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REASON

THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION
OF
INDIA.

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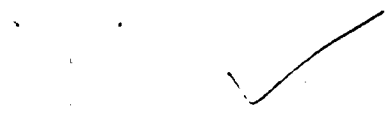
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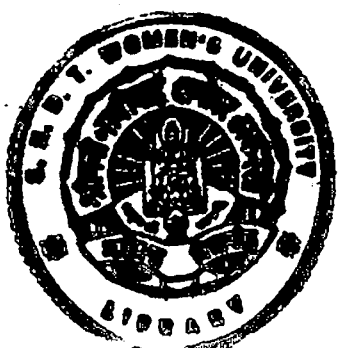
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REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

Vol. III : No. 1 Monthly ; February 1934 Ann. Sub. Rs. 3. Single Copy As. 4.

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

PROSECUTION AGAINST THE EDITOR

"IMPORTANT ISSUE INVOLVED IN "REASON" CASE."

Charge Framed Against Dr. D'Avoine.

Crown Prosecutor says it will be easy to prove Case against Editor of "Reason."—"*Sentinel.*"

On the 6th of December, Inspector Lyons and another officer of the C. I. D. visited the Kamat Printing Press and seized copies of "Reason" and some proofs Later they went to the Secretary's office and "requested" for all the available copies of the September issue of "Reason" which were given to them.

They made inquiries about the membership, about the no. of copies of "Reason" printed and circulated and the funds of the Association. All their inquiries were met. The Editor had just that afternoon left Bombay for a short holiday, but the got the news as he was boarding he train. A few days after his return, he was arrested on a warrant as a case was filed against him under Section 295-A, I. P. C. The section reads as follows :—

Sec. 295-A, I. P. C.

Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of His Majesty's subjects, by words either spoken or written, or by visible representation, insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious feelings of that class shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or fine or with both.

The charge is based on certain passages on Page 3 and 7 in the September issue of "Reason."

Dr. D'Avoine was bailed out, and the case was posted by the Chief Magistrate for the 18th. On the 18th "A charge of having deliberately and with malicious intent outraged the religious feelings of the Catholics and Muslims by insulting their religion or religious belief by the publication of an article under the caption "Religion and Morality" in the issue of "Reason" of september 1933, was framed against Dr. Charles Lionel D'Avoine, by the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, on Thursday.

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine pleaded not guilty to the charge and further hearing of the case was adjourned to January 31.

Organ of Rationalism

Mr. Eastley, appearing for the prosecution said that the accused was the Editor and Publisher of "Reason" which was the official organ of the Rationalist Association. The membership of the Association which was daily increasing, wast at present 262. The Association was started in 1930 as the Anti-Priestcraft Association and in 1931 the name was changed to the present one.

Among the objects of the Association, counsel raid, one of them was "to combat all religious beliefs that did not stand the test of reason" and the magazine was the means through which propaganda was carried on. The monthly circulation of the magazine was 500 copies. These were printed at the Kamat Printing Press. An order for Government under Section 196 of the Civil Procedure Code, sanctioning the prosecution of the accused had been obtained, as the passages read out, by Counsel, were a direct hit at Christianity and Islam and tended to outrage the religious feelings or beliefs of the Catholics and Muslims.

Magistrate's Comment

The Magistrate referring to the second article remarked: "It says about Muslims but nothing about Islam." He added he could not see how a Muslim could get offended. The same might be said about the Parsis also.

Mr. Eastley said any Muslims reading the article would take a very strong exception to the statement that he was more particular about washing his fingers and toes and assuming the correct posture than committing an offence. It was a writing which would outrage the Muslim's feelings.

The prosecution had to prove, that the feelings of the Catholics and the Muslims had been offended by the publication of this article and counsel stated that this was an easy matter.

Inspector's Evidence

Inspector Lyons, C.I.D., then stepped into the witness-box and deposed to the facts of the case. He said that on December 5 last, he received the order from the Bombay Government sanctiong the prosecution of the accused. He went to the Kamat Printing Press and attached the copies of "Reason" that had been printed by the Press and took charge of the several manuscripts of articles that were to be published.

He then went to the office of the Rationalist Association at Empire Building and saw Dr. Coelho, the Secretary of the Association. Witness was shown the register of membership which showed that the number of members on the roll was 262. He gathered that 500 copies of the "Reason" had been published in November 1933 and every one of those copies had been circulated.

Witness was a Catholic but not a Roman Catholic. Questioned about the articles witness said, he objected to the two articles. As a Catholic reading the articles he would consider that his religious feelings were outraged.

Warned in 1932

Witness said that the accused had been warned by the Commissioner of Police in August 1932 to refrain from publishing articles which tended to outrage the religious feelings of the communities.

Cross-examination of the witness was reserved.

Mr. S. S. Kamat, proprietor of the Kamat Printing Press, said that he was the printer of the magazine "Reason." He printed about 500 copies. The press had been working for about one and half years.

The Magistrate then framed a charge under Section 295-A I.P.C. against the accused, to which the accused pleaded not guilty.

Further hearing was then adjourned.

Mr. Eastley of Messrs. Little and Co. appeared for the Crown. Mr. F. S. Talyerkhan, Bar-at-Law, with Mr. C. N. Kanuga defended Dr. C. L. D'Avoine.'

(—*Sentinel.*)

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS.

The Mahomedans are observing this month as a season of fasting; with the next new moon it will be over and the Id—Fitir festival will be celebrated. During the whole month of Ramzan the more orthodox Mahomedans will not eat, drink nor even smoke from sunrise till sunset. During the night, however, he can eat and drink as he likes. This sudden reversal of the daily habits must be very harmful to the digestive system. Those who defend this religious practice assure us that it is not; on the contrary, they claim that they not only derive great spiritual benefit from it, but their health also benefits by it. Here, in India, the fast is not strictly observed. In Arabia and also in Persia they are still

very particular on the question. An Arab who may be found breaking the rule publicly may be seriously dealt with. It is evident that in those countries one is still not allowed to believe as one likes; one must conform to the herd. This reminds one that the Inquisitors of Spain also did not allow liberty of thought and freedom of conscience. One had to believe as the priests ordered. The penalty for disobeying that priestly tyranny was torture, imprisonment, confiscation of properties and very often death. The great victims of that awful tyranny were the Jews.

* * *

The idea of fasting as a meritorious act, which is believed to be very pleasing to the Deity, is a purely Oriental one. It is clear that the Mahomedans and the Christians derived it from the Jews who in turn learnt it from the Egyptians and Babylonians. The Hindus are firm believers in it, and they make it a *sine quanon* condition for the proper celebration of most of the Id festivals. The Christians were very strict about it two or three hundred years ago. The Lenten Season, which lasts about forty days, must have been for people who lived in those days, a very trying time. No meat was allowed but fish was permitted. Noseyparkers were abroad; few dared break the rule which was then a serious offence. Those who could not observe the fast had to get dispensation from the Pope—on payment of course. In England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was a penal crime to eat meat during Lent and also on Fridays. The belief in fasting is happily dying out in Christendom. In benighted Christian countries old women and hysterical girls are still great sticklers to this religious custom. The belief in fasting as a religious act must have originated from a central point, probably Egypt, as Prof. Elliot Smith and others think, and along with other religious ideas and practices disseminated far and wide along trade routes. It was probably due to the peculiar belief that the gods like men do penance and were not very pleased when men enjoyed themselves too much. It would appear, according to ancient beliefs, that the gods were always jealous of man's happiness and nothing pleased them so much as to see him move about with a long and sad face—thinking of the grave instead of making the best of this world.

* * *

Fasting is not, of course, the only act of self-sacrifice that man has done to please the gods. He has sacrified every thing dear to him to attain this end. He has immolated his own children, destroyed himself and his fellow-men, tortured his body, covered himself with vermine, undergone unspeakable tortures and inflicted on others untold miseries in the belief that by doing so his gods are immensely pleased. Human sacrifice was a common practice in barbarous lands and the Jews, themselves, who boasted that their religion alone was inspired by the true God practised human sacrifice. It was quite a natural thing for Abraham to be commanded by Jehovah to kill his son Isaac !

* * *

While primitive peoples used to kill their fellow-men by thousands as sacrifices, modern people have replaced human beings by animals. Now-a-days sheep, goats, cows and cocks are the poor victims of this peculiar aberration of the human mind. There is still a deep-rooted belief among millions that flesh and blood

are very acceptable to the Deity. It is the duty of every Rationalist to discourage this belief and to point out its revolting and cruel nature. It is remarkable that the only religion which long ago recognized this was Buddhism. The Christians, it is true, have also discoverded this, though the Roman Catholics believe that in the act of saying mass, the priest offers the body and blood of Christ as a supreme sacrifice to God, the Father, who had willed the death of his only son to redeem mankind from sin alleged to have been committed by the first parents of mankind!

* * *

Every now and then people in Europe decry against the superstitions that are still prevailing in the West. In some countries the masses in this respect are still living in the Middle Ages. In more advanced countries like France, England and Germany there is still a number of meaningless superstitions that are believed. Thus, one may not eat thirteen at table, one may not occupy a room No. 13 in a hotel. Salt may not be spilt, looking glass may not be broken and forks may not be thrown down. Mascots and amulets are very potent to avoid ill luck or to get luck. The possession of certain stores is a very lucky thing and torquise is such a stone; keeping pigeons brings calamity, howling dogs at night announce death and the curse of a priest brings malediction. They also believe that touching a blackman before going to the races is sure to bring luck. While in England some years ago the present writer was accompanied by a very dark Indian when he went to the New market races. Both of them were greatly surprised that every now and then a person would rush and touch his companion. This was done without the slightest desire or intention of wounding the latter's feelings but as a real belief that touching him would bring luck to the person who did so when he would bet on horses. If a person on his way to the races accidentally comes across a discarded horse-shoe that would be treasured as a lucky find and would be displayed in a conspicuous part of his house.

