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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Ignatius Loyola Versus the French Revolution

THE French "Fourth Republic" is, at present, locked in a mortal internal combat over the burning question of secular versus clerical education. Already more than one recent French government has fallen over the current question of state aid for (Roman Catholic) schools. Moreover, this question must itself be considered as part of the larger question of the never-ceasing efforts of the Church of Rome to undo the work of its mortal enemy, the Great French Revolution of that *annus mirabilis* in European history, 1789, the year which saw Europe awake and spring into conscious political activity against the age-old despotism of Rome and of her feudal allies. As, just at present, the Vatican is making what will, we may hope, be her final attempt to stage the reconquest of Europe under the transparent disguise of defending "Christian civilization" against "atheistic Communism," we think that a glance at what is, after all, only superficially a political question, will not be out of place in the columns of *The Freethinker*.

The struggle over state financial aid for church schools in contemporary France is not, of course, a peculiarly French question: it exists for the English Catholics also. But whereas in England the adherents of Rome merely represent a small, if increasing minority even in the religious world, across "La Manche" matters wear a different complexion. For France has been, since Roman times, "The eldest daughter of the (Catholic) Church," and ever since the French Revolution cut her political claws as the state Church, Catholicism has actually remained, as it still remains to-day, the religion of the overwhelming majority of French men and women who still adhere to the cult of the supernatural. With the limited exception of insignificant minorities of Protestants and Jews, Catholicism remains the religion of French believers: the cults of Deism, Theo-philanthropy, etc., produced by the French Revolution in conscious opposition to Rome, proved ephemeral and have perished without leaving a trace. The famous declaration of the great Robespierre has left no successors: "Atheism is aristocratic. The idea of a Supreme Being who watches over outraged innocence and punishes triumphant crime, is essentially the ideal of the people." The logical French mind opts either for atheism or for its extreme alternative, religion in its totalitarian Catholic form.

For a century after the French Revolution, a mortal antagonism separated the Liberal, Republican, and Socialist parties which upheld "the ideas of 1789" against the French clericals, the fanatical adherents of throne and altar. A whole succession of great anti-clerical writers, Victor Hugo, Jules Michelet, Emile Zola, and Anatole France, have left the imprint of this struggle in the literature of the civilised world. Since the turn of the century, however, the struggle has pursued more devious paths and been conducted along more subtle lines. For ever since Pope Leo XIII, the political genius of the modern papacy,

inaugurated "Christian Democracy" and officially "recognised" republican institutions in France, clerical strategy has relied on "boring from within," upon "Trojan Horse" tactics for the attainment of its ultimate aims, rather than upon open antagonism.

For one brief moment, indeed, thanks to Hitler, French Catholicism got its republican rival by the throat. For four golden years in the annals of clericalism, the Vichy regime of the senile Petain (1940-44) actually succeeded in putting the clock back to pre-1789 and in obliterating the "laic" state and the secular ideals which date from that epoch-making time. To-day, however, the defeat of Fascism has summarily ended that short-lived mirage and French clerical strategy is back on its old line of "Christian Democracy."

One might reasonably have thought that the memories of Vichy might have opened the eyes of such a highly intelligent race as the French to the real function of political Catholicism as the aider and abettor of every form of the contemporary political reaction. However, in actuality, this is not the case in contemporary France where political Catholicism is strongly established both inside and outside the ranks of the present Government's parliamentary supporters, the "Christian Democrats" ("M.R.P.") hold the balance of power in the government coalition, whilst the De Gaullists, who have recently succeeded the Communists as the most powerful opposition party, are also predominantly Catholic and aim openly at an at least partial return to pre-1789 conditions.

It is against the above political background that the present demands of the Church for state-aid to church schools must be considered. The issue at stake is, of course, a fundamental one and has been so since the counter-reformation, when Ignatius of Loyola, the creator of modern (as distinct from medieval) Catholicism, first coined the historic maxim:—

"Give me the child for his first seven years and you can have him for the rest of his life."

In short, the present struggle between laic and clerical ideals of education may be accurately described in a brief epitome as:—

Ignatius Loyola versus the French Revolution.

In the current deadlock, the claims of clericalism are supported within the government by the "M.R.P." to-day; perhaps it will be De Gaullists to-morrow. Whereas, the "laic" tradition of revolutionary and republican France since 1789, is upheld by the traditionally anti-clerical parties of the Left, the radicals and socialists, who carry on the historic legacy of such world-famous anti-clerical protagonists as Gambetta, Clemenceau, Jaurés, and Blum. We are particularly pleased to record that the French Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.) has just re-issued *L'Eglise et L'Ecole (The Church and the School)* by M. Marceau Pivert, the secretary of the "Federation of the Seine," with a Preface by the late M. Leon Blum, former Socialist Prime Minister. M. Pivert personally informed the present writer that the S.F.I.O. has no intention of throwing itself

into the arms of Rome in order to escape the unwelcome embraces of Moscow!

The present struggle between Church and State in France over the control of education may well prove a decisive turning point in contemporary history. Indeed, it derives additional importance from the current international political scene. For secularists may as well face the unpleasant but obvious fact that in their desire at all costs to defeat Communism, America and its Atlantic allies are handing over political power to the Vatican in country after country as the price of its support. Without trespassing on to the domain of politics, we do not believe that medievalism is the answer to Communism, nor that even those who fear a hypothetical Communist Dark Age in the future can seriously propose to defeat it by reviving the actual Catholic Dark Age of the past. "That way madness lies." Let us hope that France, the Land of the Revolution and the birthplace of modern Freethought, may again prove able to give a constructive lead to perplexed humanity at this decisive turning point in its history.

