test his thousand statements, so many of which, incidentally, come from books on legends, myths, and folk lore.

But I can say this without question. His book debunks the Bible. It makes mincemeat of its miracles and its God. And that at least deserves every commendation.

H. CUTNER.

### "A SAINT IN HYDE PARK"

I KNOW of two previous books on "Orators' Corner." *A Hyde Park Orator*, by Bonar Thompson (1934), made delightful reading. There was also *Around the Marble Arch*, by F. W. Bachelor (1944). The book at present under review—*A Saint in Hyde Park*, by E. A. Siderman (Geoffrey Bles, 7s. 6d.)—is unique. It is an eulogy of the heckled by a heckler!

Sunday by Sunday, Father Vincent McNabb used to traipse from St. Dominic's Priory, Haverstock Hill, to Hyde Park. Sunday by Sunday, Mr. Siderman, an orthodox Jew, watched his steps to the platform and waited for the Father's tongue to give occasion for a genial taunt. McNabb's personality must have impressed even the ranks of freethinking Tuscany. Mr. Siderman gives a good word portrait:—

"A slight figure of about medium height, with bent shoulders, wearing his loose, well-worn Dominican habit of coarse black and white material, a khaki haversack slung over his shoulder, thick knitted white stockings, heavy-soled, black, old fashioned boots, usually unlaced, and a battered shapeless soft felt hat, the blackness turning green with age. A keen, lined, ascetic face, with old-style steel rimmed spectacles; a smile hovering on his lip which seemed to exude friendliness and captivated his audience."

No doubt they liked his pretty, if somewhat un-Christian, wit—Jesus wept, we are told, but suggestions that he laughed usually seem ribald to the religionists. As one who has often shown a slide of Cromwell's statue, I like this: "Because Oliver Cromwell shut down Parliament the English public were so grateful to him that they erected a statue of him with his rump showing towards the Houses of Parliament—perhaps that was why the parliament he formed was called 'The Rump Parliament'." Here, too, was a touch of genuine human nature that made his audience kin with him. "People used to live in homes; now they live in flats. You know what is meant by the phrase, 'I am going home.' Can you imagine anyone saying, 'I am going flat?'"

Father McNabb had a neat riposte, even for Bernard Shaw, regarding the *Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God*, a book that published anonymously or

pseudonymously would have gone into oblivion. Preaching on it at the Dominican Church at Haverstock Hill, he discountenanced Shaw's suggestion that the ten commandments were "mere lumber" and "unsuited and inadequate to modern needs."

"Unfortunately, there was one word in the book which proved that the author was writing with his tongue in his cheek. Father Vincent then said, 'I will read you that word.' But before he read it, he kept us all in long and tense suspense. He had to find his glasses. He then put them on. He picked up the book. It was upside down. He spent several seconds in turning over the pages before he found the right one. He read the word to himself, put the book on the pulpit, removed his glasses, brushed his hair forward with both hands (a habit of his), and then put both hands to his mouth, and shouted at the top of his voice in a tone which reverberated down the vast church the one word, 'Copyright'."

This incident revealed that the holy father was a bit of an actor, as indeed are most popular preachers. However, it is clear from Mr. Siderman's account of him that he would hardly have been permitted to perform before his Holiness the Pope. He actually drafted a letter which he imagined "Peter the Fisherman" (Pope the First) might have written to his "Dear Shipmate" in which he says of Paul: "For myself I have found some of his letters hard to be understood; and now and again I have twitted him about it." Readers of *The Freethinker* will concur! He sometimes wished "that Queen Mary had never lived," and "his opponents expressed their agreement with this statement." He was also critical "of the Italian Hierarchy." There was "a specially hot place in Hell for bad Popes," and he considered there had been a too friendly attitude to the Fascist regime, which "was contrary to Catholic teaching and those members of the Hierarchy, by their friendly attitude, were compromising the Church." Worse, still, he said: "A human life is more valuable than any monument, however beautiful. If the Military Command find it necessary to bomb Rome, then it is their duty to bomb it." It is surprising that no heckler then reminded the Father of the Sermon on the Mount.

Some of his utterances were certainly challenging in their credulity. "The Vatican Academy of Science was open to all true scientists to pursue their investigations." Apparently no criterion of truth was proposed save the papal imprimatur. "We Catholics are now almost the only people who have not lost the art of thinking." Yet, the old Adam persisted in this late Christian father. He allowed his sense of humour to play around sacred things—the frequent charge against freethinkers. After being received by the Pope, he "pointed to the tuft of hair in front of his otherwise almost bald head and said jokingly, 'The Holy Father placed his hand here. It is blessed territory'." Once, indeed, he so facetiously replied to a question by Mr. Siderman that his future Boswell remonstrated, saying that if he wanted buffoonery he preferred the professionals at the Palladium. McNabb apologised, saying "Please forgive an old buffoon."

Despite inevitable tendencies to jesuitical thought, there is a strong humanist flavour about the sayings of the Father. "If the Government of this country brought in Prohibition, although I am a teetotaler, I would take a drink merely to uphold my right to do so, if I so desired." Surely we shall agree that "something must be seriously wrong with people, who, on a lovely day with the sun shining, can find nothing better to do than queue, and

then spend hours in the dark in a stuffy cinema." Joseph McCabe—one time Father Anthony—said he would rather see them in church.

Vincent McNabb impels admiration by his sincerity. Austere, quite unfastidious—quaintly he thought "Our Lady" might have been scrubbing at the time of the Annunciation!—he was a modern St. Francis. He footed it to Hyde Park, as he made fun of those who went on pilgrimage in trains. His last days were too rigorous. He declined a bed, and favoured the floor for his old bones. He certainly deserves the niche that Mr. Siderman has found for him in an orators' oratory. The heckler came to love the heckled; hence this sympathetic and skilled portrait of a pleasing personality.

There is a story of David Hume moving into a house in a street new enough to have no name. Someone chalked up "St. David's Street," at which the maid-servant was wrath. "Never mind," said Hume, "many a better man has been called a saint." The story had no application to Vincent McNabb.

WILLIAM KENT.

### CHRISTIANITY AND WAR

(Concluded from page 131)

WHAT says the Vicar of Christ and his Divine Church with its infallible guidance in moral matters? "The Catholic doctrine is emphatic on this point that there are in this fallen world circumstances which may necessitate and so justify war . . . to declare it essentially unlawful is to fly in the face both of reason and revelation. . . . Nowhere does our Lord condemn war in itself. . . . The divinely guided Church does not hesitate to countenance war on due occasion. . . . Her rulers have invoked war as a means of some good end, whether, e.g., to protect Christendom from infidel foes, or to secure the integrity of the Holy See. She has even canonised soldiers like the warrior maid, Blessed Joan of Arc . . . God . . . commanded wars, even wars of aggression and extermination, all throughout the history of his chosen people. . . . If war is essentially evil, then those who profess that doctrine have to face the fact that the God of Righteousness constantly compelled the Jews to commit abominable wickedness [Referring to Thomas Clarkson's tract, 1817, against war]. A more uncritical, untrustworthy and misleading document it would be hard to find . . . [because] a general expectation of the second coming of our Lord made his followers less inclined to follow worldly pursuits . . . military service [by early Christians] meaning mingling with pagan comrades, serving under pagan officers . . . pagan observances or duties unbecoming a Christian (Rev. Joseph Keating, S.J., in Catholic Truth Society Pamphlet, *Christianity and War*).