* * *

Speaking of amulets, luck and ill luck reminds the writer of what he saw in a nursing home the other day when the little son of a lady doctor—a holder of university degrees—was to be operated for a throat complaint. The child was loaded with sacred medals, scapulars, garrotted with holy tapes and cords, while holy pictures of male and female saints were pinned all over the little bed and bundle of the same put under the little pillow. The little patient was fed with bonbons confectioned with the water of Lourdes just before the operation and holy water sprinkled over the operating table to the disgust of the surgeon.

It was really pathetic and disgusting to see a person who passes for an educated person doing such things. In this respect she and her ayah are of the same mentality and one wonders that education has not succeeded in improving her childish belief. There is no doubt that it will take many many years before such people are really enlightened and abandon the superstitions that their priests and nuns have taught them. These people pride themselves on their great faith in religion!

* * *

THE MYTH OF CREATION.

There are two theories which explain the existence of living things on Earth. One is the scientific theory that all living things were evolved from simple organisms to the more complex, the other is the religious one that all creatures were suddenly created by a divine being. In this article I do not propose to discuss the scientific theory which is that of evolution with which most rationalists are more or less acquainted. As the untenable religious theory is still believed by millions of people, it is necessary to trace how this belief came into existence. All primitive people have their own theory of creation. The most widespread, however. is the Biblical story which is shared by the Jews, the Christians and the Mahomedans, for the simple reason that they all derive it from the same source, namely an old Babylonion myth which was believed thousands of years before the Hebrew wrote their Bible.

A careful study of the Bible makes it clear that when that book was compiled there were two versions of the story of creation in Asia Minor. The book of Genesis, in which these stories are found, gives the two versions in a manner which makes it clear that two different writers wrote them. Biblical scholars call these two versions the Elohistic and the Jehovistic account respectively. The first or Elohistic account commences with the first chapter of Genesis and ends with the third verse of the second chapter. The second or Jehovistic version of creation begins with the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis and extends through the twenty-fourth verse of the third chapter. These names have been given to these two versions because in one the word Elohim is used in referring to the Supreme Being and in the other Jehovah. Elohim which is a Hebrew word as is also Jehovah, translated literally means "The Gods". In the present Bible this has been rendered as "God". Jehovah translated literally means "The God of Gods"; in the present Bible it has been translated as "The Lord God". The differences between the Elohistic and Jehovistic accounts of the beginning of the earth, of plant and animal life, and of the human race, are concisely tabulated in the appended summary by a very distinguished theologian of the Anglican Church, Bishop John William Colenso (Colenso, who about sixty years ago was the Bishop of Natal, was shamelessly prosecuted on account of his masterly criticism of the Bible).

The following are two most noticeable points of difference between these two versions.

1. In the first, the earth emerges from the water and is, therefore, *saturated with moisture.* In the second "the Whole face of the ground" *required to be moistured.*

2. In the first, the birds and the beasts are created *before man.* In the second, *man is required before the birds and the beasts.*

3. In the first, "all fowls that fly" are made out of the *waters.* In the second "the fowls of the air" are made out of the *ground.*

4. In the first, man is created in the image of God. In the second, man is made of the dust of the ground, and

merely animated with the breath of life; and it is only after eating the forbidden fruit that "The Lord God said: Behold, the man has become *as one of us*, to know good and evil."

5. In the first, man is made Lord of the *whole earth*. In the second, he is merely placed in the garden of Eden, "to dress it and to keep it."

6, In the first, the man and woman are *created together*, as the closing and completing work of the whole creation—created also, as is evidently implied, in the same kind of way, to be the compliment of one another, and, thus created, they are blessed *together*. In the second, the beast and birds are created *between* the man and the woman. First the man is made of the dust of the ground; he is placed by *himself* in the garden, charged with a solemn command, and threatened with a curse if he breaks it; *then the beasts and birds are made*, and the man gives names to them; and lastly after all this, *the woman in made out of his ribs*, but merely as a helpmate for the man.

Contrary to popular opinion there is nothing original or unique about these Hebraic Eden Myths. Similar myths and legends were told all over the world centuries before there was any sacred literature among the Hebrews. They were known in Chaldea, Phœnicia, Babylon, India, Persia, China, Egypt and Mexico. It is well known now that the Hebrews first came in contact with these stories when the Israelites were conquered and enslaved by Sargon II, King of Assyria (722—705 B.C.) Prof. George Smith of the Department of Antiquity, the British Museum, discovered Assyrian terra cotta tablets in Mesopotamia during the years of 1873—74, dating as far back as from 1500 to 2000 B. C, which give not only the story of the Creation and Fall of Man, but a narrative of the Deluge and of the Tower of Babel as well. *The New York Truth Seeker*, April 1932, tells us that a recent find of Dr. Edward Chiera, assistant professor of Assyriology in the University of Pennsylvania, throws new light on the Babylonian origin of certain legends of the Hebrews. (As may be expected most Christian priests, especially Roman Catholics, deny that the Hebrews copied these myths from the Babylonians; they can offer no proof for their opinion except their conviction that it cannot be so.) Dr. Chiera's discovery is a tablet written in the Sumerian language. The inscriptions were carved on the clay tablet somewhere from 2100 to 2500 B.C. This tablet is thought to be merely a copy of a much older original, which in all probability dates back to around 4000 B. C. In the original Babylonian Eden Myth there is the story of a great conflict among the gods. They cannot decide whether man ought to be created or not. A "wise" reptile, the age-old dragon, Taimat opposed the creation of the human race. The dragon fought against the great god Bel. Finally the God overcame the dragon by hurling a thunder bolt upon him. Opposition having been crushed, man was created. This conflict between Bel and the dragon bears a close analogy to the story of the revolution in heaven recorded in the Apocalypse:

"And there was a war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought against his angels.

"And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and

Satan, which devideth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out of him" (Revelation xii, 7—9)

This warfare in the Heavenly Kingdom, with God and his angels on one side and the devil and his angels on the other, was the central theme of the old Persian religion. The Greeks and Romans also believed that there were frequent encounters between the gods; the Egyptians believed that and so did the Mexicans. The fight between the powers of Light and Darkness also forms the central theme of the Zoroastrian religion. Zoraster denominated the Power of Light as Ormuzd and that of darkness as Ahriman. The essence of Christian religion is regarding this fabulous warfare: Satan trying to outwit God and his determination to ruin Man, hence the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to redeem man and to protect him from the snares of that mighty devil. It is futile to speculate how man came by these grotesque beliefs. The phenomena of day and night, summer and winter, of good and evil may very well have inspired these ideas. As regards the originality of this belief in some form or other, Professor Elliot Smith is of opinion that it originated in Egypt thousands of years before Christ and that it spread along trade routes and other communications to the farthest end of the world. This would explain how it spread to America long periods before that continent became separated from Asia.

Others have tried to explain that such ideas could have originated independently, as it is contended that the mind of man at the same level of evolution must work in the same groove. If one were to believe certain pundits well versed in the Vedantic literature, it would appear tha the Hindus were more advanced in their conception of the origin of the world and living beings. There is a Brahaman scholar in Poona who has actually published a booklet purporting to show that there are clear passages in the Rig Veda which show that our Earth and its inhabitants came into existence as modern science now teaches.

In a recent article on the antiquity of man, the "Statesman" of Calcutta says that most Christians do not like to be told that man was not created in the Garden of Eden some thousand of years ago, though there are overwhelming proofs that he has existed on Earth for hundreds of thousand years and that the cradle of humanity, as Darwin predicted, is most probably Africa. This, no doubt, is a naive remark. Though some Christian clergymen profess to accept the scientific theory of the origin of man and his antiquity on earth, contrary to Biblical teaching, there is no doubt that a general and candid acceptance of this fact would mean the end of Christianism as a supernatural religion. Consider for a moment the logical sequence of this acceptance. The story of the Fall of Man must be given up and with it the cardinal dogma of Christianity, namely the dogma of the Atonement and Redemption without which Christianity is absolutely meaningless. Small wonder that the more primitive creeds refuse to accept the scientific theory. Such creeds like the Fundamentalists of America prevent the teaching of Evolution because they rightly believe that to accept this means the end of the Bible which they worship as the word of God without which this religion becomes a sham. The Roman Catholics

profess that their Church leaves it an open question and has not yet pronounced one way or other about it. All the same, every true Roman Catholic priest is contemptuous of the scientific theory and holds to the Biblical account. According to some Catholic priests, themselves, they ridicule the idea in their seminaries and their whole teaching is about the truth of the Fall of Man, his redemption by Christ and the final over-throw of the Devil on the day of Judgment.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

RATIONALISM AND THE BHAGAVAD-GITA.*

VII. The Collectivised Vision.

The exaltation of the individual is liable to be carried often too far. Humanists declare that whilst a sinful wretch breathes, or a single harlot carries on her trade, no saint could ever be made. Economists seek to replace competitive capitalism by an equitable distribution of the earth's resources among the needy, taking from each individual, the best that he can contribute to the common pool. It is claimed that the process of collectivisation will release labour from the trammels and distractions of bread-winning care and place its perspective on a higher, nobler footing than the mere factory-hand. The moral and material enfranchisement of every living human may not be within practical politics, but as the ideal to strive after, none else scarcely may displace it in importance. To work for the love of it is certainly to be preferred to work for wages, not to mention injurious acts committed through delusion.

Niyatam sangarahita maraga dveshatah kritam
Aphalaprepsuna karma yattat satvika muchyate
(Gita, XVIII, 23)

(Work which is natural, not related to its reward, done neither through love nor hate, without expectation of wages, that is pure, the best.)

This is the recognition that genius is not made to order. Real merit does not court wages. The best in humanity has always been produced spontaneously, while the capitalist genius of our time chimes with the two lower forms of the Rajasic, and Tamasic effort.

Yattu kamepsuna karma sahankarena va punah
Kriyate bahulayasam tadrajasa mudahrutam
(XVIII, 24)

(Labour spent on achieving desired ends, or again through egoism, under sweating conditions, it is passionate effort.)

