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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

"The Awakening of Asia"

THE era in which we live, the mid-20th century, an era of revolutionary change in most spheres of human activity, may well be remembered by future historians as, par excellence, the epoch of (what has been aptly described as) "the awakening of Asia." A thousand million human beings, that is, nearly half of the human species, are awakening into a new life: the most ancient forms of human culture to be found anywhere upon earth are in the course of being decisively renovated.

"Old Europe," once wrote Napoleon, "is a mole-hill. Great empires, great religions arise only in the East." Of which flamboyant saying one can, at least, state that the latter part is literally correct. For no world-religion in all history has ever risen anywhere else except in the East: all the gods, without exception, are native-born Orientals! Nor did Napoleon, that far-sighted intelligence, fail to foresee the "Revolt of Asia" which has eventuated in our own day and generation. For, pointing to the then moribund China of his own day, the great soldier exclaimed:—

"When this sleeping giant awakens, she will shake the entire world."

Hitherto, universal History has witnessed a successive oscillation of culture between East and West; an evolution of civilisation aided and paralleled by a contemporary revolution in political and military power. The theocratic despotisms of the ancient East, which have left so deep an imprint upon religious literature, were the originators of human culture as far, at least, as this has left any written records. From the epoch-making campaigns of Alexander of Macedon and the subsequent rise of the Roman Empire (4th to 1st century B.C.), dated the end of the immemorial reign of the Orient and the rise to cultural and political consciousness and supremacy of the Graeco-Roman West.

During the Christian "Dark Ages" the rise of a new religion, Islam (seventh century) synchronised with the rise of a new oriental civilisation and era of power-politics, of which, indeed, the religion of the Koran was part cause, part effect. To the cry of "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammed is the Prophet of Allah," the Muslim Crusaders swept over Western Asia, North Africa, and half Western Europe. Down to the 16th century, the oriental neo-Muhammedan civilisation retained its primacy over the West in both arms and arts.

The most recent era in history, that era which, down to recent years it has been customary to describe as the "modern" age, was inaugurated by the European Renaissance and by the Discovery of the New World in the 16th century. A new era of European world-ascendancy was thereby inaugurated in both culture, economics, and in power-politics. This era, which attained both its zenith and its culmination in the course of the 19th century, was an era of almost unchecked Western ascendancy: European culture both despised and superseded the far older culture of the East, whilst the armies of European Imperialism, armed with the scientific weapons of the Industrial Revolution, swept with an almost ridiculous

ease over the face, not only of Asia, but over virtually the entire planet.

It is, perhaps, the most ultimately important factor in our current world-situation that, after four centuries of ever-growing ascendancy, this period is now coming to an end. Asia is already awake; whilst everything indicates that both the Negroes of Africa, the history of whom has been one long "Dark Age"—in every sense of the term!—and the polyglot races of Latin America will shortly follow suit. As was recently indicated over the radio—one hears Truth in strange places!—by a distinguished Oriental statesman of the British Commonwealth, the Prime Minister of Ceylon, one epoch in world-history is ending whilst, concurrently, another is already beginning.

What bearing has this mighty revolution in human affairs upon the prospect of international Freethought in the years that lie ahead? In our submission, the historical landscape unfolded is of tremendous, indeed of incalculable significance. For what we are actually witnessing to-day is *the first secular revolution in the entire history of the East*. And if the gods cannot live under Eastern skies, where can they live at all? For we have not forgotten that the gods, all gods, originated in Asia, including of course "our own" Jesus Christ. If secularism can gain the victory over religion in Asia, the supply of gods is cut off at its hitherto unfailing source!

Such an ultimate religious débacle would appear to be actually in sight. For, as was recently indicated in the correspondence columns of this journal by an eminent Indian Rationalist, not a step in her most elementary social, scientific (we might add, sanitary) progress can be realised without first releasing India from the, at present, ubiquitous "dead hand" of out-worn religious superstitions and of obsolete religious cults which keep the vast sub-continent strangled in a vice-like grip in every aspect of its existence; since, as formerly indicated by the present writer also, the very ideas of a secular society and of secular progress are in themselves essentially alien to the exclusively religious culture of Brahminism. What applies to India, applies almost equally to the rest of the vast Asiatic continent. The world of Islam, from Morocco to Indonesia, presents an almost equally impenetrable "Iron Curtain" to social and scientific progress as does Hinduism: to be sure, Arabia, the cradle of Islam, still ranks with Tibet, that monastic theocracy, as a purely medieval "Unknown Land." Whilst, farther East, China and Japan, as yet barely emancipated from crude ancestor-worshipping cults, stand upon the threshold of social evolution into secular states.

Thus, we find that in the contemporary East, secularism is the very life-blood of social evolution; indeed the two terms are virtually synonymous "East of Suez." We face, then, a tremendous revolution in the contemporary East, a revolution the necessary life-blood of which is the philosophy of secularism and which has, broadly, the same goals as our own. With that revolution, all Freethinkers should feel the liveliest sympathy and for our Asiatic and African comrades who are now where

our own movement was in its own pioneering days. Incidentally, Charles Bradlaugh, known in his day as "the member for India," who addressed the Indian National Congress in 1889, was himself one of the pioneers of the contemporary "Awakening of Asia." We in the West have deprived the gods of some of the fruits of victory. It will be the task of our Eastern comrades to tear up religion by the roots in its immemorial Oriental cradle.