F. A. RIDLEY.

THE STORY OF A RELIGIOUS RATIONALIST

II

WHEN Mrs. Ward submitted the opening chapters of her novel, *Robert Elsmere*, to Messrs. Macmillan, the publishers of her early efforts, *Miss Bretheron* and her *English Poets*, they were declined as being unlikely to prove attractive to the reading public. In her biography of her mother, Mrs. Ward, Mrs. G. M. Trevelyan tells us that: "In this dilemma she bethought herself of Mr. George Murray Smith, the publisher of Charlotte Brontë, and, in some trepidation, offered the book to him. Mr. Smith had greater faith than the Macmillans and accepted it at once, sealing the bargain by making an advance of £200 upon it in May, 1886." The Brontës were deeply indebted to Mr. Smith for his counsel and consideration, and Mrs. Ward ever received kindly treatment in her transactions with Smith and Elder, her publishers.

Robert Elsmere was a laborious undertaking to its authoress, while, although her publisher was always helpful, he entertained little expectation of the book's success. It appeared in the then, customary three-volume form, and the press notices proved somewhat tardy, but were on the whole quite favourable. The *Academy* compared it with George Eliot's masterpiece *Adam Bede*. The *Manchester Guardian* gave it a two-column review, but the *Saturday Review's* notice was scornful. Walter Pater praised the work in the *Guardian* and opined that it presented "that quiet evolution of character through circumstance, introduced into English literature by Miss Austen and carried into perfection in France by George Sand." The *Times* reviewer averred that *Robert Elsmere* was "a clever attack on revealed religion."

Its first edition was soon sold and its later reprints showed that a very wide interest in its leading theme had been aroused. A week before his sudden death, Matthew Arnold found all the guests assembled at Lord Pembroke's seat at Wilton were eagerly discussing the heretical book, and Arnold himself thought of reviewing it in the *Nineteenth Century* monthly. Gladstone, however, was bent on this task and was already writing to Lord Acton concerning the various points he desired to stress.

Robert Elsmere disconcerted Gladstone whose religious opinions and prejudices remained medieval to the very last of his long life. The Gladstone family read the novel and

induced its head to read it, although he found it tough. Still, he declared "it is a tremendous book." Acton gave him little encouragement to cope with the problems presented, as he was well aware of Gladstone's lack of knowledge of modern Biblical scholarship. Gladstone urged that the book displays a retreat from Christ to Theism and notes that Elsmere founds a new Christian Brotherhood, dies prematurely through excessive exertion and anxiety, but leaves a flourishing modernist movement. The scholar Wendover, whose personality and choice library complete Elsmere's emancipation, is a fictional delineation of the humanist Mark Pattison, while Elsmere himself is an idealisation of the modernist Hill Green.

While impressed by the book's power, Gladstone rejected its message. In a letter to Acton he states: "I am always inclined to consider this Theism as among the least defensible of the positions alternative to Christianity. Robert Elsmere, who has been a parish clergyman, is upset entirely, as it appears, by the difficulty of accepting miracles, and by the suggestion that the existing Christianity grew up in an age especially predisposed to them."

As Gladstone was anxious to prove that the early age of Christianity was a period more sceptical than superstitious, he asked Acton to help him establish this. But as John Morley records in his standard *Life of Gladstone*: Acton probably made his suppliant feel that he was unequal to the task of successfully overcoming the conclusions of recent scientific researches into old-time cults. As Morley observes: both before and after the appearance of Gladstone's article on *Robert Elsmere* in the *Nineteenth Century*, the critical Catholic Acton, "with his vast historic knowledge and his deep penetrating gaze, warned the impassioned critic of some historic point overstated or understated, some dangerous breach left all unguarded, some lack of nicety in definition." Morley also states that all Acton's letters will some day appear in print, but unless the undersigned has been misinformed, very important letters, not among those already published, will never be permitted publication.

But, be that as it may, Morley shrewdly notes that Gladstone's defence of orthodoxy is a failure. Apparently, after perusing Acton's unpublished correspondence, Morley observes "how candidly Mr. Gladstone was admonished as to the excess of his description of the moral action of Christianity; as to the risk of sending modern questions to ancient answers; . . . that there are leaps and bounds in the history of thought; how well did Newman once say that in theology you have to meet questions that the Fathers could hardly have been made to understand; how if you go to St. Thomas or Leibnitz or Paley for rescue from Haeckel or Hegel your apologetics will be a record of disaster."

Gladstone, in conversation with Mrs. Ward, contended that Christianity alone supplied all ethical requirements, and that the exemplary lives of eminent sceptics were no general test of conduct, devoid of faith. Then came the question of miracles. Mrs. Ward found all alleged miracles incredible. "The difficulty is," he said slowly, "if you sweep away miracles, you sweep away the *Resurrection*! With regard to the other miracles, I no longer feel as I once did that they are the most essential evidences. The evidence that comes nearest to me is the evidence of Christian history, of the type of character that Christianity produced." In the light of the infamies sanctioned, committed and applauded throughout Christendom during the past two thousand years, this seems a dark and doubtful saying.