We are reminded of the war-time frenzies for peace-time production that grind out year-plans in less than their time. But passionate production is no sin. The collossal race in armaments among other nations carry the hall-mark of darkness.

Anubandham kshayam himsam anapekshyacha paurusham
Mohadarabhyate karma yattattamasa muchyate
(XVIII, 25)

* The series consists of articles in issues of December 1933, page 12.

(Acts undertaken through delusion, irrespective of death and injury capacity or consequence, they originate from the dark force.)

Armageddon is certainly Tamasic, and not less. And the secret of its force lay in an overstressed individualistic conception of human economics. On the one hand the tragedy of European Politics that based its structure on capitalism and exclusive nationalism presents the ugly features of crumbling material individualisation, while on the other, an overstressed importance placed on spiritual renunciation has made the land of the Brahmins, the stage for naked Sadhus and fakirs, the idols of idealist individualisation. Dance single however much one may, one's foot needs must rest on another's heel. Our life depends, and in a large measure our well-being is knitted to most others. We can afford to fancy that we are happy, while those around us are suffering through misery and want. But that is a delusion caused by the fallacious process of abstracting away reality from life. We may turn away our face in disgust, or pretend to forget, but the evil is there, acting on us as on every other about us. The doubt that beset Arjuna is kindly.

Tasmannarha vayam hantum Dhartarashtran swabandhavan
Swajanam hi kadham hatva sukhinah syama Madhava
(Gita I 37.)

(We should not kill the sons of Dhritarashtra, our kindred. For, how killing them may we be happy? O, Madhava?)

But nature is bigger than man. It never cares so much for the particular affections, as for the universal. It saves the species, but is in no way soft towards the individual. It is immeasurable and unconcerned, (aprameyam, Gita, XI. 17) and calls upon man to follow its lead unmindful of his special relations.

Matkarmakrun matparamo madbhaktas sangavarjitah
Nirvairas sarvabhuteshu yah samameti Pandava
(Gita, XI, 55.)

(He who acts for me, who takes my lead, devoted to me, having abandoned all his ties of kinship and friendship, and bearing no ill-will to any being, he reaches me, O, Pandava).

And Krishna is not always piping the tune of peace, laying aside the flute, he can blow the conch, Panchajanyam. (Gita, I, 15) in war.

Kalosmi lokakshaya kritpravriddhe
Lokan samaharttu miha pravrittah
Ritepi tvan na bhavishyanti sarve
Yevasthitah pratyanekeshu yodhah
(Gita, XI 32.)

(I am time resolved on destruction, and shall slay mankind. None of the fighters on either side shall survive, excepting you.)

It is written in the system of warfare, of rivalry on the battlefield (Rane sapatnan, XI, 34) as well in economic competition, that mighty forces like Drona, Bhishma, Karna, Jayadradha stand already overcome by time which pursues them to their logical end.

Mayaivaite nihatah purva meva,
Nimitta matram bhava savya sachin
(XI, 33)

(I have already sealed their fate, left-handed, you are to become but the apparent cause.)

This is but left-handed compliment to Arjuna's skill in archery. But who that has seen the majesty of the universe

yet clings to paltry events in battle and in life's struggles?

Ihaikastham jagatkrutsnam pasyadya
sa characharam
Mama dehe Gudakesa yecchaya
drishtu michehasi (XI, 7)

(Here and now, behold the universe, moving and unmoving, lying in my body, O Gudakesha, and aught else of events thou desirest to see.)

And in that infinitude of the macrocosm, where is man, the race?

Nantam namadhyam napunastavadim
pasyami.....(XI 16)

(I do not see the beginning, the middle or the end.) Nature is such a stupendous incomprehensible, that we cannot localise any event in relation to the totality of its course, even as being its middle state.

Rupam mahatte bahu vaktra netram,
maha baho bahu bahooru padam
Bahoodaram bahu danshtra karalam,
drishtva lokah pravyadhitah
tadaham ... (Gita, XI, 23)

(The mighy form, having many mouths and eyes, mighty arms, many shoulders, thighs and feet, and stomach, and fearful teeth, people see terror-struck, and so am I.)

Is this the rise of the proletariat, the mass upheaval that eliminates the individual? Mouths to feed, stomachs to fill, teeth that tear, feet that accomplish triumphal marches, and arms that subdue all contrary events. Whither do the sons of Dhritarashtra, and the multitude of the kings, Bhishma, Drona, and noblest warriors, enter? (XI, 26) "Vaktrani te tvaramana visanti" (into thy gaping mouths they rush, precipitately, XI, 27.)

Yadha nadinam bahavombu vegas
samudra mevabhimukha dravanti
Tatha tavami naraloka vira visanti
vaktranyabhi vijvalanti (XI, 28)

(As rivers flow towards the sea, rushing impetuously, these warriors, kings of the earth, fling themselves in thy flaming mouths.)

Yadha pradiptam jvalanam patangah,
visanti nasaya samriddha vegah
Tataiva nasaya visanti lokas tavapi
vaktrani samridhavegah (XI, 29)

(As moths fly to destruction in the flaming light, with quickened speed, these people are entering thy mouths to meet their end.)

The League of Nations may temporarily spread a holy shroud on the terrific aspects of human life. The Kellogg Pact may note the pious wish to replace arms by arbitration. Disarmament Conferences may hold the world's destinies in political balances. But the awkward fact remains that the Viswa-rupa, the collective man, is hungry beyond further endurance. An intimate knowledge of the world-conditions, and not attachment to national affinities and party-doctorship can soften the distracted humanity. Social science is larger than individual emancipation, party politics, or national economy. It is given to few (divyam dadami te chakshuh, XI, 8) to penetrate into the depths of entire life.

VIII. Freedom, the ethical basis.

The overpowering personality of the leader is liable to be mistaken to have swallowed the liberties of action of those that follow the lead. By the injunction "sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja" (abandoning all considerations of duty or Dharma, seek shelter under me alone, XVIII, 66) it would appear that moral responsibility may be evaded, by the devotee blindly following the preceptor. And the argument comes handy for the latter that this world is a fleeting joyless one. "Anityam asukham

loka mimam prapya bhajaswaman" (This world is impermanent and devoid of pleasure, and having been born here, worship thou Me, Gita, IX, 33). To instil unquestioning faith, none is so potent a factor as the method of distracting attention from the things of the world.

Manmana bhava madbhakto madyaji mam namaskuru
Mamevaishyasi yuktvaiva matmanam matparayanah
(IX, 34)

(Fix thy mind on me, be devoted to me, worship me, and prostrate thyself in front of me. Thus harmonised in me shalt thou enter me alone)

The identical language is repeated in sloka XVIII, 65, with the emphatic assurance "satyante pratijane priyosi me" (I pledge my troth, thy art dear.) All oaths are meant to create confidence. Theology swears when trust in its authority is sought. It also can bully.

"Adhachettva mahankaran na sroshyasi vinankshyasi" (if through egoism thou wilt not listen, destruction awaits, XVIII, 58). If inducement of the highest bliss is not enough, it can even assert that man has no choice in the matter at all.

Sarva karmanyapi sada kurvano madvyapasrayah
Matprasadadavapnoti sasvatam padam avyayam
(XVIII, 56)

(Though ever acting, sheltered by me, through my grace will he be installed in the eternal indestructible seat.)

Yadahankara masritya nayotsya itimanyase
Midhyaisha vyavasayasthe prakristvam niyokshyasi
(XVIII, 59).

(Affected by egoism, you think 'I shall not fight,' but your decision will not avail, Nature constrains you otherwise.)

Svabhavajena Kaunteya nibaddhassvena karmana
Kartum nechchasi yanmohath karishyasyavasopithat
(XVIII, 60)

(Bound to act from your own nature, O. Kaunteya, you may delude yourself to desist, but shall fight through instinct which cannot be helped.)

That is a position that stultifies all teaching. When men are machines plied by nature, and the essence of that nature, Iswera (cf, XVIII, 61) the whole teaching of the Gita through inducement, threat and promise is rendered nugatory. Even if you do not learn and act in accord, you shall be acting just the same. That is the end of all ethics. But what the Gita contemplates is not blind instinctive fight. It sets its face against the renunciation of action through delusion and ignorance.

Nayatasyatu sannyasah karmano nopapadyate.
Mohattasya parityagas tamasah parikirtitah
(XVIII, 7)

(Renunciation of acts that are enjoined is improper. Relinquishment through delusion is held to be dark, Tamasa).

To the doubt as to how the pure agent may sully his hand by engaging himself in bloody war, the answer is unmistakable.

Na dveshtyakusalam karma kusale nanushajjate
Tyagi satva samavishto medhavi chinnasamsayah.
(XVIII, 10).

(One who is unmindful of the reward of action, clothed in purity, having an intelligent grasp, his doubts cleared, has no aversion for the unpleasant course, nor does he wish for the pleasant one).

His fight is the duty, Dharma, enjoined by nature, in which his self is effaced.

Yesya nahankrito bhavo buddhiryasya nalipyate.
Hatvapi sa imam lokannahanti na nibadhyate.
(XVIII, 17).

(He who does not think of himself, and whose reason is not led by motive, though he kills people, he kills not, nor is he liable.)

In fighting for the cause, one has not to be swayed by consequence. In action through hesitation is evil. (Samsayatma vinasyati) And in fact there is really no escape from action.

Nahi dehabhruta sakyam tyaktum karmanyaseshatah.
Yastu karma phala tyagi sa tyagityabhidhiyate.
(XVIII, 11).

(No embodied being can totally cease action. He is held to have relinquished action, who has no craving for its fruit.)

The choice is between the three varieties of action, the pure, the passionate, and the dark ones, (Satva, rajas tamas) and not in any sense between action and inaction. Even when thus discriminated, an inherent evil attaches to all action, as fire is enveloped in smoke.

Sahajam karma Kaunteya sadoshamapi natyajet.
Sarvarambhahi doshena dhumenagniriva vritah.
(XVIII, 48).