F. A. RIDLEY.

A MODERN DELUSION

WHEN I wrote the book entitled *Psycho-Analysis: A Modern Delusion*, I had occasion to draw attention to a criticism of a former work, *The Myth of the Mind*, which appeared in the 1943 issue of *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. In this criticism fault was found with me for maintaining that the postulate of a distinct entity called the "mind" was an indispensable part of the doctrine of Psycho-analysis. The critic stated that most psychologists, including himself, would agree with me that such a postulate was in no way necessary to an explanation of the phenomena called "mental" processes, the implication being that I was, in effect, flogging a dead horse. In my criticisms of Psycho-analysis I have amply shown, by citations from the works of the leading Psycho-analysts themselves that, far from being "in no way necessary" the postulate of a distinct entity called the "mind" or "psyche" is the very foundation-stone of all psycho-analytic teaching.

I have also shown, and similarly allowed the Psycho-analysts to convict themselves that, far from Psycho-analysis being the science its advocates claim it to be, it has no higher status than that of a dogmatic creed. Although the Psycho-analyst may make some show of appealing to the reason he refuses to accept its verdict whenever this happens to be adverse to the doctrines he propounds. If he can get anyone to agree with him, reason, he says, is on his side. But if anyone disagrees with him, then, says he, the disagreement is due, not to any reasoning process, but to a *resistance* in his adversary's unconscious mind! "Heads I win, tails you lose." When the verdict is adverse, the Psycho-analyst infers, not that there may possibly be something wrong with his arguments, but that there is something seriously wrong with the mental equipment of the person to whom they are addressed: that his opponent is, in fact, a pathological case, possessed by an unconscious *resistance* which prevents his thinking otherwise than as he does.

My attention has recently been drawn to a review which fully justifies what I have said above. This review appeared in the November, 1949, issue of the magazine *Psychology*, and it is recommended to the reader's attention as being probably the most concise and unambiguous statement of the psycho-analytic position that has ever been written. Here it is:—

"Frank Kenyon, author of *Psycho-Analysis: A Modern Delusion* (Pioneer Press; 5s.), ought to know better than to attack a discipline whose protagonists regard adverse criticism as confirmation of their theories. His scathing condemnation of Psycho-analysis and of the fundamental postulate of the psyche on which it is based is largely misdirected against a science of which its founder, Sigmund Freud, has declared that the unbeliever is not qualified to criticise.

Psycho-Analysis cuts the ground from under the feet of its critics by asserting that their criticisms are

determined by subjective motives of which they are unaware. Such criticisms are the outcome of the critics' resistances against their own unconscious repressed wishes. As such they have no objective value and are to be looked upon as symptoms rather than contributions."

If criticisms of Psycho-analysis are determined by subjective motives of which the critic is unaware, it would be interesting to learn by what motives the theories criticised are determined. If these are likewise determined by subjective motives of which the holder is unaware the Psycho-analyst is in no better case than his opponent. His theories can have "no objective value and are to be looked upon as symptoms rather than contributions." If they are not so determined then the Psycho-analyst's criticism is a confirmation of the theoretical standpoint of his opponent. If one can argue rationally so can the other.

I have attacked Psycho-analysis for its support of the view that there is an entity called the "mind" distinguishable from the body, for its faulty logic, and for its deficiency in scientific method. The above review sufficiently confirms that I have not misrepresented the subject of my attack in these respects. I have also challenged Psycho-analysis on the grounds that it seeks to invalidate rational thought and to equate normal human conduct with that of the child, the savage, and the neurotic. Further, I regard it as a disruptive force and a menace to the morals, health, and stability of the community at large.

I should like to ask those who deplore the present-day deterioration in social and international conditions what else can they expect when it has become fashionable to regard reason, not as a guide to conduct, but merely as an instrument to provide justification for the expression of unconscious, instinctive desires; to ascribe the noblest and most praiseworthy actions of the best among us to the gratification of personal unconscious desires, due to nothing higher than the instincts of self-display, ambition, and of sexual desire. What respect can a man have, either for himself or for his neighbour, when he is led to believe that the most normal among us hate our fathers, have incestuous desires towards our mothers, and wish our brothers and sisters to die? Many other questions might be asked but we must now pass on from the doctrine to a brief consideration of those who teach it.

One of the main characteristics of the average Psycho-analyst is his love of high-sounding and ambiguous words which he applies with an almost child-like simplicity. He will never use a simple word if he can possibly find one less common to replace it. This, he imagines, places him above the common herd, whose *resistances* compel them to write what their readers can understand. Nowhere is this tendency more noticeable than in the use of Greek and Latin words to express the simplest ideas. Not for the world would the Psycho-analyst dream of mentioning such a common thing as "loss of memory." No. He must display his learning by calling it *amnesia* which he imagines places it beyond the comprehension of lesser mortals. "A slip of the tongue" is a *lapsus linguae*; "a slip of the pen" a *lapsus plumae*. This procedure is carried to the most ridiculous lengths with the sole object of giving an air of learning to his unlearned works.

Nowhere is greater use made of ambiguous words than in works dealing with Psycho-analysis; and nowhere do they prove more useful. Such words are used, first in one sense, and then in another, as the course of the miserable arguments require. When a word does not normally mean what the Psycho-analyst would like it to mean he adopts the *Alice in Wonderland* method of making it mean what he wants it to mean. Even in the short review given

above the word "Protagonist" has been given a meaning which no dictionary admits. This abuse of words, and other psycho-analytical vagaries, especially those connected with sexual obsessions, are all symptomatic, and clearly indicative of a mentality of inferior degree. In our dealings with the Psycho-analysts I think this is the most charitable view we can take.