"The root of the Pacifist's error is his confusion between moral and physical evil. . . . Not all physical evil is moral evil. . . . We can and do inflict physical evil on things that have no life—to burn a coal for the sake of warmth means inflicting physical evil on the coal by destroying it. . . . Our Lord not only does not say that [war is always morally wrong]; he teaches the exact contrary . . . [but forbids violence by private authority, said to St. Peter when he tried to resist the authority of the State (Matt. XXVI, 52). . . . The French priest-soldier, who shoots Germans, without hatred, because he must do so to save France, and then goes out to kneel beside the man he has shot, to bring him to the ambulance, or hear his confession, and pray with him till he dies, understands our Lord's teaching. . . . He inflicted physical evil on the

buyers and sellers in the temple when He drove them out with a whip. . . . If Christ had meant to include the Pacifist idea in his revelation, He would have said so. If our Lord had meant to teach us that all war is immoral . . . He would have said so. He does not say so . . . where does our Lord say that it is a sin to be a soldier? On the contrary, when the centurion comes to him, our Lord says that he has not found such faith in Israel" (C.T.S. pamphlet, *Pacifism*, by Adrian Fortescue, Ph.D., D.D.).

Such are the inspired pronouncements of "Divine Revelation." Outside of Roman Catholic ideology, there is Hegel, the "national" German philosopher, who held that war is a necessity: it elevates and purifies nations, is ethically helpful, and beneficent as a stop to domestic strife; with similar views from Professor R. Seeberg of Berlin, as a Christian and theological expert. Pastor Leiber of Fremdeswald said: "Slaughter, ruin, and destruction of others, giving Schadenfreude—the joy in others' sufferings—is genuinely German and genuinely Christian."

War is "the trade of kings" (Dryden); "the province of kings" (Cardinal Pole); "the great corrector of enormous times" (J. Fletcher) and kings and rulers "are ordained of God" (Rom. XIII, 1)—"a doctrine which no human opinions can change" (Pope Benedict XV, Nov., 1914); and Suarez, authoritative Jesuit theologian, "has laid down that a heretical king may first be deposed, and then, if continuing to reign, may lawfully be murdered" ("Defensio Fidei," 721). Cited in R. F. Littledale's *Plain Reasons*, p. 141.

Kings and governments carry no guarantee either of character or of ability. In 1654 the King of Sweden made war against the King of Poland for six years, because the latter put three etcetera after his own title and only two etcetera after the title of the Swedish king.

The world has had, and is having, gangster governments which rule by the simple plan that he should take who has the power and he should keep who can. Is any country guiltless? The fact is that the moral character of the world's people is extremely low, and there are many false assessments regarding those accounted great. Nobility is, generally, a flattering class distinction. Some theologians consider that their God is doing the best with refractory material; and the Bible states: "The Lord was with Judah . . . but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron" (Judges I, 19). Mankind has, and is, very refractory material. "We have got to recognise that evil falls within a universe for which God is responsible. One cannot absolve God for permitting the existence of evil and pain" (Canon C. E. Raven, in *Liverpool Echo*, 4th January, 1929).

St. Peter was forbidden to oppose the civil authority, but his alleged successors have power over all rulers, and can instigate war to increase or hold their power and prestige. Petain, Laval, and "the most Christian gentleman" Franco are specimens of the Papal pets. Gold and rule overrule golden rule: the Church is a warmonger. Voltaire, Kant, and Bentham, returning to the principles of Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and Celsus the anti-Christian, opposed war. It is for mankind to reform itself, shed its conceit and arrogance, and repudiate and abolish trial by ordeal or trial by battle with its hellish means. Gentlemen are lamentably scarce in governments.

GEORGE ROSS.

Ministers, who admit that witchcraft is a superstition, will read the story of the witch of Endor—will read it in a solemn, reverential voice—and will have the impudence to say that they believe it.—INGERSOLL.

### CREATION AFTER GENESIS

THE worst of Bible bangers are always those who do not know what they are talking about; they do not know Hebrew and therefore have to rely on a translation that, unless heavily commented on, of necessity is a questionable patchwork. To make this clear, let us take the introductory verses of the Bible text.

The very first word, *Berê'shît*, is a compound of "be" = in, and *re'shît* = beginning, from "resh" = head or first, represented in hieroglyphic by a human head. The two subsequent words read: *bârâ* (created) *elohim* (the high ones, or gods, *babyl. ilu*). The latter, the rabbis argue, is to be considered a *pluralis majestaticus*, since the predicate (*bârâ*) is in the singular; this, however, carries weight only when it can be proved that the text had never been tampered with. In verse 26 these *elohim* say: "Let us make man . . ." a matter decided in the more ancient Babylonian tablets of Creation by a Council of Gods.

Then the Hebrew text has: "'eth-hashshâmajim w'eth-hâ'ârèz," with *hashshâmajim* being the plural of "heaven" (there are 7 Heavens). It is connected with *hâ'ârèz* (earth) through "w" = and. The "'eth" in front of each noun, meaning "in company of," is a *nota accusativi* (denoting the accusative or object case). Considering that mythologies frequently use such terms as proper names, there is the possibility of these readings:

(a) In the beginning Elohim created, in company with Shamajim and Arez . . ., or

(b) Bereshit created Elohim together with . . .

The Babylonian Creation Epic—called "Enuma elish," after its first two words—was annually recited at the New Year in the Spring equinox:

When the heavens above were yet unnamed,  
And no dwelling beneath was called by name,  
*Apsû*, the oldest of beings, their progenitor,  
*Mummu*, *Tiâmat*, who bare each and all of them—  
Mingled their waters into a single mass. . . .

(To call by a name is equivalent to create, since it was believed that nothing could exist apart from its name).

*Apsû* is the primordial water of heavens, the "Father in Heaven" before the beginning of things, whilst *Thiâmat* is his earthly counterpart, the "waters below" and "Mother Earth." There was not yet any division between the waters above and the waters below, together they formed *Mummu*, their "Son," the Chaos. The creation is performed through Marduk when he, fighting *Thiâmat* with magical weapons and great storms, splits her and divides the two sets of waters:

. . . "Let it divide the waters from the water," as the Bible, verse 6, has it.

The link between our Bible and its Babylonian model was the version of the Phoenicians, according to which: "In the beginning there was *Bohû*; there reigned desolate darkness, and *Rûakh* floated upon the Abyss. . . ." Verse 2 in our Bible translation reads: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." What had been rendered as "without form and void" is in Hebrew "*Thohû-wa-Bohû*"—two expressions for "desert, voidness," connected with "w" = and. It is easy to recognise in *Thohû* the Babylonian dragon, *Thiâmat*, apart from *Bohû*, the Phoenician first being. The fact that these are nouns and not adjectives implies that the genuine authors of the Hebrew text had personalities in mind.