(Ones' duty, O, Kaunteya, though linked to evil, one ought not to abandon, All undertakings are enveloped in evil, as fire in smoke).

This is clear recognition of the relativity of ethical values. There is nothing like the absolute good, and the absolute bad in conduct. The standard is not fixed and unalterable for all time. It is linked with knowledge, and wisdom that is distilled from it. Vignana is the scientific perception, wherefrom real Gnana emanates. Other sources lead to delusion, Moha, or midhyagnana. And no knowledge is true that results from prepossessions, or where reason is attached to objectives.

Asakta budhissarvatra nitatma vigata spruhah
Naisharma siddhim paramam sannyasenadhigatchati
(Gita, XVIII, 49)

(He whose reason is independent in every way, egoism subdued, and the lust quelled, his renunciation is the highest perfection free from obligation.)

An attachment to conventional relationships is as much a barrier to independent reason (asakta buddhi) as the desire to pursue a cherished object, or the subtler pandering to the vanity of egoism. Softness for established relations in life, and concern for the maintenance of the conventional forms of morality at all costs, are not warranted by the expanding vision of Buddhi Yoga, the Yoga of reason, the mainstay of human evolution. The persistent ring of the Gita is to get away from the trammels of darkness (Tamas) and move forward. To that end it enjoins the destruction where necessary of the old, idolised, foggy relationships. The usual exposition that would leave individual reason in the background, and insist that the Gita lays emphasis on devotion (Bhakti) is an effort at deriving

particular sanctions from overstressed importance given to certain expressions. But the devotion throughout is obviously centered on knowledge. "Buddhya visuddhaya yukte" (linked to pure reason,) occurs in XVIII, 51. Also see II 49, 50, 51. Budhi-yoga occurs in X, 10, and again in XVIII, 57. While in the former, devotion leads to discrimination or the Yoga of reason, in the latter context, discrimination leads to devotion. But the process is clearly enough indicated, whereby concentrated attention to the secrets of the universe, unattended by the mercenary ambition of judging merit from results gained, is the highest path of the Satvic Yogi. The man who has gained an insight into knowledge, cannot remain unaffected by it. His dharma, or nature, assumes a change, and thereafter he acts in the light of that knowledge. So acting, he doth not incur sin. (Svabhava niyatam karma kurvan napnoti kilbisham, XVIII, 47) And the final basis for individual responsibility for conduct is suggested unmistakably.

Iti te gnana makhyatam guhyad guhyataram maya
Vimrusyaitadaseshena yadhechchasi tadhakuru

(I have taken you into the secret of wisdom. Discuss within thyself fully, and then, act up to your choice. Gita, XVIII, 63.)

When the effects of inducement, threat or promise are erased from the mind of the subject, it is well to remind him of the knowledge imparted, and the responsibility of making the choice. It is a recognition that, in any event, man is not a machine, but a moral agent.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

BIRTH CONTROL IN INDIA.

Dr. Hutton's remarks in connection with the last census report have had the effect of waking up the advocates as well as the opponents of Birth Control. Even the most orthodox journals, to whom the subject used to be taboo, not because they were genuinely orthodox, but simply because of their devotion to the "twin gods of circulation and advertisement revenue", had to pay at least lip service to truth and make a pretence of fairness by opening their columns to a so-called discussion of birth-control, taking due care of course to suppress correspondents like me who are apt to have an undue regard for truth irrespective of tradition, and allowing free scope to half-witted ignoramuses whose mainstay is "the eternal verities" or some other verity of eternal rubbish.

Really speaking, the census report was not at all a surprise to thoughtful people who had long known and commented on the undesirable increase in the Indian population, and the question of birth-control has fortunately such a direct bearing on individual happiness that in spite of a public show of lofty principles and impenetrable stupidity, even the half-witted ignoramuses referred to often learn the wisdom born of necessity when they personally feel the pinch of a growing family. This is why the boasted advocates of self-control can never expect to show any practical results It is indeed the height of stupidity to propose self-control as a means of birth-control. Once the desirability of birth control is perceived, unpractical idealists like Mahatma Gandhi do not even get a hear-

ing. except from those who find self-control easy and want to parade it, forgetting that, as Dr. Norman Haire neatly puts it, if a motor can be stopped easily, it may not always mean that the brakes are strong, but merely that the motor is weak. At any rate, either way, these are not normal people and we need not waste any space over them. Let me say, however, in passing, that it is ridiculous to call self-control a natural method. The sex instinct is a natural instinct and to keep it unsatisfied for years at a time is certainly not natural and, in the opinion of modern medical authorities, is often positively harmful.

Admitting that the man in the street cannot rely on self-control, modern scientific methods are the only practical ones. It is pretended by some writers that the principal difficulty about the practice of birth control in India is the religious idea that one must have a son if one is to be saved from a particular kind of hell. But even for religious people who admit this function of a son, one son is quite enough for the purpose and except in cases where daughters are born in succession and a son obstinately refuses to be, there is no harm in preventing conception after a son is born. Besides, very few people indeed are genuinely religious and most religious people are quite willing to consider practical suggestions if it does not involve open irreligion. Even religious people will not insist on having the maximum number of children possible if they are shown a way out. The real difficulty therefore is: How to bring the necessary knowledge within reach of the illiterate classes? As for the expense involved in using the admittedly best artificial means, it does not come to more than a rupee a month, and though even this may be too much for the very poorest, it is within the reach of many poor people, at least those classes who bring up their own children and do not father them on others or let them beg in the street. To bring up one or more children will certainly cost more, so it is in their own interest to pinch themselves a little if necessary and spend that rupee on prevention. In the case of the very poorest, who find even this too much, charity will find its proper field in a free distribution of cheap means. Though these may be a little less sure, they will greatly reduce the birth-rate and have a general wholesome effect on the population.

I have seen it stated by a press correspondent, who relied on English authorities, that birth control is an expensive job and therefore impracticable for the poor population of India. There are cheap contraceptives which any well established birth control clinic could teach people how to obtain and how to use them. They are so cheap that charitable organisations could supply them without incurring heavy cost.

A correspondent said in a local paper that the average income in India is Rs. 5 a month. This surely includes the people who earn nothing at all and depend on charity or on their relatives. In fact this average is of no use for any practical purpose on the question of birth control in a country like India.

Any progress on the question is sure to be hampered by religious fanatics and the ignoramuses who fill our Municipalities and other public bodies to a large extent The Bombay and Karachi Municipalities have thrown out proposals for giving birth control knowledge. The Christian champions of ignorance in

Madras and Karachi hold protest meetings against this attack on ignorance, the stronghold of all religions and the stock in trade of priests. It remains to be seen, however, how long these people can hold out against common sense. It is not the population question that appeals to the individual so much as the prospect of personal advantage, and in this case a perfectly legitimate personal advantage. As a hopeful sign, I may mention that I recently received from the Civil Surgeon of Belgaum a request for suggestions for the practical spread of birth-control information, as the District Local Board of Belgaum had passed a resolution to that effect. Whether it is in their power to do anything practical I cannot say, but wherever there is a free dispensary or any doctor or even a nurse, arrangements can be made to supply the information free of cost, and if funds were available, even the means to poor people. The details would have to be studied, but it should not be difficult if there is a band of willing workers.

Mysore has already officially established birth control clinics, but it is folly to rely on Government in such matters. Governments, like priests, have vested interests in conservatism and oppose change so far as possible. Interested parties will always hamper public bodies from carrying out any general plan of reform. These are the real enemies. Much capital is made out of Indian superstition, but some Christion sects are not any better, and missionaries encourage superstition, whether from ignorance or selfishness. It is a welcome sign that people are beginning to think for themselves instead of leaving their interests to the tender mercies of governments or priests. Individuals and private bodies can start the work without waiting for anybody. There is fortunately no law against the spread of birth-control knowledge and a good deal can be done even by individuals. I have recognized this long ago and for the last twelve years, have been giving the information to anybody who asks for it. Priests can gnash their teeth and missionaries can protest, but it does not matter. The work has to be done in the public interest.

R. D. KARVE.

WOMEN DEMAND BIRTH CONTROL CLINICS.

Calcutta Conference Regards Spread Of Scientific Knowledge On Subject Among Parents As Very Important.

[The Women of India are to be congratulated on their determination to have birth control clinics established in this country. Unlike the Catholic women of Karachi who opposed the same, the women of India rightly think that in a poor country like India the encouragement of excessive birth rate among the indigent is a great evil. It would appear that at the session of the All-India Women's Conference held at Calcutta last month the pros and cons of Birth Control were discussed in all their aspects. The orthodox views of immorality and natural laws, etc, did not weigh with these progressive women of India—Bravo! ED. REASON.]

Resolutions demanding the removal of legal disabilities of women, the abolition of immoral traffic in women and children, abolition of intoxicants, removal of untouchability, the spread of scientific knowledge on birth control among parents, abolition of capital punishment, rural reconstruction and compulsory registration of Dais and midwives were passed at the concluding session of the All-India Women's Conference at Calcutta.

Clinics Wanted.

Interesting discussion centred round the resolution demanding birth control which runs thus:

"In view of the appalling hygienic and economic conditions of society, this Conference is of opinion that immediate efforts be made to spread scientific knowledge on birth control amongst parents through the medium of recognised clinics."

The resolution was moved by Mrs. S. N. Ray, who first sought to meet the arguments that were advanced generally against it either on the ground of morality or considering the discussion of the subject indecent. These persons still believed in the antiquated ideas and thought that there was something almost criminal and wicked about the subject. Those who opposed the subject on religious grounds did not realise that religion was based on comparative ideas and that true religion could almost hold its own and yet be in the vanguard of progress. There was still another section of people who thought that the knowledge of the subject would give an impetus to loose living and moral turpitude. The tragedy of the situation was this that those people who would have liking for loose living were not generally influenced by a conference like theirs, nor by the knowledge obtained in clinics.