FRANK KENYON.

THE WARFARE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION

(Continued from page 231)

THE present Pope on page 13 also refers with approval to certain previous papal encyclicals about this subject, including that of Leo XIII, entitled *Providentissimus Deus*, which, *inter alia*, declared as follows: "Divine inspiration far from being compatible with error excludes every error; and necessarily so since God, the Supreme Truth, is incapable of teaching error (see preface to Douai translation of Catholic Bible).

In my article I referred to the Roman Catholic catechism Q. 10, which declares that "God is the very truth and can neither deceive nor be deceived." I also referred to Ch. 61 of *Contra Gentiles* by Thomas Aquinas where he repeatedly declares that God is truthful and cannot deceive.

I think that I have by this time conclusively proved that the Roman Church teaches that God is the author of the Roman Catholic Bible in all its parts. It follows, therefore, that she teaches that God is the author of the whole of the book of Genesis in all its parts, for that book was one of the books enumerated by the Council of Trent as having been received by it as sacred and canonical entire with all their parts. It therefore follows that the Roman Church teaches that God is the author of every word of that book. As she also teaches that God is truth itself, and cannot deceive, it necessarily follows that she teaches that every word of that book is true.

I quite realise that there are many Roman Catholic theologians who try to put it across to their ignorant readers, that is to say, ignorant of the Tridentine and Vatican decrees on this subject, that certain expressions in Genesis "are merely the vehicle of religious truth, rather than the proclamation of scientific truth," for example see the work *God the Creator*, of Dr. B. V. Miller, D.D., in No. 6 of the Treasury of the Faith series (Burns & Oates, 1927) at p. 56 and generally at pp. 53-60. The present Pope, however, in the passage of his encyclical from which I have quoted, loyally following the explicit Tridentine and Vatican decrees, has definitely rejected that teaching as erroneous.

It is even possible to suspect that certain passages from some of the papal encyclicals delivered since the time of the Vatican Council might be interpreted as departing somewhat from a rigid adherence to the letter of the Tridentine and Vatican decrees on this subject, but in all such cases the respective encyclicals did not purport to be *ex cathedra*, and the popes have been much more careful than the theologians whom I have just now described. They have on these occasions chosen to cover their language with a discreet amount of vagueness, but they have always eventually shown that although they had given signs they had been straining at the leash which bound them to these decrees, nevertheless, they have been forced to admit that what these decrees declare is the teaching of the Church. These observations also apply to the findings of the Biblical Commission which were delivered in 1909.

What Mr. Preece and others cannot or will not understand is that neither a mere encyclical of a pope who is not speaking *ex cathedra*, nor the findings of any body of prelates, no matter how eminent they may be, which does not constitute an oecumenical council, and it should be added, even the writings of such eminent theologians as Thomas Aquinas do not purport to be infallible. Consequently, in the event of even the slightest discrepancy between what these infallible decrees declare and what fallible papal encyclicals or findings of bodies of prelates or writings of theologians declare, with regard to any particular question, then the relevant portions of the fallible encyclicals findings or writings should be ignored. This is surely obvious, for how can there be any error in what an infallible council has declared? The policy of the Roman Church, therefore, is that no pope making an *ex cathedra* declaration on a matter of faith or morals and no oecumenical council would dare to contradict or even qualify to the slightest extent what has been established as *de fide*, i.e., what has been declared or taught with infallibility, provided, of course, that that declaration or teaching is perfectly unequivocal. The Tridentine and Vatican decrees on the matter of the inerrancy of the scriptures are absolutely unequivocal and as clear as daylight. They are *de fide* and, therefore, cannot possibly be altered.

J. H. G. BULLER, LL.B.

(To be continued)

IN MEMORY OF GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

IN memory of G.B.S., a Plaque has been unveiled to commemorate his residence at 29, Fitzroy Square, a Victorian Square looking over a beautiful garden right in the heart of London and a few minutes walk from Tottenham Court Road.

The Plaque bears the words: "George Bernard Shaw lived in this house from 1887-1898. 'From the coffers of his genius he enriched the world.'"

Sir Barry Jackson made a speech, and managed to make a howler. He said (quoting from the account of the ceremony in the "St. Pancras Chronicle") that "bright young modern authors, anxious perhaps to strengthen their dialogue, made frequent use of the expletive, My God! Look through all the Shavian drama and you will not find it used. I once asked him why that was, and he replied 'If you are a believer it is blasphemy; if you are not a believer it is nonsense.' And yet there are people who say he was not religious."

Surely the fact that G.B.S. endorsed the atheistic contention that only a believer in God could be blasphemous, shows that he was not religious. If you are not a believer in a deity it is, as G.B.S. pointed out, nonsense to use the name of God as an expletive, although custom dies hard in the ordinary human being. G.B.S. was a high principled moralist, and even in his will disdained religion.

G.B.S. was also a very tolerant man. In a letter which he wrote to this paragraphist on the subject of secular education in our schools, he said "I should describe all the religions to a child, and tell it to choose its own line when it was old enough to care."

A. D. CORRICK.

THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

By W. A. Campbell. With a Preface by the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson. Price 2s. 6d.; postage 2d.

DETERMINISM OR FREEWILL? By Chapman Cohen. Price cloth 3s.; postage 2d.