Acton, on the other hand, while claiming as invaluable

the humane services of primitive Christianity, reminded Gladstone that later Christianity proved anti-liberal and anti-social until sects arose, some of which denied Christ's divinity, while others repudiated the whole Christian system. Morley summarises Acton's pronouncement thus: "Liberalism, if it admits these things as indifferent, surrenders its own *raison d'être*, and ceases to strive for an ethical cause. If the doctrines of Torquemada make us condone his morality, there can be no public right and no wrong, no political sin, no secular cause to die for."

Robert Elsmere had an enormous vogue in the U.S., but the then absence of international copyright enabled the pirates to undersell the more reputable firms of American publishers.

T. F. PALMER.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

THE British Association for the Advancement of Science was formed in 1831 as a medium for intercourse between men of science and the further development of scientific knowledge. It holds an annual session at which leading men of science proclaim the ever-increasing achievements, hopes, and speculations in the domain of science and discussion follows. One need only read the discourses at the annual session of the past few years to realise how thoroughly the purpose for which the Association was formed has been served.

This year the session was held in Edinburgh, and the presidential address was delivered by the Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., F.R.S. The Duke described his address as "a layman's impression of the march of science in the past hundred years." The address as a clear, informative epitome of the enormous achievements of science covering a century, is one that a specialist could well be proud of. The scientific alphabet from Anthropology to Zoology was covered and tribute paid to the pioneers and outstanding contributors in the specific sections.

In tracing the improvement in our environment by the end of the century under review the Duke found no need to depart from the highway of science for the explanation, to quote his own words, as reported in *Nature*, he says, "The concrete measurement and indirect effect of all scientific effort is the general improvement in the conditions in which people live and work; it is in the improvement in health, in the expectation of life and standards of living; the latter including not only food and clothing, but also housing, home comforts, medical care, education, books and newspapers, recreations and travel facilities. In every one of these directions the progress that has been made has amounted to a revolution."

Further emphasis is added when he later said "progress in almost every form of human activity depends upon the continued efforts of scientists."

There is no ambiguity about those two statements, they make a plain, honest story of what we owe to science in the measure of social and intellectual progress made during the century being dealt with. With that in mind there follows what appears to be a peculiar intrusion when the Duke said, "not all this springs directly from science and invention. Much has been due to the politicians and administrators, and behind them to religion, morals, education, art and the complex influences which we call culture." But surely all these except religion are covered in the two previous quotations. If politicians, administrators, or others make a contribution to scientific knowledge their contributions become part of the sum total of science. We do not talk of politicians' science, or administrators' science.

Then what about religion? There is no reason whatever for leaving religion out of a survey of science during the past century. It certainly should be included. But not as sectarian beliefs in creeds, catechisms, and theological gymnastics, they are only trade devices of religious practitioners, and have no place in science. The story of religion as presented by Anthropology is built on the studies of men like Frazer, Inman, Tylor and a host of others. It has no room for divine revelations. It treats religion as a natural consequence of primitive human conditions. It tells us how primitive humanity came to fashion gods and beliefs in the supernatural. The story is a fascinating one, taking us back almost to the cradle of the human race, to those remote periods when man was haunted by fears nourished by his ignorance, and struggling by the help of his inherited animal curiosity to get some understanding of his environment. That story belongs to science and should command inclusion in any survey of scientific progress. Of course a holy howl could be expected from the clergy, but that should make no difference. If the scientific presentation of religion is true according to facts, then it is true, and truth in science and elsewhere must never be allowed to depend upon the approval or otherwise of the clergy.

To introduce religion by one word and credit it with some influence upon the progress of science is misleading. In common use the term "religion" is taken as meaning Christianity. When the clergy refer to religious instruction in schools they mean Christianity, the politician uses the word with the same meaning, as is also the case with religious broadcasts on the B.B.C. Taking the word religion as commonly understood it is not true that it has encouraged science in its progress. When did Christianity encourage any of the sciences to grow healthy and strong? The Duke quoted Darwin's *Descent of Man*, and *Origin of Species*, during his address when dealing with the section on biology. Religion never had anything but abuse for Darwin and his work at the time and to-day, nearing the end of a century, that abuse crops up again and again. Clerical spite against science seeps through countless sermons and writings and as to the early attitude of religion towards science and scientific workers, the whole space of *The Freethinker* for months could be filled with the evidence for religious antagonism to science; the works of Draper, Andrew White, Lecky, Buckle, Hallam, etc., and the factual history of any branch of science will provide more facts.

Science has had to struggle hard against clerical opposition but it has won its place in the world of knowledge because of the quality of its teachings and the sincerity of its workers. In every factory, workshop, office, home, and in social life, the facts of scientific achievement are before us and experienced. Whilst the clergy talk and pray, science is producing and providing; whilst the churches offer you a place in heaven, when you are dead, science has given us such progress in human welfare as, in the words of the Duke of Edinburgh, to amount to a revolution. If men of science will confine their efforts to the scientific aspect and teaching on all subjects, and leave supernaturalism entirely to the churches, clarity will result and the opposite roads taken by each will become crystal clear to every intelligent citizen, whether the clergy approve or not.

R. H. ROSETTI.

LIFT UP YOUR HEADS. An Anthology for Freethinkers.

By William Kent. Price, cloth 6s., paper 4s. 3d.; postage 3d.

MATERIALISM RESTATED. Fourth edition. By Chapman Cohen. Price 5s. 3d.; postage 3d.