From practical point of view the subject of imparting knowledge to unmarried youths both male and female was very important. As the mothers of the race are responsible for its healthy development, it is absolutely necessary that they should tear aside the veil of false modesty and prudence and tackle the problem. There was no other way if they wanted to improve the physique of the race to take up the question of sex hygiene and birth control—only then they would reach to the root of many of the most important national problems affecting the modern Indian society.

Mrs. S. Mehta supporting the resolution said that whatever be the angle of their vision, if they wanted to look at it either from economic, eugenic or medical point of view they could not but come to the conclusion that birth control was absolutely necessary." As regards "the fuss of the moralists." Mrs. Mehta said that birth control would improve the chance in life and physique of their children and it would slow down the rate of multiplications.

Resolution Opposed.

Miss Rani Ghosh who opposed the resolution contested that many members of the audience would question her right to speak on the subject as she had not the experience of labour that a woman undergoes when a child is born. But it appeared to her to be undignified for the Conference to discuss openly a subject which should be settled between a husband and wife in the bed-room. She could well remember the agitation they had when the subject came up for discussion in Madras and also in Lucknow when the resolution on the subject was carried with great majority. She enquired what practical work had been affected by the Conference in the direction within the course of a year or two.

To judge the number that one wished to have in the family by advocating birth-control seemed to her to be a futile task. All of them have their own standards of value by which they would measure the worth of the pleasures, privileges and duties, comforts, and satisfaction of life. What was meat for one might prove poison for another. By championing the cause of birth-control at this time in this country they would be beaten as a nation by a decrease in its numerical strength. Could India at this critical stage of her history afford a cause which would decrease her number. She asked the audience to realise the responsibility for having to take such a course when the new reforms were to come and when for the army, navy and for the development of economic and material resources of the country they would be handicapped. At the present moment India was stepped in darkness and men and women who were real representatives of India were in want of food not because they had not been taught to control the births but because adequate provision had not been made for them for the development of their physical, mental and moral capabilities. Let those who favoured birth-control teach the masses to respect themselves, to control their purse instead of births.

A Mother Speaks.

Mrs. A. Kale supporting the resolution said by way of introducing herself that she was the mother of five children while she found it to be a matter of wonder that most of them who opposed the resolution were unmarried. Many of them were under the wrong impression that birth-control meant birth prevention. Nobody would bother with the number of children if adequate provision for their upbringing could be arranged for. Nobody would question the fine civilisation that was developed in India once when other nations like pilgrims had to come to India for learning. But the question was the present position in which they were placed. Birth control was a means that was absolutely necessary for getting rid of the present crisis. As soon as it would be over when India would be able to adequately maintain her children the method should be discarded at once. Nobody had held the view that birth control was the only method which should

remain in the Indian social regulations for all time to come. The instance of Germany had been referred to. She did not think that the comparison was justified, but if it was she would ask Miss Ghosh to go to Germany and settle there. As regards the question of immorality she would draw the attention of the audience to the practical aspect. As long as there would remain the natural attraction between sexes there would occur in spite of rigidity of religion a small percentage of immorality. But that could and should not deter them from adopting a course which was meant only for the betterment of the race and which would help women from realising that they were not merely procuring machines.

Mrs. Khemchand opposed the resolution. She said that she opposed it on principle. The poor did not practice birth control. But the rich who would well afford to bear children, practised it.

Two Harijan ladies, Mrs. Laxmi Bai Naik and Mrs. Joyabai Chaudhury, took part in the proceedings.

Miss Khadja Begum Ferozuddin of Lahore strongly opposed the resolution and said that if the birth-control advocated to save India from over population why was the Conference then backing up widow remarriage? Instead of pleading for birth-control to save the lower classes from producing too many children the best method would be to educate them and raise their standard of living and moralify. Teach them, she said, Brahmacharya and "Atma Sanjam" (self-control) which had been the key note of Indian education. Only then you would be able to elevate your land. "You could never" she concided "raise a nation by moral degradation."

The resolution was put to vote and carried by a huge majority.

PIGS FROM THE PIG-STY; ARE WE?

It is a common experience to all of us to meet occasions when people refuse to see the opposite side. Such an occasion has occured again during the last few months on the subject of "Birth-Control." The Catholics, men and women, have gone into hysterics over this question and have passed resolutions couched in language which makes us, one and all, non-followers of that religion, wonder at their bigotry. To them controlling the birth-rate is highly immoral because their priests say so and they are believed to be infallible as they are inspired from heaven. I wonder if the voices they hear are like the one Mr. Gandhi heard. It is a thousand pities that we do not possess plates of ectoplasm on which we could record these inner voices! To the Catholics all supporters of birth control measures are immoral and have "filthy minds". As I am writing this, the scribe in heaven is putting a black dot against my name and the devil in hell is adding some more lumps of sulpur and brimstone to his fire in anticipation of my visit.

Catholics are against Birth-Control because their Church forbids it. That is their only argument. Their Church forbids it because it is against the Natural Law. They are very considerate! According to this Law, we should live in darkness after sunset. Since God

created this world in that way he meant that we should have darkness except for a little candle light of the moon, probably an after-thought when the utter darkness bewildered him. Yet we have lights, and even the churches are lit not only during night but even during day. I do not want to multiply examples. Man to-day counts his progress by the conquest he has made over nature, even in the matter of sex. Our Catholic friends tell us that according to this Natural Law anything that goes against his fellow man is wrong. It is difficult to follow how controlling the size of my family should in any way upset my neighbour. This is certainly entirely a personal matter. When we neighbours feel that we have to destroy another group of neighbours and we are all unanimously decided about it, then probably we will have to do our best to raise the sinews of war,-men and money. In that contingency limitation of my family would be against our common interest. But war is not our goal. Ever since religion has been on the wane and people have forgotton to worship the Lord of Battles we have made peace, everlasting peace, our goal. We want to make the best of what this life offers us and we still cling to that freedom to dispense our personal affair in the way we want.

The Holy Church brings in the relation to God. It is no use pointing out that the existence of that being or whatever he is, has not been proved satisfactorily. To the believers it is an article of faith. Suppose this God exists and he controlls all our actions. He is said to know what is best fof us. Then, if in his infinite wisdom he allows me only thirty rupees a month, if he is "all-loving," then he must pat me on my back if I do not have any children. He must say "Well done, my boy, you have cut the coat according to your cloth!" The Catholic Church is here one with me and its God. But the difference arises when the means are considered. To it "self-control" is the only permissable method.

Since conception is a chance, self-control would mean that I will have to be continent all my life. But no, the Church is not so hard; it realises that sexual satisfaction should not be completely denied. So the learned and holy peiests are busy spreading knowledge about "safe periods," knowledge which must be safely distributed through the confessional. The present knowledge of these "safe periods" has been laboriously gathered by "filthy-minded" men who are now realising that no period is 100 per cent safe and that many times they are 100 per cent unsafe. But that is all that the Catholic Church offers without impairing the purity of matrimony and lowering men and women to the level of beasts. Those "Safe periods" are based on animal life, forgetting that man's condition in this respect has been profoundly altered.

However unsafe these "safe periods" may be, still all public spirited Catholics, be they doctors or principles of schools, must not only uphold but press the Catholic point of view! There are a large number of Catholics who feel seriously disturbed when on coming home in the evening, they find that the hungry mouths they have to feed are daily increasing. Some of them who abhor any kind of birth control knowledge try "safe periods". God appreciates their virtue and blesses them with more children! Don't forget that every little tiny

tot that dies after baptism goes to heaven and from there prays for blessings upon his parents who were instrumental in offering him the chance of eternal happiness. Still if God is everywhere. why can't these prayers be offered from this earth and be just as effective?

Others want to take no risks and either repress sublimate their passion. To many this alternative is not suitable nor is it in the best interest of society. Majority of these that practise self-control are not able to do that always. Any doctor friend of yours will tell you the story that many mothers say "Well I kept away for three years but I was caught for the first time". This would not matter if there were no children but if this comes on top of five or six children then the mother certainly does not feel very happy about the accident. Then come mutual recriminations. But then you cannot expect God to watch such small details in this vast universe.

Some gentleman in Bombay looked with dismay at the prospect of a pig-sty morality. Evidently he thought that sexlife would be what it is amongst the pigs if knowledge of contraceptives was wide-spread. I do not know what is the special weakness of pigs regarding their mating affair. Perhaps he means want of control and secrecy. But the gentleman who spoke is a Catholic and he forgets that the pigs do not offend against the Natural Law. They let nature take its course and suffer themselves to be entirely led by it. Nature controls them in this respect and they are totally indifferent about the result. Must man do the same? For them sex is nature, just as food is. This is just what we will be if the doctrine of the holy pure Church is followed. The advocates of Birth-Control want us to behave as human beings and continue as human beings. Sexual desire is present in every human being of a certain age, it is a natural urge which does not necessarily make people become Satyrs or nymphomainacs. It is true that we might become more liberal in our sex ideas at a later stage, but there are restrictions which even the universal knowledge of contraceptives and universal freedom of action will not be able to remove. You see that in countries like Russia where after the first spell of freedom, sex-life is more restrained. This is not because of state l gislation but from the inmate sense of human beings. Should a questionaire be circulated amongst married couples who consider children a blessing of God and are anxious to have as many as they can have, such a questionaire will elicit the information that sex life is not necessarily excessive amongst the greater number. You cannot ascribe this restraint to Catholicism because, even before Christ. the pagan nations did not spend their life only in sex and its pursuit. But it is the spirit of the "original sin" which is driven deep into the mentality of the Catholic that prevents him from giving credit to the goodness of man and his progress in civilisation.