ACID DROPS

Noting the many "enemies" Christianity has to fight, chief among which was that "the temper of society had become increasingly irreligious," the Bishop of Wakefield, in a recent speech, felt that there was "a great field of evangelism before us which *requires a new approach.*" What exactly ought to be this new approach the good Bishop did not say—but we heartily agree with him. The old approach, with its sublime Saviour, Miracles, Devils, and Hell, has so obviously failed that if Christianity is to survive a new approach is the only remedy. But surely it was the Bishop's duty to let his faithful hearers know what it was? Alas, he wants some other chap to hold the baby—like so many modern Bishops.

An ecclesiastic fear has gripped the Rector of Rushden; peeping into the future he sees the disintegration of the Empire, European civilisation, and indeed the whole world. And it all began because some motor cycle races were arranged for and carried out on Whit-Sunday afternoon. But what a poor official send-off for such an important world-wide catastrophe!

Bishop Barnes is reported to have told his diocesan conference, "We are all, if we are honest with ourselves, to a certain extent agnostic—not atheistic, but unknowing." He might have taken the next step and declared that Jesus Christ was an agnostic; it will have to come sooner or later when the churches replace their out-of-date stock with something more up-to-date.

The B.B.C. and the Press have been giving a good deal of publicity recently to the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" in 1701 by our then Dutch king, William III. It was, perhaps, in connection with this pious occasion that the same king, about the same time, issued another decree forbidding any of his Dutch subjects to read the works of Spinoza, the great Dutch philosopher and protagonist of Freethought. However, we rather fancy that Spinoza will continue to be read long after the S.P.G. has finished its "propagation of the Gospel."

At a recent meeting of the "Industrial Christian Fellowship" in Caxton Hall, Westminster, a Miss Knight-Bruce delivered herself of the weighty dictum that "they would convert Communists only by showing them a social order which was according to the mind of Christ." However, according to the Dean of Canterbury who, incidentally, has much better theological qualifications than Miss Knight-Bruce, Christ *was* the perfect Communist, and the present-day Communists are the only people who really understand His "mind." It is all very confusing. Perhaps Christ had a split "mind" or, perhaps, there never was a Christ to have a "mind" at all?

However much the Fundamentalists may protest, Bishop Barnes says what he thinks, and those of us who believe in free speech—even if we disagree with his conclusions—claim that he has right on his side. In one of his latest speeches in Birmingham, he said that "we may speculate as to man's creation" but there is always "an element of doubt" in our conclusions—in fact, if we are honest we must be "agnostic—not atheistic but unknowing;" and "theological beliefs" are less important than "character." The Bishop is heading straight for the Bottomless Pit if he keeps on talking like this.

The Rev. H. W. Kemshall, a Unitarian minister living in Lincoln, complains: "I realise to-day that most 'religious' people are also superstitious, and cannot worship God *without* the traditional and romantic trappings of myth, legend, dogma, and ritual. I realise also that to those large numbers of people to whom Christianity is intellectually discredited, and who regard it as an amiable fairy tale, rational religion makes little or no appeal." In which connection, the word "amiable" appears to be a rather curious adjective to describe the creed of Torquemada and hell-fire. Anyway, isn't "rational religion" also a fairy tale, "amiable" or otherwise?

Our African contemporary *The Accra Evening News* reports that the recent enthronement of Fr. Porter as the first Roman Catholic Archbishop of West Africa was a "red-letter day" in the annals of West Africa. At the risk of being alliterative, we would say that this victory of the "Black International" was a black day for the blacks!

A Christian Science advertisement says, "Most people would pray more if they felt they knew how." Quite so, the feeling usually comes with a softening brain.

The New Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland has found out what is the matter with the world—what is, in fact, the real danger to humanity. It is not the atom or the "H" bomb which is responsible for the mischief, but man's "natural depravity." It is "the evil deceit and hatred enthroned in the heart of man" which is the real danger. It was by God's grace that we were delivered from "a nightmare of destruction, bloodshed and cruelty"—evidently Mr. Macrae does not think that the vast armies of the Allies had anything to do with the deliverance. And, of course, the "fearful calamities" are the result of the nations not having learnt "righteousness." *The Scotsman* reports two columns of similar wisdom—but it all sounds rather familiar. Didn't these people talk like this before the two world wars?

Whatever else the book may call for, the review by *The Times of English Life and Leisure*, by Messrs. Rowntree and Lavers will not cause cheers from our genuine Christian community. It points out that, after careful research into religion, "there emerges a picture of a largely pagan community in which the Roman Catholics are the only consciously Christian minority who are at least holding their own. Most people have given up all pretence of religious observance . . ." though "a vestigial Christianity still lingers behind their beliefs." And *The Times* concludes that "the broad accuracy of this picture is undeniable." In other words, while Freethought can never claim spectacular victories, its slow but certain sapping of supernaturalism has produced results which even astonishes the aged conservatism of *The Times*.

In fear and trembling we mention the bogey word "Communist," but only to point out that the Vatican's threat to excommunicate those who voted Red in the recent Italian election did not prevent one-third of the eighteen million electors voting Red and increasing that vote by five per cent. It looks suspiciously like God being on the side of the Reds in Italy and it may call for a purge in the Italian heaven, but of far greater importance is the fact that excommunication is losing its sting in Roman Catholics countries.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. H. G. BULLER.—You will see that we have not omitted the paragraph you mention. Many thanks for letter.