ACID DROPS

The gates of St. Benet's Abbey, Norfolk Broads, were rusty and would not open when the Bishop of Norwich arrived to hold the annual service. A clergyman present went into action. It was obvious he did not pray; he might have cursed but it was not audible; he did what an Atheist locksmith would have done—he used a can of oil and a hammer and the gates surrendered. Will clergymen annoyed by rusty gates, please note?

The natives of a Pacific Island were in high spirits when they looted rifles, twenty-five pounder guns, ammunition, ten tons of beer and the equipment of 750 soldiers from an abandoned troopship after it had gone aground. The natives called it "the ship that God sent from heaven"; the soldiers no doubt had a different opinion and expressed it in army language. If Christianity be true, and the Bible accurate, they were both right. At any rate, the natives can now dump their spears and scalping knives and fight like Christian soldiers with more deadly weapons from the armouries of Christian countries.

A correspondent of *The Sunday Pictorial* recently printed in his journal an account of his visit to the "Isle of Purgatory." For the benefit of inquiring readers, we hasten to add that this delectable area is not in the "next world." It is actually situated, or so we are told, in "a one-acre islet in Lough Derg, Donegal, Eire." Pilgrims to this purgatorial spot seem to have a rough time. They have to walk barefooted "in imitation of the man of sorrows." But, presumably, with this difference: walking barefoot over a stony beach is all right for a God but is, we should imagine, highly uncomfortable for people endowed with normal "bodies, parts," and—shall we say—corns?

At a prize giving at a convent school in Stroud, the chairman of the Governors, Rev. Fr. Fitzpatrick declared that "the nuns taught for the love of God. They did not get paid for it, and the teacher who taught for the love of God would certainly have results." We are afraid that the "National Union of Teachers" would not take kindly to "the love of God" as a satisfactory alternative to the trade union wage as laid down in the Burnham scale for members of the teaching profession.

In "Ordinary Cats" by Mr. Charles Duff, commented upon elsewhere in this issue, the learned author gives us a new angle upon the misdeeds of medieval Christianity. According to him, the terrible "Black Death" which devastated Europe in the middle of the 14th century, owed its universal diffusion to the maleficent activities of rats who had multiplied out of all proportion, on account of the wholesale extermination of the cats, who would normally have prevented them from multiplying. From the point of view of the rats, this was literally an "act of God." For it was the Holy Inquisition which executed cats wholesale as "witches" and imps of Satan. We thought that we knew something about the crimes of Christianity, but we had never heard of that one! However, it sounds eminently probable.

During the French Revolution, the French Government encouraged a humanist cult in opposition to the Catholic Church, known as Theophilanthropy. One day, its political sponsor encountered the famous Talleyrand,

atheistic ex-bishop of Autun. "Citizen Talleyrand," exclaimed the harassed politician, "our new religion is making slow progress, what is to be done about it?" "Citizen Director," answered the great wit, "Christianity spread rapidly because Jesus Christ died for it: you had better go and imitate that blessed example."

The weather is too much even for the Vatican. Bread is unknown in the polar regions, where seals form the staple diet of the indigenous Eskimos. Hence, the Holy Father has made a concession; hereafter, Catholic Eskimos may alter the, to them, meaningless petition, "give us this day our daily bread," to "give us this day our daily seal." Who said that Christians were not materialists?

Following the ban on Sunday amusements in the fun fair at Battersea Park, the *Press and Journal* of Aberdeen reports a government ban on Sunday motor racing organised by the Aberdeen and District Motor Club at Crimond aerodrome. But why the preferential treatment for Battersea and Aberdeen in the Government's progressive Sabbatarian moves? What is good for Battersea and Aberdeen is good for the whole country and Sabbatarianism should be enforced all over Britain without any favour. If that does not fill the churches, then a substantial increase in the personal allowance under Income Tax for all Sunday churchgoers might be considered, the churches must be filled by hook or by crook.

It is on record that that pious evangelical Christian, the late Queen Victoria of blessed (and Mrs. Grundy-like) memory, once told the then Shah of Persia that the greatness of England rested on the Bible. To-day, however, our Labour Government and its most Christian plenipotentiary, Mr. Stokes, evidently think differently: to judge from their recent Parliamentary diatribes, it seems clear that Persian oil is at least equally necessary as a source of British greatness in the future—indeed, at present they seem much more concerned about it than about the Holy Book.

In a volume of clerical memoirs we came across the following pleasant anecdote. A clergyman visited Mr. Gladstone when that eminent statesman was in residence at Hawarden Castle. Mrs. Gladstone received her visitor in the drawing room and the reverend gentleman poured out a torrent of woe about the weather, the Irish, and other contemporary sources of trouble, ending with the pious comment "But, fortunately, dear Mrs. Gladstone, there is one above who knows all." "Oh, yes," replied Mrs. Gladstone, "he will be coming downstairs in about a quarter-of-an-hour"!

A correspondent to our contemporary, *The Birmingham Post*, must have been reading *The Freethinker*. "It is most unfair," he declares, "for the Roman Catholic denomination, which is wealthy enough, partially to build a school and then ask the State to finish it, but at the same time keep full control of that school, and also of the staff of teachers. No, the only possible way is for the State to build and to control all elementary, secondary, and higher schools, and leave all creeds and dogmas to the churches, Sunday Schools, and religious evening meetings." We are sometimes told that the N.S.S. is old-fashioned, and so we are! We have been saying all this since 1866.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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London, W.C. 1.
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TO CORRESPONDENTS

- R. TA'BOIS.—Sorry for mistakes. We do not know everything about astronomy—like God!
- A. D. CORRICK.—Thanks for good wishes—also for letter, which will appear. We quite agree that Hell is indispensable to religion—on the financial side in particular.
- IDE L.—Your articles will appear in due course—you must appreciate that our space is extremely limited.