A literal translation of the following phrase would be: "And darkness lay upon the face of *Thehôm*, and the

*rûakh* (Greek *pneuma* = breath, or spirit) of the *Elohim* sat upon the face of *Majim*." The last term is a dual form of water, hence, the two sets of water (undivided still). The meaning of the predicate to "*rûakh*" is: to sit with care upon something in a nest, hence: to hatch. The symbol of *rûakh*, the Holy Ghost or Spirit, is the Dove.

After "Enuma Elish" the creation is the result of a fierce struggle:

*Tiâmat* and Marduk, the envoy of the gods, rushed at one another,

They met in close conflict, they were linked in struggle.

The Lord cast his net and made it to enclose her. The evil wind that had its place behind him he let out in her face.

*Tiâmat* opened her mouth to its greatest extent, Marduk made the evil wind to enter her so that her lips could not unclose. . . .

Marduk shot the arrow, he split up her belly . . . etc.\*

After *Tiâmat*, the dragon, was slain, the remaining Chaos monsters took to flight. The Bible still contains scattered indications of that fight, so in Psalm 89 where *Tiâmat* is called "Rahab" (Fracas):

"Thou has broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm." (10).

In particular, Rahab is the representative of Egypt as the adversary of Jahveh's people, and on their mythical exodus from thence, the motive of division is repeated on the "Red Sea": "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?" (Ps. 114, 5). ". . . Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep . . .?" (Is. 51, 9-10). Here again, the translation is misleading, as "the great deep" was invented for textual "the floods of the great *Thehôm*."

"He divideth the sea" (Job 26, 12), and again: "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.—Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood . . . etc." (Ps. 74, 13, 15), in this way creating order out of chaos.

Every vernal equinox is a repetition of that creation,† hence the equinoctial gales are God's allies: ". . . and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind . . . and the waters were divided" (Ex. 14, 21 and 15, 10).

These are merely a few comments on the first lines of the creation story, and one can hardly fathom how much nonsense is daily being talked by pious people who think they know their scriptures.

PERCY GORDON ROY.

\* Translation taken from the British Museum edition of "The Babylonian Legends of the Creation."

† That is the time when "Enuma Elish" was recited, and when the Jews celebrate Passah, the Feast of Pass-over, in commemoration of the cleft Red-Sea Monster.

### COMELY DAVID

MR. BROWN, the teacher, had just listened to his boys reading the beginning of the story of David, as it is told, of course, in the Bible, for he had himself never heard of David from any other source. He paused in his walk amid the desks to ask George what "comely" meant, for David had been described as that. George was about eight years old, and not comely, although he was then insufficiently self-conscious to trouble about his lack of beauty.

He knew the answer, however. Then the master asked him whether the Jews were, in general, a comely people. This was where George could show cleverness, and he eagerly answered that the Jews were not comely, with which reply the master was well satisfied.

This incident happened many years ago, in fact, in about 1904. Georgie had then probably not physically distinguished a Jew from a Gentile, although he lived in one of the larger towns of England in which there were, no doubt, many Jews. George was, however, as indicated, rather clever; his intelligence was certainly well above the average of those in his class. He sensed that the master wanted the answer he provided, and he was pleased when he won Mr. Brown's approval. I do not know why Georgie answered so well, but it was not even because of his having read much more than his class-mates, for his reading had, as yet, been confined to Grimms' and Hans Andersen's fairy tales, a romance about Roundheads and Cavaliers, and a few stories from a famous series, "Fifty-two Stories for Boys." I guess that George saw that if his master asked, in relation to the Biblical description of David, whether Jews were, in general, handsome people, he was indicating that the answer was in the negative. It was a leading question to that end.

I like to remember that George's master was pleased with him, for Georgie was rather scrofulous, and the weedy need encouragement. The truth also should include the fact that George was worth approval quite apart from his guess, for his class-work was usually good.

Georgie liked the master, and soon learnt to sympathise with him, for he was sensitive. The master did, in fact, need sympathy, although George did not know this quite at the time of the Davidic incident.

The master was intelligent, or so George always felt, but the question of how intelligent is difficult to answer, for, when you begin to consider the relation of comeliness to the Israelites, difficulties come swarming along. You can perceive that the master was looking upon the Jews as a race and lumping the Jews of 1904 with the Israelites of the Old Testament. He was also, probably, considering as part of a Jewish race those Jews who had immigrated into Great Britain from Central Europe within a century or two before. These do not look very English, but, when George grew up, he wondered how it could be supposed that they physically resembled the Israelites of David's time more than English Gentiles did. Then he learnt to discard the idea that the English formed a race. He supposed once also that the English were a handsome people, but a friend, who seemed intellectual, remarked of an aristocratic one that he looked like a well-bred horse. It was, alas, George's fate to discover that his friend's remark came out of a book.

Mr. Brown was rather unpopular. This was because he was often peevish. The boys dared not cheek him for he was a good disciplinarian, although he was not as strict as Mr. Kirk. The latter was, however, popular, although his sternness was rather alarming. The difference in the behaviour of these masters was, no doubt, derived from that of their health. Mr. Kirk had good looks, and enjoyed robust health. He radiated the latter, together with his air of resolute authority, and he seemed never under strain.

Mr. Brown was puny, although more of an athlete than his colleague he was bearded, and the beard partly concealed his physical weakness. George was old enough to observe his master's change of mood when, once a month, he had visited the barber, for it was as if he had subconsciously become aware of his defects. He was then plainly irritable. His face, hitherto fairly rounded by its hair, assumed a drawn look. Strain was now emphasised by

hollowed cheeks. The average boy could not love such a master. He could not do so even though Mr. Brown would sometimes give a gymnastic display on the parallel bars. This cost the master much effort, that was obvious, for he gave never more than a few minutes display at a time, and, at its conclusion, his near exhaustion was plain: he almost panted. He gave of his best, but the boys did not properly requite him. It was not their fault; it was due to the limitation of their understanding.

That George liked this master was due to two things. First, the master was George's class master, for, although each master was sometimes in charge of the whole school, he had certain boys whom he took through the general school curriculum. The understanding between a master and his particular class would help to dissipate the prejudice generated by the mass suggestion of the body of the pupils.

The other factor of George's liking sprang from the fact that he himself had had long illness. He had consequently been often rather alone. He was, therefore, sensitive to the marks of suffering in his master. He did not, however, understand what was really the matter with his master. He saw him at Christmas-time show his artistic gift by drawing a seasonable picture on the black-board, which could be left untouched for some long time, for the reverse of the board could be used for class work, when this was restarted. In summer he saw the master play cricket for a season or two, and with some distinction, a distinction George himself knew he could never reach, for his athletic aptitude was nearly nil.

In course of time George got over his early tendency to illness; even influenza epidemics seemed to pass him by.