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.

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

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, 19s. 2d.; half-year, 9s. 7d.; three months, 4s. 11d.

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.

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

Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.

SUGAR PLUMS

The Bishop of London is reported to have said, "It is difficult for the clergy to gain contact with unbelievers." This is strange because, when the Executive of the N.S.S. tried to get two clergymen to join two N.S.S. speakers in a public Brains Trust, we drew blanks. Failure also attended the Executive's efforts to get two clergymen to take part, with two N.S.S. speakers, in a Freethought Forum. Here, however, is an offer to overcome the clergy's difficulty in gaining contact with unbelievers. If the Bishop will find two clergymen to take part in a public Brains Trust with two N.S.S. speakers, the Executive will pay the cost of hiring a hall and the advertising. That should be a start towards removing the difficulty of gaining contact with unbelievers.

The B.B.C. could have helped the Bishop, for their difficulty is to avoid unbelievers pressing for a genuine broadcast on their beliefs; but, as the Rev. E. H. Robertson, Assistant Head of Religious Broadcasting said recently, "Whilst other departments had to be impartial, his own department made no pretensions of impartiality."

Secretaries of Debating and Discussion Societies will shortly be busy preparing their syllabuses for the coming indoor season. The Executive, N.S.S., is always willing to send speakers to give addresses on the Freethought point of view on all important social questions. Applications to General Secretary, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. 1.

A comic paper in the State of Israel recently carried the following comment: "Adam was the first Israeli citizen. He could not buy clothes, could find nothing to eat except vegetables, and yet he thought that he was living in the Garden of Eden." Surely, however, one difference has been omitted. In Eden, Jehovah cast out Adam, whilst if what we hear about the rapid spread of Atheism is true, it is Jehovah who is on the way out in Israel.

The Freethinker Fund

Cheques and Postal Orders should be addressed to

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

To find space for the numerous articles awaiting publication we shall acknowledge all contributions by post instead of printing lists.

is now open

INGERSOLL'S LETTERS

The Letters of Robert G. Ingersoll. Edited with a Biographical Introduction by Eva Ingersoll Wakefield. Philosophical Library, New York. 750 pp. 1951. \$7.50.

HERE at last is a book all who have loved Ingersoll must have waited for. In the ranks of Freethought literature, Ingersoll has always held a very high place, and I am sure that there can be but few Freethinkers who have never read at least one of his immortal essays or lectures. I deliberately say "immortal," for one of his richest qualities is that he has never dated. You can read his *Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child* or his *Gods* or his *About the Holy Bible* or even his *Talmagian Catechism* and find it as fresh as when he wrote it. And just as effective.

Freethought, indeed, has had some worthy champions but rarely one who could wield a lance or flash a rapier with the wit, the satire, and the urbanity of Robert Ingersoll; and when he liked, he could slash with a broadsword just as effectively. Mostly, it was with a rapier that he liked to attack, for nothing could exceed his contempt for revealed religion; but its crimes, its bestialities, and its intolerance, often roused him to anger, and then it was the broadsword for him.

Lucky indeed are the people who have his complete works in the 12 volumes Dresden Edition—for there will be found the true text of all he wrote or delivered, properly edited and printed. Like so many of the 19th century Freethinkers, a good deal of what he wrote was printed, sometimes very badly, in cheap pamphlets and small print. Rarely was Ingersoll produced in a handsomely bound volume—he was just a common pamphleteer by all accounts. The Dresden Edition changed all that, but it is not everyone who can afford such beautifully produced volumes. Messrs. Watts & Co. have a one-volume edition of some of the best lectures and essays which I can heartily recommend. And now comes this volume of letters—a truly handsome and finely printed work—and for the first time we get to know, apart from what has already been given us about his life in a number of biographies, more about Ingersoll the Man.

To begin with, however, is a 100 page biographical introduction with an appreciation of many of his writings—and I found it very interesting to learn that Ingersoll himself considered his *About the Holy Bible* his favourite. It has been mine for nearly 50 years.

Mrs. Wakefield has given us a loving sketch of her famous grandfather, surely one of the greatest men born in America, and one whose name and fame is steadily rising—like that of Thomas Paine whose great champion he was. Let us never forget that when Ingersoll took up the challenge, Christians had for over 70 years villified and lied about the author of the *Age of Reason*; and in the excessively Presbyterian atmosphere of the United States it was not easy to take up the gauntlet in defence of the hated heretic and infidel. It certainly was easier to do so in England.

One would like to linger on the many reminiscences of Robert Ingersoll so beautifully given us by Mrs. Wakefield. As a soldier in the Civil War, as a passionate advocate against slavery, as a politician of the first rank fighting "heroically for freedom and justice in politics," as perhaps the greatest of all American orators—"his words welled out of the deep pure inner springs of his mind and heart with joyous spontaneity and unstudied art," as Mrs. Wakefield puts it—and as a Freethinker, Ingersoll was always outstanding, head and shoulders above nearly all his contemporaries.

When I left school I worked for some years with an American whose enthusiasm for Ingersoll was boundless. It was he who read out to me *About the Holy Bible, What is Religion* and *Ghosts* and they made a deep and lasting impression on me. I learnt how Ingersoll could hold an audience for hours, sometimes wet-eyed, his magnificent delivery keeping everybody spellbound. There was not a preacher or politician who came anywhere near him in popularity, in spite of the fact that he was always being bitterly attacked by the men of God. The most infamous lies, of course, were told about "Bob" Ingersoll, as they were about "Tom" Paine, but both are now recognised as very great Humanists, and who knows now anything about the Christian villifiers? Even their names are almost forgotten.