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.

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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

Many readers of *The Freethinker* probably know the work of that versatile author, Charles Duff. Mr. Duff is widely known as an authority on the language and literature of the Iberian Peninsula and upon linguistic matters in general. In addition, his *Handbook On Hanging* is a gem of satire in the best tradition of Swift and Samuel Butler. Our author has now laid animal-lovers and, in particular, lovers of cats, under a fresh debt of gratitude with *Ordinary Cats*, which, as its title implies, is all about cats in general. In 116 pages, the reader is given a "Who's Who" of the feline world, adorned by twenty-five photographs of "Felix Domesticus" in a variety of charming postures. *Ordinary Cats* can be obtained from Messrs. Williams and Norgate, 36, Great Russell St., W.C. 1, at the price of 7s. 6d. Both cat fans and book lovers will, we think, find it a good bargain. Mr. Duff is a past—and, we hope, future contributor to this journal and readers of Messrs. Watt's "Thinkers' Library" will know his book, *This Human Nature*.

From the Annual Report of the New Zealand Rationalist Association we note with pleasure that its activities have been well maintained and supported by its members. The financial resources are slender, but that is the standard condition with organisations working for the entry of rational thought into religious beliefs. We send fraternal greetings to our New Zealand friends and wish them all they wish for their Association during the ensuing year.

Our oft repeated offer to send speakers to address outside organisations of the Freethought point of view is bearing good fruit. A number of invitations have been received at the Head Office, and also by branches. All have been accepted and we hope to announce further details as the day and time draws nearer. The offer is, of course, still open to other organisations.

The Freethinker Fund

Cheques and Postal Orders should be addressed to

THE FREETHINKER
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

WHY ACID DROPS?

MOST readers will, I think, have found the controversy initiated by Mr. P. C. King at least entertaining, whichever side they are on; but, of course, this is not the first time Acid Drops and Sugar Plums have been attacked. Indeed, it may be said that most of the features which distinguish *The Freethinker* have been the subject of—sometimes—bitter discussion, though not always in its columns.

Our title, *The Freethinker*, has been always hated by the most lovable of Christians, and it should be added, by many reverent Rationalists as well. Such a title admits of no compromise. You either have to be a Freethinker or not, and Freethought is intensely disliked by both religious believers and followers of totalitarian systems. Many quite respectable Rationalists and Agnostics, without religion themselves, would much prefer a title which would not put off those timid people who, beginning to see that Christianity was not true, yet feel that they could not subscribe to such an uncompromising "creed" as Freethought. It is a fact that many offers of considerable legacies and donations have been made if only we would re-name the paper with some less provocative title. But those behind *The Freethinker*, I am glad to say, never compromised. Our job was to make Freethinkers proud of being called so, not timid and just more or less unbelievers in religion. In any case, there is a world of difference between Freethought and mere anti-religion or anti-clericalism.

And so with "Acid Drops" and "Sugar Plums." It is my convinced opinion that these headings were a stroke of genius on the part of G. W. Foote. Anyone could have thought of "Notes and News" or "Passing Comments" or "Jottings by the Way." It required a little more than the commonplaces of most writers to think of such superb headings as "Acid Drops" and "Sugar Plums" however much the paragraphs themselves have fallen from the high standard intended by our first Editor—in the opinion of certain critics.

I think it was Burns who said something about critics deserving the hangman's whip—and whether we agree with this or not, it is a fact that there have always been critics objecting to something or other, particularly many without a scrap of humour who feel it a duty to attack humour—or so-called humour—for not being humorous enough or because they themselves disliked humour.

The *Pickwick Papers* is, in my opinion, the greatest of all humorous novels, perhaps the greatest work of its kind in any language. Did it escape the lash of our critics? Not a bit of it. I advise readers to get hold of F. G. Kitton's *Dickensiana* and they will read with more than amusement how Charles Dickens was attacked for his vulgarity, lack of humour and bad grammar. Yes, bad grammar! One critic was aghast at the famous chapter in *Martin Chuzzlewit* describing, so superbly,

Todger's boarding house—in fact, there have always been our Kings and our Englishes. I am not suggesting that "Acid Drops" ever rose to the heights of Pickwick for, after all, there has been only one Dickens; but in our own small way, these paragraphs have, for 70 years, week in and week out, dealt wittily with religious imbecilities, and if they have not always been packed with scintillating humour, satire, irony, and the other great qualities which nature dishes out to writers very sparsely—so what? They do what the writers intended—to comment, often rather "acidulated" on current religious propaganda. To write them necessitates wading through stacks of journals and cuttings and we are pleased to say, "Acid Drops" have always appealed to most of our readers.

One critic was good enough to refer to my own contributions as "elephantine" and I do not doubt for a moment that I often deserve it. One can only do one's best and for one adverse criticism such as this, I get a hundred in my favour. In any case, I cannot help wondering whether my "elephantine" humour is so described because I do not subscribe to my critic's economic ideals?