George parted from his master in 1908. He himself was about twelve. He soon forgot about Mr. Brown, for the thoughts of youth, "the long, long thoughts," do not dwell in the past. The young do not often much grieve, they are usually full of hope. Their lives are crowded. Disillusioned they may some day become, but yet the world, even when civilisations seem about to collapse, seems marvellous. So when George's brother re-visited the old school in 1912, and reported that Mr. Brown had died of that common scourge of the earlier years of this century, pulmonary tuberculosis, George hardly gave it a thought.

J. G. LUPTON.

### TRIXIE

A little mouth, not roughed, but red,  
 And big enough to babble lies  
 Of quite considerable size;  
 A curly head  
 That covers empty cranial space:  
 Two smiling eyes,  
 Set in a dusky face,  
 That warn the wise  
 That levity comes easy to her race.  
 Yet with it all there goes the native grace  
 So often found in Dixie—  
 There, more than any other place,  
 And most of all in Trixie.  
 I must be weak to love this pretty bubble,  
 For I shall pay for love with heaps of trouble.

—BAYARD SIMMONS.

Is it not true that Truth gets well if she is run over by a locomotive, while Error dies of lockjaw if she scratches her finger! I never heard of a mathematician being alarmed for the safety of a demonstrated proposition, and I think that the dread of discussion generally implies feebleness of inward conviction.—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

### ACID DROPS

The Rev. Nathaniel Micklem has been speaking on the radio as a Neo-Thomist, and appears to be quite convinced that the "purely logical and rational proofs that God exists," enunciated by Aquinas, "could be put into modern terms and used in answering sceptics and unbelievers at the Marble Arch." We doubt very much that even with St. Thomas Mr. Micklem could do this, and we are quite sure that he could not give any "rational proof that God exists," in any debate with competent Freethinkers, whether taken from Aquinas, or any of his own particular champions. In any case, Mr. Micklem admits that "he does not think that St. Thomas's position is finally satisfactory"—though, of course, quite good enough to settle sceptics and unbelievers!

For once we are in full agreement with a Roman Catholic Bishop—Bishop Marshall of Salford, who says, in the *Catholic Times*, that the people of England are losing their faith and he blames "modern education." Why, of course. How can any child believe in the twaddle put out by the Vatican and its priests, who gets a thorough grounding in history and science—so long as it is not the history and science allowed by the Church of Rome? A course of modern astronomy is enough to smash the Creation myths of Genesis. And if the story of Adam and Eve is not true, when did we get the "Fall of Man," and why is a Saviour necessary?

The London County Council are determined to keep religion as a main subject for teachers who, in consequence, have just had a course of lectures on "Religion in Education." And, according to the *Teachers' World*, teachers themselves are organising lectures on religion all over the country. To ginger them up still more, the Rev. G. H. Davies is having a Conference in April on "Christian Teaching about God: Its Presentation in School." This should intrigue Bishop Marshall—though, of course, his religion and that of the Rev. Davies might well be as different as chalk and cheese. But all this campaigning is a proof how hard hit is religion and how hard the Churches are working for its survival.

Judging from some of the correspondence which regularly follows articles in the press on forcing religion on to children in our national schools, it appears as if there are still people who believe it is only a question of getting over the proper teaching and children will all believe in the Christian "approach" and in the Christian way of life," to give two of the stock phrases used. We can only repeat once again that the sure way to get Christianity believed in is to stop all history and science lessons. Properly taught by competent teachers, these make mince-meat, even for children, or the childish Bible lessons with their infantile miracles, and their fantastic stories of God, Angels, and Devils.

Yet to have this kind of religious drivel taught in Catholic schools, we are informed by the Parliamentary Secretary of the Minister of Education that "to improve and replace" existing Roman Catholic schools will cost about £28,500,000, while the eventual cost to the Catholic community will be between £50 million and £60 million. Well, we hope they will be forced to pay it. If religion means so much to them, it should be a pleasure.

The Devon and Somerset Staghounds must have felt thoroughly proud of their latest courageous exploit. According to the *Sunday Graphic*, they raced two stags to their death—one being chased down the river Barle where "it finally sank, exhausted, and was dispatched with a knife;" the other "collapsed in a stream in a garden." Then "hounds bounded over the hedge," the stag got up, and raced down the garden being "ultimately killed in a field." After this, it does one's heart good to read Mr. E. R. Lloyd, the secretary of the hunt, telling us that, "People don't understand hunting and jump to conclusions." Which, in good English, means that if only we did understand hunting, we also would gladly chase stags to their death, whooping for joy.

Mr. Lloyd goes on to say that "if hunting died out, the stag would be shot or maimed, trapped or caught by wires." This out-worn argument, trotted out every time these good Christian hunters carry on with their "hunting"—we admit it is allowed by law—has been answered thousands of times. Better, surely for these poor animals to be shot at sight than foully tortured to provide a Roman holiday; and "trapping and maiming" should be severely punished, not only by the law, but by the moral feeling of every humanist.

We could not expect the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society to say anything else, but he has been boasting that the demand for the Bible is greater than ever before. Millions of copies are certainly being produced and circulated, but who reads them? Why is there all this whining and moaning at the ignorance of our conscript soldiers who often—so we are told—hardly know who exactly is Jesus Christ? Gen. MacArthur, like so many of our own generals and admirals, is intensely religious, and wants 5,000,000 copies of the Bible for the Japanese, but it does not transpire exactly why. Does he expect them to convert the Japanese?

We always like to read of some "scientist" trying to show how Christianity and Science are really "one and indivisible." The latest we have come across is Mr. A. J. Philpot, M.A., B.Sc., a Baptist who addressed the Baptist Board recently to show how uncertain everything was in science. "It was recognised now that the cast iron theory of physics was no more than a probability," he told the Board, and of course that let in God Almighty, or ought to have done so. However, even Mr. Philpot could not go quite so far, for he added that "we oversimplify our religion and underestimate the capacity of our hearers to take more serious stuff." In fact, Baptist preachers should "not be afraid of making demands on the intellect" of their congregations. We like the word "intellect" in this connection.

A momentous question is posed in a Derby paper. It is "Did Jesus visit England?" and the answer is, "yes." It appears that Joseph of Arimathea was the brother of the Mother of God, and he had a large trade with Cornwall. "What could be more natural than on his voyage to this country he would take his (Divine) nephew with him?" We think this is incontrovertible—at least, it is just as true as the other stories which fill the Gospels. But we admit it is a new one on us.

# "THE FREETHINKER"

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*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.*

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## SUGAR PLUMS

The Annual Conference of the The National Secular Society will take place in London this year during the Whitsun week-end. Only members of the N.S.S. can attend the business sessions in the Holborn Hall, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1. Members and friends can attend the reception of delegates on the Saturday evening in The Yorkshire Grey, at the corner of Theobalds Road and Gray's Inn Road; and all London readers can now begin to recruit their friends to attend the Public Demonstration on Whit Sunday evening, after the Conference. It will be held in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, W.C.1. There will be a number of speakers, admission is free, with some reserved seats at one shilling each. Commence 7 p.m.