But what about his letters? Beginning with one written to his brother John in 1853—one of the earliest preserved—we can follow his career in them as orator, Agnostic, critic and lover of the arts, husband, father and friend, and humanist. On this last, we get what he thought on such subjects as capital and labour, censorship, capital punishment, birth control, kindness to animals, racial intolerance, sex equality, and vivisection; and, indeed, on many other subjects.

Some of the best letters are his replies to the religious lunatics who bombarded him with angry attacks on his anti-religious views. It is impossible fully to quote even a few in the short space of a review, but it is interesting to note that in 1892 they had the same kind of hot discussion about opening the World's Fair on a Sunday as we have had here about opening the Fun Fair. Ingersoll was asked his opinion and he wrote:—

There are two reasons given in the Bible for "keeping the Sabbath." The first is that God having made the world in six days, rested on the seventh, therefore man shall rest on the seventh. We know that this is not true. We know, if we know anything, that God did not make the world in six days and rest on the seventh. The second reason is that God brought out the Jews from Egypt. If this is the real reason, it applies to no people except to the Jews. . . . All days should be for the good of man, and that day in which most people are really happy, is the best day.

This is a very short extract from a long letter, but every argument Ingersoll used 60 years ago has still to be reiterated not only to the mass of our people but actually to the 600 or more members of Parliament who fondly imagine that they are "progressive." If Sabbatarianism is not these days quite so rampant, it is only because Freethinkers like Ingersoll have stood out, facing villification and ostracism at the hands of religious believers. Yet religion can even now find its passionate defenders!

H. CUTNER.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PAPACY. By F. A. Ridley.
Price 1s.; postage 1½d.

THE FAULTS AND FAILINGS OF JESUS CHRIST.
By C. G. L. Du Cann. (Second Edition.) Price 4d.;
postage 1d.

FACTS FOR FREETHINKERS

Roman Catholic Religious Orders

THE Roman Catholic Church divides its clergy into two sections: "regular" clergy, under a religious "rule" (Latin—"regula") authorised by the Church, and "secular" or parochial clergy who live "in the world" (Latin—"in sæcula"). The "regular" clergy are enrolled in a large number of religious "Orders," some details of the more important of which can be found below. The "Rules" under which these monastic "Orders" live vary considerably. All of them, however, exact the canonical oaths of "poverty, chastity, and obedience," from their members who, unlike the "secular" clergy, cannot own property. Most of these religious "Orders" also live in "religious houses" or monasteries, which they cannot leave without permission of their monastic superiors. (The Jesuits, in this and in other respects, live under a modified rule with some features peculiar to themselves).

The Chief Religious Orders:—

1. *The Order of St. Benedict.*—Founded in the 6th century by Benedict of Nursia (born about 480), a Roman nobleman, at Monte Cassino in Italy. The Benedictines were the first Western Order to abandon the extreme asceticism of the Eastern monks and to make corporate labour a regular part of monastic life. The Benedictines were the missionaries of the Church during the "Dark Ages." Pope Gregory "the Great" and St. Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, belonged to this Order. The Benedictine Order is the most learned Catholic Order and specialises in education and research.

2. *The Franciscans.*—Now divided into three separate Orders, the Franciscans were founded by Francis of Assisi in 1209. Francis, an Italian itinerant preacher, played a rôle in the history of the Catholic Church rather similar to that of John Wesley in the history of English Christianity: at a time when Catholicism had lost contact with the masses, "the poor man of Assisi" and his Order reclaimed them for Christianity. The Franciscans have always specialised in work amongst the poor.

3. *Order of Preachers (Dominicans).*—Founded in 1217 by Dominic de Guzman, a Spanish contemporary of Francis, the "Order of Preachers" has, as its name implies, always specialised in preaching, controversy, and theological study. Nicknamed the "canes Domini" ("Watchdogs of the Lord"), the Order founded and subsequently directed the Inquisition in both Rome and Spain. In the opinion of the late Prof. Coulton, it was the joint activity of the Franciscans and Dominicans that postponed the outbreak of the Reformation from the 13th to the 16th century. Thomas Aquinas, the Dean of Catholic theologians (1226-1274), was a Dominican.

4. *"Company of Jesus" (Jesuits).*—Founded in 1540 by a Spanish ex-soldier, Ignatius of Loyola, and organised on military lines, the Jesuits are the most famous and powerful of Catholic Orders. Their training, based on "The Spiritual Exercises" of Loyola, is very severe and lasts about seventeen years. The Jesuits are the "shock troops" of the Church. They specialise in missionary and educational work. They take a special oath of obedience to the Pope, but have always been very much "a church within the Church." Their motto is "Ad maiorem Dei Gloriam" ("A.M.D.G."—"To the greater glory of God"). Suppressed by the Pope in 1773, they were restored in 1814. Since Pascal (a Catholic critic) attacked them in his "Provincial Letters" (1656-57), the appellation "Jesuit" has become synonymous with intrigue and duplicity in popular speech.

Amongst minor Catholic Orders may be mentioned: The Servites, or Servants of Mary; The Trappists, distinguished by their oath of perpetual silence; and the "Congregation of the Oratory" to which Cardinal Newman belonged.