Another critic—a Mr. English—in a passage which, owing to lack of space was omitted from his letter, after bewailing the complete absence of humour, wit, satire and irony in "Acid Drops," pathetically pointed out that he *once* did send us two "Acid Drops," presumably packed with these superb qualities and we, at this end, poor boobies as we are, altered such gems of genius so drastically that he was almost unable to recognise them. I cannot remember this lamentable incident myself but what a pity that *The Freethinker* acted so outrageously. What a marvellous treat its readers have missed!

The truth is, naturally, that such a journal as *The Freethinker* is bound to offend some readers somewhere. Lots of them don't want any metaphysical subjects at all. Others get quite angry if the Shakespeare problem is hinted at. I have met readers who hate any discussion on the historicity of Jesus, while if I dare to criticise Socialism or Communism, there's the devil to pay. Attack the Churches, attack our priests, parsons and bishops—but, if you say one word against any pet economic theories (left), anything in favour of Franco or Toryism, God help you and your paper!

Personally, I think many of these subjects should be thrashed out in *The Freethinker* and this is one reason why I am glad this controversy on "Acid Drops" has taken place. It's all to the good to learn what readers like and want; and it's all to the good to find out if we are making Freethinkers, that is, people who can bear the calamity of other people differing from them with tolerance and good humour. If we are not doing this, we are not doing much; and I think "Acid Drops" and "Sugar Plums" help the good work. Selah!

H. CUTNER.

ASK AT YOUR LIBRARY

"THE LITTLE FELLOW"—The Life and Work of Charlie Chaplin. By Peter Cotes and Thelma Niklaus. (Published by Paul Elek, 14, Great James Street, London, W.C. 1, price 15s.)

AS a public entertainer, Charlie Chaplin certainly stands in a unique position. "The Little Fellow" has endeared himself to millions of people all over the world; not only by his priceless humour, but also by his deep humanity.

This man can make audiences forget all their worries, and bring tears into their eyes from laughter; and then

real tears of sympathy when he portrays the disappointments, the injustices and brutalities which the poor and defenceless have to suffer at the hands of the thousands of would-be Hitlers.

The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

Those of us who know and love Chaplin, the great artist, know very little of Chaplin, the man. We will know the real Chaplin much better when we have read this book.

We are taken, as it were, behind the scenes, and, without the funny garb of Chaplin, the artist, we meet Chaplin, the man. We realise, perhaps for the first time, how Charlie, who has made millions forget their sorrows, was himself a lonely and little-understood character.

This volume is not just a recital of his screen successes it is the history of the man who, working against tremendous odds, has again and again made his failures the stepping-stones to his success.

The authors are not alone lovers of Charlie's art, but word painters who have studied the mentality and reactions of Chaplin himself.

Charlie's early life in London, his desperate struggle against practically starvation, are well portrayed but free of mawkish sentiment. His arrival in U.S.A. and his introduction to the cinema world, and how his versatility and originality refused to accept the stereotyped "humour" served out by the cinema magnates are very graphic.

It has been said that Chaplin owed much to the cinema, which gave him the means of expressing his unusual gifts. No doubt this is true, but one must also realise that the cinema was his debtor for the new art that Chaplin introduced to the screen.

When eventually success, dazzling success, came his way, he did not lose his head at the admiration he everywhere received; and the reason he did not succumb was that he still retained, whether rich or poor, on or off the screen, his wonderful sense of humour.

Too often we see examples of men who have had success thrust upon them, fall by the wayside and cease to progress. Charlie never had success thrust upon him: he achieved it practically by his own unaided efforts, by his originality and by his refusal to give up the struggle even when the odds were hopelessly against him.

This is a book of which every page is interesting; full of facts which very few of us knew anything about. Most of us, if asked, would say that we know Charlie Chaplin; but we will know him a hundred times better when we have read this fascinating volume.

F. A. HORNIBROOK.

A ROMANCE OF TWO WORLDS

ONE fears that the recent series of articles by Mr. John Rowland may be regarded by many readers as merely expressing the personal ideas of the writer, and therefore possessing no living interest for the Rationalist Movement otherwise than as an individualist view. But in thus summarily dismissing them we risk overlooking their real importance. So far from representing a merely personal opinion, these articles give in a very clear way the latest phase of religious apology, and what a phase it is! Instead of the attempts in the past to give counter-evidence from history, or to claim that the religious position is not fairly put or is misrepresented, we get simply the claim that one's personal, subjective, emotional reaction is the standard by which everything is to be judged; for be it

observed the claim for the emotional standard is made not only in the case of religion, but also in art, in the broadest sense of that term, ethics, politics, and, one gathers, many things besides. It is true that science is brought in as favouring the view put forward, but no scientific discovery is quoted as being on the side of the angels and the gods, but simply the statement that scientists are to-day more favourable to religion than in the past.

This statement is neither new nor novel. Newton, Faraday, Brewster, etc., etc., were so claimed in their day, but let me remark in passing that the important thing is, not that Newton is said to have dabbled in magic and the Book of Daniel, but that his scientific discoveries were a turning point in the natural interpretation of the universe in opposition to the supernatural one that had preceded it. In like manner, Priestley's discovery of oxygen put an end to the false phlogiston theory, although Priestley clung to it to the last. All history is evidence that it is not the opinions of discoverers, whether scientific or other, that count, but the facts they have brought to light. There are, however, more fundamental matters in the new apologetics than the mere recapitulation of discredited claims. For fundamentally the question is far more serious and not in any sense merely academic, and that is Rowland's claim "that we live in two worlds." What this means is made abundantly clear a line or two lower down in his article. And let the following be clearly understood by such foggy thinkers who imagine that there can be any *rapprochement* between Rationalists and those who think that one can do some kind of good reforming social work without considering the rational basis on which anything of the kind must be founded to be successful.