There will be for certain one happy man in Nottingham this evening (April 22), Mr. T. M. Mosley by name, who will begin his open-air lectures in The Old Market Square, Nottingham, at 6-30, for the local N.S.S. Branch. A well attended meeting is attractive to intelligent passers-by, and that means that all readers in Nottingham sympathetic to our work, and within range of the pitch, should give their support. Mr. Mosley is willing to visit and lecture in surrounding districts of Nottingham if a little local help is available. To obtain his services, write to Mr. T. M. Mosley, 63, Valley Road, Carlton, Nottingham.

One of the mysteries we have never been able to solve is why so many people insist that the only solution to juvenile delinquency is a thorough grounding in Christianity. That this is quite untrue, the religious sects who fill our prisons proves conclusively. But the other day, two choir boys were charged with stealing from a church, and it transpired that their "gang" actually had their "headquarters" in the church, thus finding it much easier to "pinch" the contents of the alms box. They also managed to eat 300 "wafers" specially made for Holy Communion, without the Lord lifting a finger to prevent such awful blasphemy. We are quite sure this case will never crop up when the benefits of Christianity for naughty boys are discussed.

## THE MOST RELIGIOUS COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

THAT religion is usually inimical to social progress is a truism amongst Rationalists of all shades of opinions. For secular progress depends upon adaptability to social and intellectual change, to which the innate conservatism, the "dead hand" of religion, particularly of long-established religion, tends to be directly inimical. It is, for example, true that, whilst Christianity may have been a socially cohesive force in the "Dark Ages" of barbarism that followed upon the passing of the classical civilisation of antiquity, yet, as soon as the recovery of European culture had passed a certain level, it found itself directly opposed to, and had to fight for its life against the obscurantism of the then all-powerful medieval Church. From the age of Dante, which was, concurrently the age of the foundation of that medieval "Gestapo," the Inquisition, all that was vital in European culture had to fight for its very existence against the "dead hand." So completely, in fact, was medieval society dominated by the clerical regime that every successful assault made upon the existing theocracy constitutes a political and a religious revolution; for example, the Reformation is justifiably included, not only amongst the greatest religious, but also amongst the greatest social revolutions in European history.

The emergence of a modern, at least, semi-secularist western civilisation, constitutes the tangible result which has accrued from a series of terrible struggles extending over several centuries. Incidentally, to refer to this civilisation as "Christian civilisation" constitutes a gross anachronism; it was, in fact, only as a result of a long and desperate battle *against* "Christian Civilisation," or what passed for such, that modern civilisation ever came into existence at all. However, that conflict, if not yet completely won by the forces making for a secular culture, has, at least, resulted in important successes.

However, these successes are mainly still confined to the area of "western civilisation." There are still extensive areas of the earth's surface where the liberating battles that have constituted outstanding milestones in European history, the Reformation, the Renaissance, and the "Enlightenment," have yet to be fought. Of these still medieval theocratic or, more accurately, theocentric civilisations, India is, at present, by far the largest actually, and by far the most important potentially. In this immemorially ancient civilisation, which was already old when European civilisation was unborn, and which has recently re-entered the world of sovereign states, we observe a civilisation still at tether, still dominated, perhaps to an even greater extent than was medieval Europe, by the "dead hand" of religion. In fact, so much is this so that it is literally true to state that no real progress even in the secular sphere can be attained until the overwhelming penetration of Hinduism into every sphere of the national life has been finally and irrevocably broken. For modern India, the terms "Secularism" and "Civilisation" are, in actual fact, synonymous.

The problem presented by the dominant religious culture to the rising forces of Rationalism and Secularism which, as in the earlier case of Europe, are, to-day, entering India in the wake of modern industry founded upon scientific concepts, differs, however, considerably from the problems presented to modern European culture by the surviving "dead hand" of a still medieval Christianity. For Christianity and Hinduism differ very widely in the character of their influence. For Christianity represents a unified ecclesiastical corporation, non-hereditary and,

except for some local travesties non-national and cosmopolitan in character; cosmopolitanism is, in fact, so deeply ingrained in historical Christianity that even national Churches like the "Church of England," still claim, in theory, at least, to be "Catholic," to be part of the "Universal" Church of Christ. Moreover, that which unites all Christians is a system of belief, and a system which relates to the next world rather than to this one and is, accordingly, theological rather than social in character.

As we have pointed out before, in its *social* relationships Christianity has shown itself to be very adaptable; the existence of "Christian Socialism" and, even of "Christian Anarchism"—we only recently discovered this last sociological sub-species!—afford demonstrable proof of this fact. However closely at any particular time, Christianity may have associated itself with a particular social system (as, for example, medieval Catholicism with feudalism, or modern Protestantism with capitalism), it is false to affirm without any qualification that Christianity has ever identified itself *completely* with any one social system. Its tyranny, so frequently exercised over secular society, is thus an indirect one, which depends in the last resort, upon belief in its supernatural claims.

When, however, we turn to Hinduism, to the dominant creed of present-day India, we are immediately confronted with an entirely different state of things. For Hinduism, as is common knowledge, is a *social* system rather than a theological creed and, as such, exercises a *direct*—and not, as in the case of Christianity, an indirect—tyranny over society at large; in the actual case of Hinduism, one cannot even talk, as one could talk in the case of Christianity, of a tyranny exercised *over* secular society. For, strictly speaking, there is no *secular* society in a Hindu community. (Theologically speaking, Hinduism is notoriously lax and contains in its ranks every shade of opinion, from "Christian Brahmins" (sic) to metaphysical Atheists!) A "Hindu" is one whose whole life is rigorously and meticulously conformed to a *social* ritual and to certain beliefs which are primarily social in both their character and effects, and which are only secondarily metaphysical. Moreover, as the great jurist, Sir Henry Maine, pointed out long ago in his *Ancient Law*, Hinduism is the, perhaps, supreme example of a polity which is based "upon status and not upon contract." For the *social* order itself is divinely ordained; the caste-system is hereditary and sacrosanct; and it is only in a future reincarnation, earned by obedience in *this* life, that a man may hope to rise in the social scale and change his caste in a future reincarnation. In this existence, both extremes of the social scale, the Brahmin at the top and the "outcast" at the bottom, like the proverbial genius, "we are born and not made."

Such, in its essential outline, is "Hinduism," a national social system which, in actuality, like every other system, accurately reflects the conditions of the society amid which it originally arose; in this case, the agrarian animal-worshipping civilisation which has existed throughout the sub-continent, virtually unchanged, since prehistoric times. Hinduism must have corresponded very accurately with these now obsolete social conditions; for, historically, it has successfully resisted both the pacific propaganda of Buddhism and the militant—and military—propaganda of Islam—both cosmopolitan creeds, without the caste system. Even to-day, as far as the masses of the people are concerned, the power of Hinduism and of its Brahmin beneficiaries appears to have been but little shaken by a still exceptional imported industrialism.