F. A. R.

THEATRICAL NOTES

OF the farces, *Reluctant Heroes*, at the Whitehall Theatre, is a most entertaining and laughable long-drawn-out musical sketch on new recruits in the Army. A better piece of work than *Worm's Eye View*, which is having an undeservedly long run (Comedy Theatre), now in its sixth year. Of better standard by far is the comedy *To Dorothy, a Son*, in which Richard Attenborough and Yolande Donlan do well in what amounts to almost a two-character play, with a few slight additions including Sheila Sim.

Of the musical shows, *Kiss Me Kate*, at the Coliseum, is a little disappointing and lacking in humour. *Blue for a Boy*, at his Majesty's, is good, light and cheerful entertainment.

Perhaps the most enterprising theatre club in London is the New Boltons, to which Peter Cotes has given so much hard work during the last few months. The present production of *A Pin to See the Peepshow* is an achievement, both for its direction by Peter Cotes and for Joan Miller's outstanding performance. Here is a very sincere play written round the Bywaters-Thompson case, with something to say against capital punishment. Anyone within travelling distance of this theatre can be well served by taking out a 5s. membership, which entitles them to use of the club rooms, bar and restaurant.

Lastly, Christopher Fry's church play, *A Sleep of Prisoners*, is quite a remarkable achievement in the manipulation of language, and as such is highly entertaining though not too lucid. It is (as I write) showing at St. Thomas' Church, Regent St., W. 1, and is likely to tour different parts of the country . . . essentially for performance in churches. As delightful as Mr. Fry can be at his best.

RAYMOND DOUGLAS.

WOULD YOU CHUCK IT?

Holy Clerk in Cowards' Castle
Gospelising to the good,
Giving out your news from nowhere,
Would you chuck it—if you could?
Omnisciently expounding;
"Freedom in the Faith we find!"
Acting under Holy Orders,
Does it ever cross your mind?
Under Christian dispensation,
Centuries of sweated toil,
Sordid slavery and serfdom,
Tied to task and stuck to soil?
Do you really, truly credit
Magic myth and stupid story,
In the Book you've had to edit
(All for His Eternal Glory?)
As your rotund, rubbed-up phrases
Echo back from empty pews,
You could welcome contradiction,
Deadly dullness can't amuse.
Holy Clerk in Cowards' Castle,
Gospelising to the good;
As each weary word is wasted,
You would chuck it—if you could.

ARTHUR E. CARPENTER.

OBITUARY

I regret to report the death of Robert Wethesburn at the age of 90 years. He was the eldest of a family of Atheists and has been active in the cause of Freethought for over 60 years. A quiet and kindly man, he has done much to introduce his Freethought ideas to others. Up to the closing weeks of his life he was still firm and definite in his opinions and activities. He was one of the old guard who rallied round Charles Bradlaugh, and, later, Chapman Cohen, in their work in N.E. England. He will be long remembered in this part of the world for his clear and honest opinions, and for his work to brighten the lives of those with whom he came into contact.

Our sympathy goes out to his sister (Mrs. A. Shiel) and to all his relatives. A service was conducted at Newcastle Crematorium, in harmony with his desires.

JOHN T. BRIGHTON.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

Report of Executive Meeting held June 21, 1951

The President, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Griffiths, A. C. Rosetti, Ridley, Hornibrook, Morris, Shaw, Ebury, Johnson, Cleaver, Corstorphine, Barker.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Birmingham Branch and to the Parent Society. Space would be found in *The Freethinker* for a column of branch news if the secretaries forwarded the necessary details to the General Secretary.

Action taken over a case arising from the Marriage Act, 1949, was reported and endorsed; further information had been asked for from the appropriate authority.

A resolution was passed protesting against the proposed use of public money for the conveyance of children to the United Church Exhibition by the Windsor Divisional Education Executive. Freethinkers all over the country were advised to keep a watchful eye for similar practices in local administration.

A grant was made to the Nigeria Branch, N.S.S.

In view of the holiday season the next meeting of the Executive was fixed for August 9, and the proceedings closed.

JOHN SEIBERT, General Secretary.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

OUTDOOR

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

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

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

Also Lectures at Platt Fields, Sunday, 3 p.m.; Alexandra Park Gates, Wednesday, 8 p.m.; St. Mary's Gate, Blitzed Site, Sunday, 8 p.m.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, 12 noon: F. A. RIDLEY. Sunday Evening, 7-30 p.m. (Highbury Corner): F. A. RIDLEY. Friday Evening, July 6, 8 p.m. (South Hill Park), L. EBURY.

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

South London and Lewisham Branch (Brockwell Park).—6-30 p.m.: L. EBURY.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Hyde Park).—Sunday, 4 p.m.: C. E. WOOD.

INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, July 1, JOSEPH MCCABE: "More's 'Utopia.'"

THE FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGION. By Chapman Cohen. New Edition. Price 6d.; postage 1d.

GOD AND EVOLUTION. By Chapman Cohen. Price 6d.; postage 1d.

GOD AND ME (revised edition of "Letters to the Lord"). By Chapman Cohen. Price, cloth 2s. 6d., postage 2d.; paper 1s. 3d.; postage 1d.

A FEW CORRECTIONS

REPLYING to my remarks in "Materialism and Metaphysics" (*The Freethinker*, April 1), Mr. Vernon Carter tells me "I am to be complimented, for it is quite an achievement to commit so many fallacies." To be complimented on committing fallacies is quite a new style of commendation, and, though intended to be ironical, looks very much like nonsense. However, let us see what his notion of a fallacy is.