JAMES H. MATSON.

(To be concluded)

CORRESPONDENCE

ACID DROPS? SUGAR PLUMS?

SIR,—“What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”—Yours, etc.,

BAYARD SIMMONS.

IS THERE A HELL?

SIR,—A correspondent of “The Observer” has made the incorrect statement that “No Catholic priest dare assert that anyone is actually burning in hell-fire, far less that anyone will so burn.” I ventured to write to the Editor of that Sunday paper pointing out that the existence of hell and its residents was an integral part of Christianity, despite the attempts of some clergy and laymen to minimise the warmth of hell. My letter has not been printed, and I have assumed that the facts I gave were too frank for that journal.

I mentioned that there is on sale in Roman Catholic churches a booklet entitled “The Fact of Hell” by Walter Jewell. Mr. Jewell writes—“The Catholic believes it because the teaching of Christ our Lord on the subject leaves no room for doubt. He made use of the words ‘fire’ and ‘everlasting,’ thus giving us the essential doctrine in a single phrase.”

Also I gave an extract from another R.C. booklet called “The Sight of Hell,” written by the Rev. J. Furniss, and this again may have been too strong for “Observer” readers:

“Luke 16—It came to pass that the rich man also died, and he was buried in the fire of hell.” Mr. Furniss comments: “Think of a coffin not made of wood, but of fire, solid fire! And now come into this other room. You see a pit, a deep, almost bottomless pit. Look down it and you will see something red-hot and burning. It is a coffin, a red-hot coffin of fire. A certain man is lying fastened in the inside of that coffin of fire. You might burst open a coffin made of iron; but that coffin made of solid fire never can be burst open. There that man lies and will lie for ever in the fiery coffin.”

“Matthew 25—These shall go into everlasting punishment.” Mr. Furniss writes—“There is one thing which could change Hell into Heaven. An angel of God comes to the gates of Hell and says, ‘Listen to me, all ye people in Hell, for I bring you good

news. You will still burn in Hell for almost countless millions of years. But a day will come, and on that day the pains of Hell will be no more! You will go out of Hell.’ If such a message came, Hell would no longer be Hell. Hell would no longer be a house of blasphemy, but a house of prayer and thanksgiving and joy. But such a message will never come to Hell, because God has said that the punishment of Hell shall be everlasting.”—Yours, etc.,

ALFRED D. CORRICK.

OBITUARY

JOHN GREARSON LUPTON

Readers of *The Freethinker*, particularly in the North London area, will learn with sorrow of the death of John Grearson Lupton, at the early age of 54. As a member of the North London Branch, N.S.S., he was one of its most active workers. His quiet enthusiasm, energy, and sterling character soon marked him out as a valuable asset to the branch and his loss will be keenly felt. He served on the Executive of the National Secular Society until increasing ill-health compelled him to resign in 1949, much to the regret of his colleagues who had learned to appreciate his judgment, personality, and integrity. As a contributor to the columns of *The Freethinker* his articles were informative, clear and welcomed. When the state of his health forced him to give up the more robust of his activities, he continued to serve the movement with his pen right to the end which came on August 17. As a speaker he rapidly developed into a very useful addition to the platform staff of the Society until once more ill-health intervened. Our sincere sympathy goes out to his widow and family; they have suffered a grievous loss, and the North London Branch N.S.S. and Freethought Movement have lost a valiant soldier, a loyal comrade, and a faithful friend.

The cremation took place at Golders Green Crematorium on August 22 where before an assembly of relatives, members of the N.S.S. Executive, North London Branch N.S.S. and friends, a Secular Service was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti. R. H. R.

ALEXANDER KIRKWOOD

Glasgow and the West of Scotland Freethinkers will read with regret of the death of Alexander Kirkwood, who died on August 16. For nearly half a century he was active in the Freethought Movement, having joined the Glasgow Secular Society in 1903. A keen Educationalist, he devoted much of his time to instructing young people in the principles of Freethinking.

Our sympathy goes out to his widow (Edith), who nursed him devotedly through his long illness.

A Secular service according to his desires was conducted at the Crematorium by the undersigned.

R. M. HAMILTON.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

OUTDOOR

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

J. CLAYTON's Lecture Engagements: Worsthorne, Friday, August 31, 7-30 p.m.; Enfield, Saturday, September 1, 6 p.m.; Blackburn Market, Sunday, September 2, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Hapton, Tuesday, September 4, 7-30 p.m.

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 and W. G. FRASER. Sunday Evening, 7-30 p.m. (Highbury Corner): F. A. RIDLEY. Friday Evening, August 31, 8 p.m. (South Hill Park): F. A. RIDLEY and J. M. ALEXANDER.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Saturday, September 1, 7 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY and A. ELSMERE.

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

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

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

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS IS A DELUSION

IN the article which appeared in the July 1, 1951, issue of *The Freethinker*, I quoted a review that had been published in the monthly journal *Psychology*. When I referred to this review as being "probably the most concise and unambiguous statement of the psycho-analytic position that has even been written" I little dreamt that its author would be prepared to stand by it without any further qualifications. It is certainly refreshing to find an advocate of psycho-analysis with the courage of his convictions. But I must still insist that, however honestly these convictions may be held, they are founded on a delusion. What authority have the psycho-analysts for stating that adverse criticism is a confirmation of their theories? None whatever, except the bare, unsupported statement of their arch-priest, Sigmund Freud, who contents himself with the contemptuous assertion that the unbeliever is not qualified to criticise.