The potential importance of a newly-liberated India is enormous; in another century, it could become a world power of the first rank. But, in order to live and progress in the modern world, India must first cast off the "dead hand" of Hinduism, of an obsolescent social code which proclaims itself and, accordingly, the social conditions which it represents, as eternal and divinely ordained. The newly established Rationalist movement in India has a tremendous task before it; one even more difficult than the corresponding task which confronted the European Freethinkers and Secularists in past centuries. For the Indian Freethinker has not merely, like his European Secularist counterpart to free a potentially secular society from the yoke of ecclesiastical organisations. He has, actually, first to create the very concept of a secular society itself. For India is not only "the most religious country in the world." It is, also, the major example in the present world of a society which represents the creation and expression of religion itself.

F. A. RIDLEY.

### PROFESSOR HOYLE ON SURVIVAL

UNDER the auspices of the Fabian Society, Professor Fred Hoyle gave a lecture on Survival. Sufficient has been written on the subject by Boyd Orr, Vogt, and other distinguished authors, for the theme in its general lines to be familiar to the reader. Briefly: world resources in foodstuffs and vital materials are limited; the animal species, *homo sapiens*, already populating the planet in excess and still on the increase, is making greater inroads into these resources than can be put back by current production. *Ergo*, what are we going to do about this problem of increasing demands and diminishing returns?

The Socialist concept that production should be in the interests of the consumers and brought to the point of abundance, thereby enabling distribution to be made according to need, is, in the view of the lecturer, no longer realistic. There never will be such abundance now. We have to realise that our planet's resources are limited and that a like limit must be put on the reproduction of the species *homo*. Professor Hoyle submitted that this can be achieved in one of three ways: (a) by starvation, (b) by radio-active poisoning, and (c) by birth control, whether voluntary or enforced, with a possible fourth alternative of destruction by bacteria. If we are to avoid the first two disasters, then we should be prepared to accept the third, and if not voluntarily accepted, some form of enforcement would become necessary. Professor Hoyle put it to the Fabian Society as the "brain" of the Labour Party, that it was incumbent on them to re-orient Labour policy with due regard to these two features of population and natural resources.

The reaction of the audience to his peroration was both curious and interesting. Questions and comments were highly charged with emotional content but, apart from some valid criticism of the speaker's strictures on economists, singularly devoid of that intelligent and rational outlook for which one is accustomed to look in Fabian circles. While making no real attempt to question the lecturer's facts and figures, critics constantly charged him with confusion and ambiguity in that he talked of increasing food supplies and of a worsening economic position. Unjustifiable criticism! On no point was the lecturer clearer or more consistent.

In an impoverished community, such as in China or India, the mortality rate amongst mothers and children is high, owing to bad conditions, especially, shortage of

food, lack of hygiene and medical requirements. The immediate result of remedying these defects is to save more mothers and children, the population increases rapidly until the situation is once more where it was with a lessened possibility of remedying it.

For "educating up" people to the idea of a commensurate and stabilised population takes time, probably at least half a century. And this co-ordination of economic and social relationships can only be realised under special circumstances. The British and French, with their vast empires, which they could develop and exploit in their own interests, or the Americans with an extensive hinterland of virgin soil at their disposal, are instances of groups favoured in this special way. The population of Great Britain, for example, doubled itself between 1800 and 1850, and doubled itself again between 1850 and 1900; but during this time food and materials were pouring in from every quarter in almost unlimited quantities. The people, therefore, had sufficient time to adjust their moral and social outlook to the new conditions. But while this might happen in a particular confined area (and at the expense of other areas), obviously it will not apply to the world as a whole.

The only sane solution, to the speaker's way of thinking, is reduction and restriction of world population which, at its present figure of 2,000 million is excessive and should be brought down to about a quarter of that figure. (Professor Hoyle did not, however, point out that this would, in effect, mean that only *every other* married couple could have progeny and that couple *one child only*. I do not think the institution of marriage could survive so drastic a curtailment of its primary purpose.)

If the facts and figures given by the lecturer are correct, then the Socialist ideal of an era of abundance is but a dream of yesternight, and some form of managerial society, controlling both the production of the species and of goods seems on the cards. It was the endeavour to escape this dilemma that explains the audience's somewhat irrational reaction to the lecture, reflected in such remarks as that this "was putting humanity on the dissecting table" (to which the lecturer mildly retorted that an unborn child could hardly be the subject of surgical dissection). Another critic, with ponderous wit, observed that if the situation were really so parlous as the Professor made out, then the maker of atom bombs was a greater benefactor of humanity than the discoverer of a cure for malaria. With a nimbler wit Professor Hoyle chose to take this remark seriously and responded gravely that it was a very important question and the answer would depend on who was dealing with it. The reporter of to-day would no doubt acclaim the malaria healer as humanity's benefactor; but the historian of a thousand years hence might well conclude that the atom bomb manufacturer had in the long run proved of greater service to his race.

The mind does not take kindly to new ideas, and it is hard to shed preconceptions emotionally satisfying, especially when we have nothing satisfactory to put in their place. The prophet of woe is never welcome: if he turns out wrong, he merely earns our contempt; if right, our feeling is one of more active dislike and a suspicion that he has had something somehow to do with our misfortunes. Hence the attempt to unload on to the shoulders of the scientist responsibility for our own misuse of his inventions. "The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves." The Fabians did not like having their pet theories upset by the newest pest, the scientists, though of course they were much too gentlemanly to express their

thoughts to their distinguished guest and lecturer, Professor Freddie Hoyle. But we, as rationalists, cannot afford indulgence in such escapism, but must pursue the path of Truth however cold and comfortless the glare of light that blazes its trail.

P. C. KING.

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### THE MOTHER OF GOD

IN my article, "The Teaching of the Church," I said the Assumption may have a symbolic meaning. As with other religions, the Catholic Church, which like St. Paul, is all things to all men, has an esoteric or initiated, as well as an exoteric or popular, doctrine. If a metaphysical interpretation is substituted for a religious, or a religious for a magic one, the underlying symbolism is analogous; for, as Vernon Carter would say, there is a necessity for a new hypothesis to be compatible with the old established one. The oldest and deepest rooted persist as analogies or symbols, and you pay your money and you take your choice. They persist in the social memory as romantic fantasy.

Myths, like words, have "meaning." And, as J. M. Robertson said, it is a maxim that they refer to, or explain, customary practice. In the evolution of religion the symbolism of idolatry is transferred to the heavens in astro-mythology, and phallic magic is evident in this, as also in the associated agricultural cult; and fetishes and totems appear in the poetic imagery of romantic art. In the substitution of animal for human sacrifice or of bread and wine for body and blood, the associated customs are also analogous, and in practice, analogy is word magic in the customary association of ideas. In sympathetic magic, analogy, as a basis of logic, can work miracles.