Catholics tell us that moral law and conscience veto intemperance, stealing and murder. They put restriction of the family by artificial means on the same level. Whereas the first three are depriving somebody else of their right the latter does nothing of the sort. "But are you not depriving the unborn one the chance of its entering the kingdom of heaven?" Yes, but if it is justifiable

to deny that chance by abstinence, by "safe periods," then why is it wrong to do the same, by safer methods? If it is not considered wrong to do sexual acts *ad lib* after conception has taken place why should it be so when conception has not taken place or is not going to take place

But all this talk of moral law and consience veto is all BUNK written in the largest letters conceivable. The Catholic Church teaches that the pleasures of this world have to be shunned and of these pleasures sexual pleasure is especially held as most sinful. According to that Church sexual pleasure outside matrimony is sinful. The Church has to reconcile itself to an inconsistency. Before a man and woman stand before a priest and promise to be man and wife even the remotest sexual desire is sin. But once the wedding bells have pealed, then all is permitted. The only way they come out of this is by professing that sex is only a means to an end, the end being the begetting of children. This is the primary function of marriage for which all that can should marry. How far this is true I leave for your readers to decide. But I wonder if sexual indulgence is sinful after conception has taken place! It ought to be since then it cannot be a means to an end.

For long men and women have rebelled against these ideas of the Church. Yet they had to stay quiet. Society was hard on the illegitimate child or child born outside wedlock. To-day that attitude is rapidly changing. Indeed our whole attitude on sex is changing. Novels and other publications write on sex freely without any prudishness and no one feels ashamed of gaining knowledge in this respect. It is this that the Church is afraid. Unfortunately for the Church, the disillusionment of religion and rending of the veil that covered sex have more or less come on together. The last war did it. Humanely one cannot understand why sexual urge should be considered filthy and dirty. Educated men and women now begin to think otherwise; they believe that sexual knowledge is instructive and should be freely imparted. Recent literature under the guidance of Freud and his pupils has brought into prominence the fact that an ignorance of sexual questions has been the cause of morbid sex repression. Men and women whose best thoughts were sapped or distorted by this constant repression are now free to lead civilisation. A knowledge of birth control is bound to add to the happiness of life in general.

ALI AKBAR.

THEISM AND 'EVOLUTION.'

It is frequently stated that Science is the greatest enemy of religion. The underlying truth of this saying is easily comprehensible, for the more there is of light the less will be the darkness. In other words, religion which is based on faith, miracle, mystery and superstition cannot stand the searchlight of Science which is *par excellence* a pursuit after truth under the guiding hands of knowledge and reason. But, in practice, scientists are more often than not as little free-thinking and as much superstitious as fanatical priests and irrational bigots. This gulf between theory and practice between conviction and conduct, is perceptible both in the East and the West. Only, the East being proverbially more religious and consequently less reasoning than the West, the gulf appears to be pretty wide on this side of the globe. I purpose, however, in the following article to take a restricted view and to examine modern religious belief and practice in the light of only one theory of Science, the Theory of Evolution.

All the great religions of the world have a common basis in theism or belief in the existence of a God supernaturally revealed to man. It is this God who is supposed to have created the world and all the original inhabitants thereof. One fine morning-unfortunately there was no morning then, for all was chaos, so says the "Holy Bible"—God said "Let there be light: and there was light." Another day God took it into his head to create man in His own likeness. So by a wave of his wand—to borrow the idiom of necromancy,—He created a man and a woman and told them, to the great chagrin of our birth-control enthusiasts: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." By this miraculous process of calling on nobody to bring forth the shining firmanent, the fertile land, the delicious fruit, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air God created the world and its denizens all. Thus, or nearly thus, do all religions explain the creation of the world.

This amusing account of the origin of the world held the field from the time of creation-nobody *knows* when, but everybody *says* some thousands or millions or billions of years ago as their respective religion or superstition dictates-right up to the latter half of the nineteenth century. No doubt, there were dissenters and unbelievers even in olden days. There was Sankhya, for instance, whose system of philosophy did away so thoroughly with God and creation as to appear almost atheistic. There was Buddha whose religion and philosophy in their pristine form show definite agnostic tendencies. There was again Epicurus whose philosophy is striking modern in its materialistic note. In times nearer to our own, we hear of Vallabhacharya who may rightly be called "the Indian Epicurus." But all these thinkers were essentially philosophers *qua* philosophers, that is to say, logicians well read in the

ancient lore and endowed with sufficient independence of mind to rationally analyse the old system and to lay bear its holes and pitfalls. But in doing so they did not call in the aid of Science as much as they requisitioned the services of Logic. The first great below to religion therefore, came from quite an unexpected quarter, a quarter which was itself unconscious of the blow it was delivering—Science. It was with Darwin's publication in 1859 of his famous "Origin of Species" wherein he propounded his "Theory and Evolution" the people were set a thinking about creation and matters cognate.

Darwin never attempted to do away with the idea of an original creation, for he thought out, explained and substantiated on scientific lines the gradual evolution of higher organisms from lower, the lowest in the order of evolution being the protoplasm, that is, the essence of life which permeates all organisms. But, whence came this protoplasm ? Did it come out of nothing or was it created by somebody ? Darwin found himself in a quandary when faced with these questions and sought the aid of a creator, not the Lord God of the Bible who created in pairs all the living things that now exist, but a miniature Lord God whose one and only handiwork was the creation of the protoplasm. As Max Muller says, "Darwin himself went so far as to maintain most distinctly that his system of nature required a creator who breathed life into it in the beginning." Max Muller: Six Systems, P. 326.)

Now, if the Darwinian concept of evolution were true, is belief in and reverence for a Creator called for? I would answer that the belief is fully warranted for the protoplasm was of divine making; but, the warranty for reverence is neither obvious nor indisputable.

Reverence is but the consummation of gratitude, personal or impersonal. No man will revere another, not even God, for nothing. So, if man reveres God, it can only mean, that he is grateful to Him for all that He has created or done for him. But, he must be a very poor man who will revere a God who has created evil and suffering in the world. So, the whole problem of reverence to and worship of hangs on the answer to the question whether God has created such a good and happy world as to merit our gratitude, regard and reverence.

There are facile optimists who, though not fool-hardy enough to maintain that everything in this world is good and as it ought to be, are confident that the good will overcome the evil in not a long time to come. Their reverence for the Creator is unshakable, for wherever they turn the hand of Providence stares them in the face. Like Mr. Chesterton, they see a living miracle in every child. On the other hand, there are incorrigible pessi-

mists who discern the hand of Satan in every work of God. To them the world is a vast expanse of misery, exploitation, torture and its creator, a short-sighted, mischief-making, Satanic imp, and to revere him is the greatest folly of man. Obviously, neither view is or can be correct, for we realise that there is good as well as evil in this world, and we also realise the possibility that a good thing under one set of circumstances may become a bad one under another, and vice versa. But, who created this evil? Certainly God, for it would be aginst all canons of candour to maintain that God created only the good things of this world, and to leave the evil ones hang in mid air. Even Mr. Gandhi admits that, "He (God) has no evil in himself and yet if there be evil, He is the author of it." But Mr. Gandhi evades the issue when he explains further that though God is the author of evil, He is "yet untouched by it"-like the manufacturers, I suppose, who turn out their products "untouched-by hand"!

It goes without saying that if we all turn pessimists,-I do not wish for such a consummation-reverence for God may be cast to the winds. But, suppose, we develop a fancy for optimism, what can rationally be our attitude? To what extent should our gratitude extend?

It may be said, in the first place, that it is very difficult to establish a clear, tangible and continuous contact between the man of to-day and the God who created the world in the bad old days. The relationship is untraceably remote, for not we, but only our antediluvian ancestor that owes his being to God-if the Scriptures are to be believed. We are the results, not of creation but of procreation. But, in the light of 'Evolution' it is not our original ancestor, but the protoplasm which was the lowest rung in the ladder of our ancestor's evolution, that was created by God. This makes the relationship all the more distant and all the more hazy. The fact of relation, however, cannot be gainsaid. Secondly, if man is to revere God, the ultimate creator, it stands to reason that he must revere as much, if not more, his immediate procreator. He must revere an engineer, a manufacturer, an architect, a carpenter, a brick-mason more than he reveres God, for God's creation was an effortless affair whereas the production of man is by the sweat of his brow. Let our theists ponder over this!

A word about the common man, and I have done. To the man in the street the belief in God comes home with irresistible force in the shape of miracles. Almost all the religions of the world owe their popularity and numerical strength as much to the miracles wrought by their saints and prophets as to their doctrines and philosophy. So, even to this day when a man witnesses something miraculous, something wonderful, something which he cannot explain, he seeks the aid of a preternatural agency, either a God or a devil. But this is purely an outcome of loose thinking, for the fact of our being unable to account for a particular thing only proves our ignorance thereof and not the existence of a God. Any number of illustrations may be cited to bear out this contention. When the steam engine was introduced into India, it was supposed to have its motive power in the machinations of the devil, for our ancestors of those days could not bring themselves to believe that the innocuous steam with which they were all familiar could work such wonders. So was the case with the aeroplane, with the

wireless and with a host of other inventions which have greatly redounded to man's progress and prosperity. Nobody now believes that these inventions are the handiwork of supernatural or preternatural agencies. Again, in mediaeval times, plague, pestilence and many other preventible nuisances were regarded as God's punishments for man's sins, for with the knowledge then available these phenomena could not be explained in any other way. But, to-day a fourth form boy will be able to explain these "miracles" that confounded the mitred heads of bygone days. Suffice it to say, that to link miracle with God and the unseen working of His hand is but an act of desperate ignorance.

S. V. VENKATARAMANAN.

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD.

"New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth,

They must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast of truth.–*Lowell.*

The greatest blows that religion ever experienced since the Renaissance were the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, both the work of Englishmen. These writers were thorough in their methods, Charles Darwin writing after thirty years' investigation, whilst Herbert Spencer was forty years perfecting his system of Synthetic Philosophy.

There have been no grander intellectual achievements since Edward Gibbon took his memorable walk under the acacias at Lausanne on the completion of his memorable *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* Spencer, unlike Darwin, never startled the religious world, and his utter want of orthodoxy was not fully realized until his *Data of Ethics* appeared. Then Christian theologians were annoyed to find that the man who had taken his place quietly as the leading English philosopher of the nineteenth century was as thorough a Freethinker as Charles Bradlaugh. Standing outside all churches and all creeds, he built up his own philosophy by science alone.