If Mr. Dudley really believes that adverse criticism is a confirmation of psycho-analytic theories, and that the unbeliever is not qualified to criticise, I cannot understand why he should trouble to argue with me at all unless it is to obtain further, much-needed, confirmation of the truth of psycho-analytic theory from the criticisms which I am supposed not to be qualified to make. A strange science this, which depends as much on what people say against it as on what they say for it! Here am I writing, as I imagine, against psycho-analysis, while according to the psycho-analysts, I am all the time confirming it by my opposition. If the psycho-analysts really believed this they would not have banned my book from their lists of publications.

I am pleased to note that Mr. Dudley agrees with my statement that "the postulate of a distinct entity called the 'mind' or 'psyche' is the very foundation stone of all psycho-analytic teaching." Although all psycho-analysts make full use of this postulate in their works and practice, they are, almost to a man, chary of admitting it in discussion. I regard it as no small triumph, therefore, to have gained this admission from Mr. Dudley. If the postulate of a distinct spiritual entity is essential to all psycho-analytic teaching then the fight against psycho-analysis is practically won. For, in the work that has given rise to this discussion I have shown, over and over again, that there is not a single phenomenon which psycho-analysis pretends to explain by the postulate of an immaterial "mind" which cannot be better explained by reference to material factors alone. If the phenomena can be explained by such means there is no excuse whatever for the postulate of a distinct immaterial entity and the elaborate doctrine of hocus-pocus that has been built upon it.

We next come to Mr. Dudley's statement that "psycho-analysis are the result of making conscious previously by asserting that their criticisms are determined by subjective motives of which they are unaware." But where is the warrant for such an assertion? Neither Mr. Dudley nor any other psycho-analyst can produce it. When I ask: "If such criticisms are determined by subjective motives, by what motives are the theories of psycho-analysis determined?" Mr. Dudley replies that the theories of psycho-analysis are the result of making conscious, previously repressed material in persons who have submitted themselves to analysis. "The psycho-analyst," he says: "is thus in better case than his opponent, for his theories are based on unconscious material that has been made conscious, whereas the arguments of his hostile critic are rationalisations of material that in him is still unconscious."

Even a psycho-analyst ought to know that not only his own theories, but the theories of his critics, are based on unconscious material that has been made conscious. Only a fraction of our knowledge occupies the field of consciousness at any one moment. The bulk of it lies in subconscious depths from which it is drawn as occasion requires. All the psycho-analyst can claim in this respect is that, by his methods, he can probe deeper and bring into consciousness material that cannot be reached by any other means. Even assuming this to be true, what value can we attach to it? When we consider that the buried complex he seeks to bring to light is supposed to have originated in early childhood, and that it is necessary for the patient to carry his thoughts back to that early period, it is not difficult to realise that a phantasy of imagination, suggested by the psycho-analyst, may often be mistaken for an actual restoration. By a process of rationalisation of a different kind to that which the psycho-analyst deplors in his critic the patient may be induced to believe anything that can be made to fit in with the phantasies of the psycho-analysers.

Mr. Dudley goes on to deal with my assertion that psycho-analysis equates "normal" human conduct with that of the child, the savage, and the neurotic. In doing so he makes use of the deplorable doctrine, a favourite among psycho-analysts, that there is no such thing as a "normal" human being. So-called normal people, we are told, differ only in degree from those who are recognised as "abnormal." Admitted we have all our individual habits, whims, and peculiarities, and there is no such *thing* as a "standard" human being. A standard human being is a pure abstraction, as when we speak of a tree, a house, a ship, etc., in the abstract, without referring to any one particular tree, house, or ship. But when we speak of a normal human being, what is it that we really mean? We mean a person upon whom we can more or less rely to keep his engagements; to perform his duties; make provision for the future; in short, to behave as his "normal" neighbours expect him to behave. No matter what the psycho-analyst may say, we cannot equate such with a child, a savage, a neurotic, or any other irresponsible being. All that the arguments of the psycho-analysts amount to in this respect is that we are all more or less irresponsible—abject victims of the modernised demons that lurk in the murky depths of our unconscious minds.

There are many other points in Mr. Dudley's article with which I should like to deal, did space permit. But I think enough has now been written to prove that psycho-analysis is a delusion; that it is built on fiction and not on fact; that it has no scientific background whatever; that, by its equation of normal human conduct with that of the child, the savage, and the neurotic, and its insistence on the innate corruptness of human nature, it is a disruptive force and a menace to the morals, health and stability of the community at large. Mr. Dudley has himself admitted, without reserve, my main contention that psycho-analysis is founded on the postulate of an immaterial entity—a mythical "mind." When I object that psycho-analysis seeks to invalidate rational thought all Mr. Dudley can say is that "this is not entirely true." But if it is only partially true my objection stands. If the psycho-analyst is entitled to regard my opposition as confirmation of his theories then I claim to be equally entitled to regard his opposition as confirmation of mine. If he affirms that my opposition is due to a buried complex my retort is that his opposition may possibly be due to one far more serious which would require something more than the art of the psycho-analyst to bring to light.

FRANK KENYON.