Easter is not a fixed date. The seasonal sacrifice of the Lamb is symbolic of the sign of the Zodiac, Aries, and the association with the spring equinox connects directly with seed sowing in ritual ceremonial of a fertility cult; and it involves a phallic meaning in the concept of "seed." To Marcus Aurelius the husbandman fertilised the soil with seed, but with St. Paul we go back to an older meaning, for, "Ye are the sacrifice, ye are the seed." The concept of seed as phallic magic in astrological and agricultural cults not only involved the Children of Israel as the seed of Abraham, but also involved the whole of humanity in Original Sin in the seed of Adam, and so also, Eve, in the relations of male and female.

If the Crucifixion at Easter concerns the rebirth of nature in spring, the Assumption of the Virgin comes with the harvest and the autumnal equinox. If Aries is the first of the six summer months, so Virgo is the first of the winter months, and the celestial virgin of the Zodiac is depicted with her foot on the head of the serpent. But if we, nowadays, consult a calendar or almanac, instead of looking up at the stars; and if our farmers no longer observe Plough Sunday and Plough Monday after Christmas, the phallic symbolism still involves sex in the relations of male and female, and the antithesis of the sheep and the goats involves Good and Evil.

Our moralists are concerned with higher and lower motives and our agriculturalists speak of the virtue in the fertility of virgin soil, thus showing the astrological and agrarian elements in the symbolism, but the phallicism is seen in the sacred Latin, with Mother Earth as Mater Materia and with "matter" as Virgo Materia, so that the "corruption" of the Flesh, as being "of the earth, earthy" connects with the "evil" of sex and the "temptation" in the Garden of Eden; with Women as the

source of all evil; so that St. Chrysostom could say that the touch of a woman is worse than the bite of a mad dog.

To the ancients, the elements fire and air or spirit were male, earth and water, female. So, the Virgin Mary is associated with the sea and the Church as the Body of Christ is spoken of as She. As in the Jewish ceremonial of the passage of the Red Sea by Miriam and Moses out of the Hand of Bondage into the Promised Land, like the metaphorical crossing of the Jordan into the heavenly New Jerusalem, with a phallic re-birth of Nature in spring, and water as a symbol of "re-birth" in the baptismal font, it symbolises the liberation from the "body of this death" in the "promise of the life to come." And as Miriam was foster mother of Moses, and Joseph was foster father of Jesus, the baptism and the crucifixion are to be considered as "spiritual" or symbolic rebirth.

Analogy always means something else. "Except the seed die, there is no life," said St. Paul; but the old agricultural ritual is forgotten and spring revival is an analogy in personal symbolism. In a pastoral analogy Christ is All in All, as "members one of another," in communion within the Church and in the Communion of Saints. With Divine Grace in the liberation from Original Sin, the body of this death, the Old Adam is reborn in Christ as the New Adam. The resurrection is a re-birth of the Old Adam in a new body, in the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ in the Mystery of the Incarnation. It is re-birth in the faith of conversion in the body of the Church. The whole of the reasoning is allegorical.

To the mythical Paul, Christ is the New Adam, and since Justin Martyr, Mary is the New Eve. If the Passion of the Cross is spring ritual, the Festival of the Assumption of the Virgin at the autumnal equinox, as with the Feast of All Souls, comes with the harvest. As woman is honoured in becoming a mother, Mary is adored as the Mother of God in the Glory of the Holy Child. In the communion within the Church there is a place for woman and in the Communion of Saints the Virgin is the Queen of the Saints as the Mother of the Redeemer, and the Woman is redeemed in childbirth, maternity and home life. Which is the logical consummation of the tragedy of the Garden of Eden.

Whether all this is a beautiful picture or a romantic fantasy, the Assumption of the Virgin cannot be considered *in vacuo*; it involves the psychology of folk lore. The relation of mother and child is intimate, and as with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, it concerns age-old passions and prejudices in the deepest-rooted personal feelings. If, like the Church, science uses analogy in anthropology and symbolism and "scientific myth" in psychology, we have to face what Freud meant when he said that if superstition is physically false it is psychologically true. But it is clear that the "meaning" is not a matter of literal truth, it is the logic of analogy.

H. H. PREECE.

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Does anyone know that God exists; that he ever heard or answered any prayer? Is it known that he governs the world; that he interferes in the affairs of men; that he protects the good or punishes the wicked? Can evidence of this be found in the history of mankind? If God governs the world, why should we credit him for the good and not charge him with the evil? If all is done by this God, we should make no distinction between his actions, between the actions of the infinitely wise, powerful, and good. If we thank him for sunshine and harvest, we should also thank him for plague and famine. If we thank him for liberty, the slave should raise his chained hands in worship and thank God that he toils unpaid, with the lash upon his naked back. If we thank him for victory, we should thank him for defeat.—INGERSOLL.

## THE LIBRARY TABLE

ALL readers interested in the details of the evolutionary process should know something about the latest researches in Genetics and, for this, we can heartily recommend *What's All This About Genetics* by Rona Hurst (Thrift Books, Watts & Co., 1s.). The author has made a detailed study of this not-too-easy subject, and has lucidly explained "inheritance" in plants, animals and man. It is not a "dry-as-dust" science but a fascinating one, particularly as—the author contends—"One of the most surprising results of the study of Genetics is the discovery that the same mechanism of inheritance holds good throughout all life, whether plant or animal." The chapter on "Human Genetics" goes into great detail in proof of this statement. There is an interesting account of the "pioneers of Genetics" which adds to the value of the book. These "Thrift" books are remarkable value for the money.

Another very important work is Dr. R. Broom's *Finding the Missing Link*. It is important because it embodies the very latest discoveries of fossils which (perhaps) help to give us proof of the "missing link" so ardently sought for by Evolutionists.

Dr. Broom begins by referring to the early Evolutionists and how, in some cases, their discoveries were belittled or ignored. But time has its revenges and the work of Dubois who discovered *Pithecanthropus erectus* in Java, of Prof. Shoetensack who found *Homo heidelbergensis*, of Dawson who discovered the famous Piltdown skull, and of Prof. Leakey, who claimed that the fragment of a human jaw he found at Kanam showed "true man" existing 700,000 years ago, are all now being recognised as of the greatest value.

The discoveries of later researchers like Prof. Dart are detailed and illustrations are given of the famous *Australopithecus africanus*, the skull of the Taurigs ape-man child, discovered by Dart, together with a full description.

Dr. Broom himself has also some valuable discoveries to his credit particularly the Sterkfontein Ape-Man fossils, accounts of which were published in 1936 in *Nature* and the *Illustrated London News*, as "A New Ancestral Link between Ape and Man." Other fragments are known as the Kromdraai Ape-Man, and these can go back 750,000 years.

Dr. Broom's latest discoveries—in 1947-8-9—are all carefully described and they included "a large new type of ape-man, *Paranthropus crassideus*" as well as the skull of a "child ape-man," Swartkraus in 1950, and two larger skulls, male and female of the same species.

In chapter 9, Dr. Broom discusses the question, "Are the African fossil forms Apes or Men?"—and he thinks they are human. At all events, "it was from a member of this family that man arose—most probably about the middle of the Pliocene—perhaps about 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 years ago." And the reader can judge on the evidence for himself.