It is no disparagement to Darwin to say that Spencer's system of Synthetic Philosophy, which puts things together and does not pull them to pieces, is the vaster scheme of the two. Darwin's name may have been execrated in every pulpit in Christendom, but Spencer's work was far more comprehensive and far more deadly to Orthodoxy. The two works made a thunderous engine of attack, from which Christianity is still reeling.

Spencer, in his writings, sought to show that all phenomena, physical and psychical, are the natural products of elementary matter and its laws, these being modes of operation of the primal law of what he calls the "persistence of force." His scheme, probably the vastest ever conceived by the human mind, embraced the story of the evolution of the universe from formless stuff into solar systems, the process being the advance from the simple to the complex, from the indefinite to the coherent. This same process was shown to be in operation in the life-history of the earth. No break

between things inanimate and animate being assumed, mind in the lower animals and man, man's social and intellectual development, are in unbroken sequence shown to be part of the eternal order. The Synthetic Philosophy, as the author chose to call it, is nothing more nor less than the law of evolution, as exemplified in nature and in man, in the animal realm and the vegetable and human, the sphere of sense, and the sphere of conscious and moral aspiration.

The glory and triumph of Spencer is that his philosophy rests on ascertained scientific knowledge. While other philosophers have evoked various extraneous agencies to account for the difference between man and the rest of the world, he trusted to evolution, the law which connects the thoughts of a Shakespeare with the obscure movements of an ascidian on the rocks. Spencer had a harder task than Darwin, because he took all knowledge for his province, whilst Darwin specialized.

The general admission of evolution is the deathknell of religious orthodoxy. It sweeps away at once the old Oriental legends which men have been taught to consider a sufficient explanation of all things. The legend of a fallen race disappears, and with it goes the myth of the devil, and all other strange and monstrous explanations that were necessary to harmonize the theological theory put forward by Priestcraft. With it also goes the bibliolatry which, like so many other idolatries, has served to enchain and cramp the human intellect. The Christian Bible, which is so largely the Bible of the Ancient Hebrews, must descend from its lofty pedestal and take its rank on the modest library shelf which contains the many sacred books of other and older nations.

Nothing more momentous has taken place since the Renaissance. Strangest of all, this intellectual lever, which will finally overthrow all existing creeds, has come among us so silently that many have scarcely noticed its approach. Opposition there has been, as there is to all new truths, but compared with the momentous issues at stake, the opposition has been trifling. Silently and steadily, for over seventy years, Evolution has been resistlessly pushing its way till no educated man or woman attempts to contravene it. There has been no "bridal birth of thunder peals," while this "great thought has wedded fact." To the clergy and their congregations, whose very innocence will not permit them to follow intelligently the course of modern scientific thought, the new theory must appear like Banquo's ghost to the amazed Macbeth. They look up suddenly from their crosses, candles, and their prayers, and see the awful shape in front of them. "Adam" and "Eve" and the talking snake are driven out from the fabled Garden of Eden, not by an angel with a flaming sword, but by the scientists.

Since Darwin's death, the clergy who formerly denounced the dead scientist with the whole wicked vocabulary of theological abhorrence, have, characteristically and hypocritically, claimed him as one of their flock. They buried this black sheep among the illustrious obscure in Westminster Abbey, and calmly pretend that the teachings of Evolution are in harmony with the fable of Eden and the story of Jonah and the whale. Only two religious bodies have been reasonably honest in this matter. Poles asunder in so many respects, the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have remained faithful to ignorance. On no

condition will these two bodies part with "Eve" and the apple, and the talking snake in "Eden." Romanists and Salvationists alike believe that Darwin and Spencer, and their colleagues, are to-day suffering the tortures of the damned. These uncultured people no more believe in evolution than they understand the alphabet of science. But those who are trying to effect a compromise between the irreconcilables, religion and science, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the very glib speakers on Pleasant Sunday Afternoon platforms, are assuring thair audiences that the great truths of evolution are all in harmony with the Oriental legends in the Old and New Testaments, and that the discoveries of science are an assistance to religion.

Slowly, with lapses into its "lov'd Egyptian night," men and women are shaking themselves free from the chains of superstition. Bewildered by the new light, missing at first the guiding hand of their erst-while pastors and masters, they stand amazed on the threshold of the future. The fundamental question of man's place in nature has been solved, and the wide acceptance of evolution has already begun to bear fruit in all practical affairs of life. Sooner or later, in spite of all the priests of Christendom, it will lead mankind to a happier, more consummate condition of life, and to loftier ideals.

MIMNERMUS.

"From The Free Thinker."

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

Vol. III : No. 2 Monthly ; March 1934 Ann. Sub. Rs. 3. Single Copy As. 4.

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Notice.—All coniributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

"REASON" CASE.

Case No. 10/W of 1934.

To,

The Chief Presidency Magistrate,
Bombay.

Bombay 4th January 1934.

Sir,

I beg to report that one Mr. C. L. D'Avoine, is the Editor and Publisher of a monthly Magazine of Bombay entitled "Reason" This magazine is the Journal of "The Rationalist Association of India" Empire Automobile Building Queen's Road Bombay.

In the September 1933 issue of the said magazine appear the following passages :—The paragraph beginning with the words "Some Religions, Catholicism for instance and ending with the words

"said his prayers" in the article headed "Religion and Morality" published at page 3 and 7 respectively. As the aforesaid passages constitute an offence punishable under Section 295 A Indian Penal Code I would request that your Worship will be pleased to issue a warrant for the arrest of the said Mr. C. L. D'Avoine.

The Governor in Council has authorised the prosecution of Mr. C. L. D'Avoine.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant
Sd.
Inspector of Police
General Branch.

Lyon examined on oath.
Warrant bailable Rs. 500 and one surety
Sd. H. P. Dastur,
4-1-34.

In the Court of the Chief Presidency Magistrate Bombay

Case No. 10/W of 1934.

Inspector Lyon.....*Complainant*

vs

Mr. C. L. D'Avoine.....*Accused*

Charge : Under S. 295-A I.P.C.

Eastly for the Crown.

Talyarkhan with Kanuga for accused.

Sidney Clarence Aubrey Lyon
Examined on Oath :

Inspector C.I.D. I produce the sanction of the Government Ex. A. In consequence of this I applied to this Court for permission to investigate this case. It was given. I went to the Kamat Printing Press. I went to the Kamat Printing Press, Parekh Street and attached 6 copies of Reason of August 1933, 5 copies of August 1932 and 2 copies of September 1933 and one proof copy (page 1 to 25) of September 1933. (Put in as Ex. B C and D respectively) (Proof copy Ex-D-1). I made a Panchnama. I produce it Ex. E). I went to the office of the Association viz. to the Empire Automobile Building. I saw there Dr. Coelho. I asked him to produce copies of September 1933. He produced 16 copies. I produce them. (Ex. F). D. R. D. Wadia kept the accounts. The accused is the Editor and publisher of the Magazine. I saw the membership book. I found these were about 262 members. The accused writes the editorial notes and the articles. Five hundred copies are printed monthly. It is circulated among members and libraries. I saw Kamat. He is the printer. He said that he used to receive the manuscript from Dr. D'Avoine and from Dr. Coelho. He had no correspondence. He used to get verbal orders I complain of passages appearing at pages 3 and 7 of September 1933 (see Appendix on page Ed. Reason). Accused was warned by the Commissioner of Police in 1932. I am a Catholic but not a Roman Catholic. (Referred to pages 3 and 7). On reading these 2 articles I say that my religious feelings as a Catholic are outraged.

Cross-examination reserved.

Prabhakar Trimbak Karnik S A
Examined :—

Judicial clerk to the Chief Presidency Magistrate. I produce a declaration made by Charles Lionel D'Avoine as publisher of a monthly Magazine entitled Reason.' It was made on 27th June, 1932. (Ex. G).

No cross-examination.

Shankar Shridhar Kamat S A

Examined :—

Proprietor of the Kamat Printing Press. I am the printer of 'Reason.' The issues Ex. B C D were printed at my press. Payments for printing are made by Dr. Coelho and D. R. D. Wadia. I send proofs sometimes to Dr. D'Avoine. I print 500 copies monthly.

No Cross-examination.

Eastly closes his case.

Charge under Section 295-A.

Charge explained to accused.

Accused pleads not guilty.

Mr. Talyarkhan wants time.

Case adjourned to 31-9-1934.

Sd. H. P. DASTUR.

18-1-1934.

10/W of 1934.

Sidney Clarence Aubrey Lyon Examined further :—(Shown Ex. C). At page 16 there appears a passage at the foot of the left hand column about which he was warned. (Eastley tenders the whole article. Kanuga objects P. C. Article to go in to prove the "intention" of the accused. Ex. C-1.)

Cross-examined :—This journal is the organ of the Rationalist Association of India. The objects of the Association are set forth on the back of the cover of the Magazine. I saw the articles at page 3 and 7 of Ex. D. in December last. The article starts with a reference to the rejection by the University Senate of a motion to encourage religious teaching. I don't complain of the first paragraph. I don't agree with it I noted different views. I don't complain of general observations as falling with the mischief aimed at by the section. My feelings were injured on reading the passage at page 7. I belong to the Church of England. All Christians are Catholic. I am a Catholic. This is not a criticism but a mockery. I don't owe allegiance to the Pope. I don't know all the rituals prescribed by the Roman Catholic. It is a belief among the Roman Catholic not to eat meat on a Friday, but not among the Protestants. Mass is a term for a particular ritual they hold in the Roman Catholic Church, and not by the Protestants. I have attended a mass in the Roman Catholic Church. Anything about the Mussalmans will not hurt my religious feelings. The objectional passage at page 3 applies to Roman Catholics. I don't acknowledge the Pope as our spiritual Head. From the time of Martin Luther we Protestants do not acknowledge the Pope as our spiritual Head. My religious feelings may or may not be insulted if any defamatory remarks are made against the Pope. It depends upon the remarks made. Defamatory remarks made against the Pope would be resented by him as remarks against a Catholic. I am not aware that a large body of Roman Catholic objected to the exposition of the Holy Coat. I am not aware that since 1844 a large body of Roman Catholics have been protesting against the exposition of the Holy Coat. (Kanuga refers to an article in the Encyclopædia entitled. "German Catholic" I am not aware of a strong body of Roman Catholics making a vigorous protest against the exposition of the Holy Coat (Read Hamsworth History of the World Vol. 1 2 P. 4893) I am not aware that a body of Roman Catholics view it as an . I don't know what is the mythology of the Holy Staircase. I don't know what a Holy Staircase is. I don't know what that story is. I can't say if the story would not meet with the

credence of a reasonable man. I was not present when the warning was given to the accused. I was not present at the interview with Sir Patrick Kelly.