He says that my "argument that a Materialist is a Freethinker is circular, and *ipso facto*, it is fallacious," and "even if most Freethinkers are Materialists, it is *non sequitur* to argue from that, therefore, all Materialists are Freethinkers. It would appear *prima facie* that a Materialist cannot be a Freethinker." What I said to let loose this shower of technical tags was simply that, as most Freethinkers worthy of the name, accept the Materialist theory of the non-existence of spirit, the terms are to that extent, synonymous. The result is a display of chop-logic, imbibed from Dorothy Emmett's book, and enunciated with all the tyro's cocksureness and pomposity.

Replying to a charge I made, he says: "Even if I merely repeat the parrotry of religionists, that does not, on that account, make my criticism valueless. The repetition of statements does not affect either their truth or validity; $1 + 1 = 2$ will still be true however many times it is repeated." An unquestionable fact, but, as it happens, in no way applicable as an argument, to Mr. Vernon Carter's present predicament. To use one of his favourite phrases, it is *non sequitur*. Because $1 + 1 = 2$ is self-evident, it does not follow that his assertion, "Materialism is a body of out-worn discredited ideas" is equally so. His arithmetical illustration has no bearing on the question, and proves nothing unless it be his muddled thinking.

"It has yet to be established," he says, "that religionists are credulous. Can it be said that Whitehead and Dorothy Emmett are credulous?" Indubitably, if they are religionists. What better proof of their credulity could Mr. Vernon Carter require? Next. He tells us that, "even if Materialism were founded on reason, experience and common sense, it would not on that account make it acceptable." In support of this curious statement he adds, "If the grounds or premises of an argument are not certain, then the conclusions cannot be regarded as certain."

I am not sure whether this deserves any comment other than a smile and a shrug.

Does Mr. Vernon Carter know of any other means by which we judge of the acceptability of a thing than reason, experience and common sense? They are the arbiters of our actions, the only criteria of what is fit or unfit, wise or foolish, right or wrong. If Mr. Vernon Carter had been guided by them instead of by his book-logic, there would have been no occasion for this article.

Here is another of the same cast. "I can assure Mr. Yates that you cannot have a contradiction between belief and behaviour. Any elementary text book of logic which deals with the relations between propositions will confirm this statement."

This is so far true that, when under no constraining influence, behaviour is always the expression or reflection of belief. But to assert that there cannot, on that account, be a contradiction between belief and behaviour is absurd. Every case of false pretence or practised deception, from that of the religious hypocrite to that of the confidence

trickster, affords an instance of the contradiction that may exist between belief and conduct. Our courts of law were established to emphasize, by penal infliction, the difference between what some people *know* and what they *do*.

On the other hand, if no contradiction existed between belief and behaviour, and people always acted according to what they believed, many otherwise worthy persons would need to be placed under strict supervision and control. They would "play such tricks before high Heaven as make the angels weep." He says I confuse Metaphysics with Solipsism, and "that while all Solipsists may be Metaphysicians, it does not follow that all Metaphysicians are Solipsists."

That some Metaphysicians do not style themselves Solipsists is because they fail to carry their metaphysic to its inevitable conclusion, or what Bertrand Russell calls "its *reductio ad absurdum*." Once the Berkeleian theory of the non-existence of Matter is accepted there is no logical alternative to stark subjective Idealism (Solipsism). In F. H. Bradley's words (*Appearance and Reality*), "I cannot transcend experience; and experience is *my* experience. From this it follows that nothing beyond myself exists."

Does Mr. Vernon Carter's metaphysic extend thus far? If it does not, what becomes of his logic? If it does, what becomes of his "shallow materialist?"

"One of the difficulties facing the Materialist," he says, "is to show how rationality can enter into physiological processes." But there is no need to show this. Does Mr. Vernon Carter know of any instance of rationality existing apart from physiological processes? If he does not, may we not conclude that rationality does not *enter* into physiological processes, but is *produced* by them?

The objection is founded on the assumption that the rational cannot proceed from the irrational, that there is an impassable gap between them. But can there be such a thing as thought without the generator of thought, the brain? The plainest lesson of Biology is that mind, thought, rationality, whatever name we give to mental activity, is the result of a gradual evolutionary process of brain development from ancestral instinct to human reason. To regard Mind as absolute leads to an absurdity, for thought cannot exist without some *thing* to think of, and that thing must necessarily precede and condition it. In a word, if Mind is the faculty of conception, there must have been something to conceive before it could exist.

I hope readers of *The Freethinker* are not getting tired of all this. I am. It is not a pleasant job to turn one's pen into a literary scalpel for the purpose of cutting out diseased notions. But Mr. Vernon Carter is a difficult subject with a very obstinate disorder, viz., an enlarged estimation of himself. Mr. Preece's treatment of his case, extending as it did over a long period, only made matters worse; it ministered to, rather than combated the trouble, as is shown by the violence of the present outbreak. Excision, though severe, is the only remedy. If the operation is successful, Mr. Vernon Carter would be well advised, in order to prevent a recurrence of the malady, to renounce altogether the study of logic and metaphysics as tending to produce an excitation of the ego manifesting itself in an inordinate self-conceit.

A. YATES.

Those who swallow their Deity, really and truly, in transubstantiation, can hardly find anything else otherwise than of easy digestion.
—BYRON.