Finally, Dr. Broom, puzzled at the why and the wherefore of Evolution, like so many physicists and other scientists, thinks "that there is a great mystery" behind it all. "I believe," he concludes, "that there is a Plan"—and here, the present reviewer must leave him for—in his opinion—there is no evidence whatever of any Plan.

Dr. Broom's work should be read by all Freethinkers and if they cannot buy it for themselves, should insist on their free libraries providing copies. The publishers are Watts & Co., and the price is 6s.

From the Philosophical Library, New York, we have received *A Guide for the Misguided* by Ezra Brudno (2 dollars)—a very entertaining criticism of the Bible. Mr. Brudno has studied it for 60 years and has visited many of the scenes associated with the "Holy Book"; and, as a practising lawyer, is used to weighing evidence. After a profound study of the Old and New Testaments, he became "agnostic" before he read Huxley, and was deeply impressed by Strauss and Renan.

This *Guide* is an unusual kind of work—the author recognising that thousands of books criticising the Bible have been written and it is by no means easy to say something new. For this reason it is almost as difficult to review it as one wants to quote so many passages. Mr. Brudno realises that "the Bible is nothing more than a collection of myths that has come down to us from a primitive people," and that there are "no heroic traits in the Hebrew patriarchs." Yet although he agrees that "the story of Moses reads like a piece of fiction," he claims, "there is no doubt that Moses was a great leader." There is, of course, not a particle of evidence that Moses was a real personage.

Mr. Brudno seems rather astonished to learn there are people who believe Jesus is a myth and he cites George Brandes as one author who in "a little book denies the very existence of Jesus." He appears never to have heard of Dupuis, Robert Taylor, or John M. Robertson. And he would be, perhaps, also astonished that some of us think Paul and Peter are also myths.

As a lawyer, Mr. Brudno found that 99 per cent. of the criminals he prosecuted had been reared in orthodox homes and had attended Sunday schools, but they are never quoted as proving the benefits of religion.

By the way, Mr. Brudno confuses the "Immaculate Conception" (of Mary) with the Virgin Birth (of Jesus)—a common mistake but rather surprising for such a well-read scholar.

*A Guide for the Misguided* will be found most interesting reading and, for those who have not so far read any Freethought works, will prove a useful antidote for the poison of religion.

H. C.

### CORRESPONDENCE FREEMASONRY

SIR.—Mr. W. E. Richardson, referring to my letter, which he says is "extremely interesting," asks questions to verify my statements. I was present when a man said he was a Lodge Chaplain and dubbed Mr. Campbell-Everden "a stupid atheist, &c." Mr. Le Maine was Chairman, and after Mr. Everden's address Mr. Le Maine told me that "Everden was a M.M., a Master Mason." Mr. Everden's book, "Freemasonry and its Etiquette," can be read in the British Museum Reading Room; or Foyle's second-hand bookshop, 115, Charing Cross Road, London, might supply a copy as itemed in their Catalogue, No. 16b, "Standard Works on Freemasonry," page 9, price 7s. 6d. Mr. Richardson remarks that "the stupid atheist statement has a familiar ring," and he is correct, because the "Freemasons' Book of Constitutions," first page, declares: "A stupid atheist cannot be a Freemason." These "Constitutions" were composed by the Reverend Anderson for the Craft. About Mr. Everden "going through the chair," I can't say.—Yours, etc.,

WM. AUGUSTUS VAUGHAN.

### F. A. RIDLEY AND DANIEL DE LEON

SIR.—It will be noted that Mr. Ridley has, if somewhat grudgingly, conceded the point of correction which was raised in my first letter. He is, or should be, well enough informed to know that De Leon was the most reviled and "lied about" individual in the Labour Movement in America, and that, despite the differences and acrimonious disputes which rend the various groups in this country, they have always shown a wonderful unanimity in the "conspiracy of silence" regarding De Leon and his work. The Index Expurgations does not function more efficiently.

Mr. Ridley's use of the inclusive "an American socialist" could very well mislead the uninformed to think that the translator of Sue's classic may have been a Berger, a Spargo or even a Hillquit or another of that kidney.

It is good to learn of the "profound admiration," yet, though I have read, with pleasure and benefit and, on occasion, disagreement, many of Mr. Ridley's contributions to *The Freethinker* and other journals I find little evidence of the influence of the epoch-making "Burning Question" or "Preamble," nor of the brilliant "Two Pages," but I grant that this does not apply to De Leon's scathing indictment of the Romish dictatorship—"Ultramontanism"; which, by the way, would be a prized addition to the library of any thinking freethinker.—Yours, etc.,

DAVID BRUCE.

### ARYA, ARYAN

SIR.—In his interesting and instructive article on "Language Associations" Mr. George Ross asserts that there are Aryan languages but there is no Aryan race. Consistently with this statement, or opinion, he draws attention to the Sanscrit.

"Arya" is a Sanscrit word meaning nobility, historical and personal, belonging to a good family. In contrast to this word is "anarya," indicating "unworthy."

Then, if it has to do with noble families, it concerns race, a tribe or nation of common descent. In the Rig Veda it indicated the invading tribes from the north-west. The term Aryan is used for the Indo-European families.

As usual, one can cite authorities for and against there being an Aryan race. The majority (which are not necessarily always correct) are in support of this race. There is Schroder's "Antiquity of the Aryan Peoples," Morris's "The Aryan Race, its Origin," Childe's "The Aryans; A Study of Indo-European Origins." Besides, as the term means "noble, illustrious, famous," it more pertains to personality than to language.—Yours, etc.,

GEORGE LAWS.

### OBITUARY

#### SAMUEL EDWARD BEARDALL

It is with regret that we announce the death of Mr. S. E. Beardall, who died Friday, April 6. He was an active member of the Nottingham Branch and assisted in its formation. A pronounced Freethinker, a great admirer of the works of Chapman Cohen, nothing was too much for him to do for the "Best of Causes."

The cremation took place at Wilford Hill, Tuesday, April 10, when a Secular Service was read by T. M. Mosley. Mr. Beardall leaves a widow and son. He was 66 years of age. Nottingham Branch will sadly miss him.

T. M. M.

### LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

#### OUTDOOR

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

Kingston-on-Thames Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: Mr. J. W. BARKER.

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

Lewisham and District Branch N.S.S. (The London and Brighton Hotel, 139, Queen's Road, Peckham, S.E.15).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: Debate between Mr. L. EBURY and Mr. T. COLYER on: "Is Roman Catholicism More Tolerant than Protestantism?"

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Sunday, April 22, 6-30 p.m.: Mr. T. M. MOSLEY and A. ELSMERE.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, April 22: Mr. S. K. RATCLIFFE, "The Day of Judgment."

West Ham and District Branch N.S.S. (Wanstead House, The Green, Wanstead E.11).—Thursday, April 26, 7-45 p.m.: A Lecture.

West London Branch N.S.S. (The "Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, Marylebone, W.1).—Sunday, April 22, 7-15 p.m.: Mr. S. M. ALEXANDER, "Magic Old and New."

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