Q. The accused says that his interview with Sir P. Kelly was only about the 3rd paragraph at page 17 in August 1932.

Ans. I am not prepared to contradict the accused if he says that it was with reference to this article.

My information about the warning is hearsay.

Re-examined : The paragraph at page 3 relates to Roman Catholics. It is offensive to me. In the Church of England there are 2 sects the High Church and the Low Church. Some very High Church Protestants don't eat meat on a Friday. As a Catholic both these articles outrage my religious feelings.

No Cross-examination of any other witness for the Prosecution.

Eastly closes his case.

Accused makes statement recorded separately.

Accused tenders written statement put in Ex. No. 1.

Kanuga calls no evidence.

Eastly addresses.

In the course of his address Mr. Eastly referred to certain paragraphs appearing in the other magazines to show the intention of the writer. Mr. Kanuga objected to his reading the paragraphs. Eastly says that when he put in the Magazines he distinctly told the Counsel and the Court that he put the other Magazines in to show the intention of the writer.

P. C. As the paragraphs were not put in separately and marked as Exhibits the accused would in my opinion be prejudiced. Eastly requests permission to recall Lyon and put in the paragraphs so as to give an opportunity to the accused's Advocate to cross examine the witness.

P. C. Permission given.

Sydney Clarance Aubray Lyon Recalled and Examined : (Shown issue of August 1933). This is the 2nd paragraph at P. 2 in the right hand column commencing with the words. "It is remarkable that etc." (Ex. B-1 This is the last paragraph at Page 4 on the left hand column) This is the article "Malicious Propaganda" Ex. B-3).*

Cross-Examined by Kanuga :—I read Ex. B-3 in December last. I have read through the whole of the Magazine. Malicious propaganda refers to religion. The propaganda is against Free thinkers, the Rationalists as suggested by Monsignor D'Herbigny. There is undoubtedly a protest by the Rationalists of India against their being described as plotting against the Government. The reference to Jesus Christ at Page 5 offends my religion feelings. I object to the words "Audacious claim."

Q: Do you believe that whatever the Pope teaches must necessarily receive divine sanction.

A: I don't acknowledge the Pope as Spiritual Head. I am not prepared to support the claim. I would not protest against it. I would not accept it and therefore it follows I would reject it.

Q: Do you not consider it a bold claim.

A: It is a very difficult question to answer.

Q: Do you consider it a reasonable claim.

A: No.

Not being fully aware of the religious tenets of the Catholic I am not in a posi-

*See Article "Malicious Propaganda" Pages 4, 5, 6 & 7 of August 1933 in "Reason."

tion to express any opinion of it is "unreasonable".

The writer's view point appears to refer to the Roman Catholic Church at the same time the expression the Catholic Church is used. The Pope is not the Vicar of the Catholic Church as the word Catholic Church is understood by me. The first paragraph undoubtedly refer to Roman Catholics. In Ex. B-1 object to the last three lines commencing "from that moment etc." Ex. B-2"* says would offend only the Khoja Sect Act, believing in him. I don't challenge that the belief is held by that particular Khoja sect that he is the representative of God on earth. I am aware that his followers give him valuable offerings. I don't know what the fundamental points of belief are of that Khoja Sect.

Accused makes statement recorded separately.

Kanuga does not wish to call any evidence.

Case adjourned to 6-2-34.

Sd. H. P. Dastur,
31-1-34.

IN THE COURT OF THE CHIEF PRESIDENCY MAGISTRATE, BOMBAY.

Case No. 10/w of 1934.

King Emperor
vs.
C. L. D'Avoine.....Accused.

Written Statement of the Accused above-named.

1. I am 58 years of age and was born in the British Colony of Mauritius where French is spoken in a large section of the population. I received my medical education in France and Belgium and took the degree of M. D. in the latter country. I have been practising medicine in Bombay for the last 25 years or so, and am a registered medical practitioner. I was born in a Roman Catholic family and am married in another Roman Catholic family. I have amongst my patients a large number of Roman Catholics, and I am also the doctor attending many Catholic Nuns and the inmates of their convents in Bombay whenever my services are required and this has been so for the last about 20 years. Similarly I have friends who are Roman Catholic.

2. Although born and brought up as a Roman Catholic, my education and study of comparative religions have however changed my views so as to have a scientific and rational outlook on life and I disapprove of all superstitious rites, ceremonies or beliefs. Even regarding scientific theories, I, like every rationalist, have an open mind and should change acceptance of a theory if later discoveries prove it to be erroneous.

3. I have been the local corresponding secretary of the Rationalist Press Association of London for about 25 years among whose members are noted men of science and philosophy of outstanding merit like Prof. Haldane, Prof. H. Laski, Leonard Huxley, Prof. Julian Huxley, Sir Arthur Keith, Sir P. Chalmers Mitchel, Dr. R. P. Paranjpe, Mr. Joseph McCabe, Prof. C. J. Pattei, The Earl of Russell, Lord Snell, Prof. Westermarck, Sir John Summer, H. G. Wells and many others.

*See Para one before last in Notes and Happenings in Reason August 1933.

4. I have been for the last 30 years a consistent writer on Rationalism in Bombay, and my articles and contributions on the subject have often appeared in the Times of India, the Bombay Gazette and other English and Indian dailies of India.

5. I joined the Anti-Priestcraft Association (Rationalist Association of India since 1931) as soon as it was formed by a number of educated and influential men in Bombay in 1930, and have been one of its Vice-Presidents and Editor and publisher of "Reason", the organ of the Association whose avowed object is to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the people of this country.

6. I bear no malice against the Roman Catholic religion, nor against Islam or any other religion nor against the followers of any religion or sect. In writing the article 'Religion and Morality' my object was to make it clear that a rationalist stands for the best and the highest moral code and the best of hygienic principles, and that morality as such plays but a secondary part in the religious beliefs of the uneducated and uncultured classes, and that they attach more importance to unimportant spectacular practices and superstitious rites rather than serious ethical and moral consideration. As regards the paragraph appearing at page 3, the same refers to what are considered to be unhistoric superstitious practices and is a comment regarding such practices which have before now been adversely criticised and disapproved of by many Roman Catholics themselves. I have made the comment in good faith and without any deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of Roman Catholics here, or of insulting the religion or religious beliefs of the Roman Catholics.

7. From the official census figures for 1931, it appears that there are 6¼ million Christians of all sects in India including the Native States of which 1¾ millions are in the Madras Presidency and 2 millions are in Travancore and Cochin. About 25% of the total Christians of India are literate. The magazine 'Reason' is published in English with a circulation of less than 500 amongst the educated classes who are in a position to do something, if they would, to reform the superstitious practices prevalent in this country, and whose views are likely to gradually influence the less educated classes, and it is needless to add that the magazine makes no appeal to nor expected to be read by the illiterate Catholics.

8. I make the same submission as in the preceding paragraph with regard to Moslems also and I may add that I have a large number of Moslems also amongst my patients and friends.

9. The statement of Inspector Lyon that I was warned by the Commissioner of Police is not correct. The true facts are that at an interview with Sir Patrick Kelly, the late Commissioner of Police in Bombay, my attention was drawn to a contributed article on God and Christ in which the expression "Sadhu" was used and as the meaning of Sadhu had been misunderstood by him, and I made it clear what the true meaning of the expression was and that he was satisfied and nothing further was said about it and it is incorrect to say that I was warned.

10. I deny that I have with deliberate and malicious intention outraged the religious feelings of any class of His Majesty's subjects by my writings, or insulted or attempted to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of any class. I am entirely innocent and pray that I may be acquitted.

Bombay,
31st January 1934.

In the Court of the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay.

Case No. 10/W of 1934.

King-Emperor ... .. *Complainant.*

Vs

C. L. D'Avoine ... ... *Accused.*

Charge:—Under Section 295-A I. P. Code.

Accused pleads not guilty.

Judgment.

The accused is an M.D. of Belgium and the editor and a publisher of a magazine called "Reason". He is charged under section 295-A of the Indian Penal Code in respect of 2 writings published at pages 3 and 7 in the September issue of the magazine.

It is alleged that the two writings are calculated not only to hurt the feelings of all Catholics and of Muslims also as regards the 2nd writing, but that the accused by publishing them had a malicious and deliberate intention of outraging their religious feelings.

Section 295-A is a new Section and was introduced by the Criminal Law Amendment Act 25 of 1927 in consequence of the decision of the Lahore High Court in what is known as the Rangila Rasul case, in which it was held that section 153-A was not meant to stop polemics against a deceased religious leader however scurrilous and in bad taste such attacks may be. There is, however, a deliberate difference in the words used in section 295-A and in section 153-A.

Any criticism, and particularly a vigorous criticism, of any religious belief is bound to hurt or insult the religious feelings of the class of people professing that faith. It is also true that an intention of the writer is to be gathered from the actual words used and the effect they may have on the minds of those to whom they are addressed, or against whom they are directed.

As, however, that would stifle all honest attempts to introduce social reforms, Legislature has not made a mere intent to insult the religious feelings of any class of His Majesty's subjects, penal under this section. It requires that that should be the deliberate intention of the writer and that such intention on his part be "malicious."

The principles which guide the Courts in judging of the intention of a writer in such cases as fall under the purview of sections 124/A or 153/A would not therefore apply to section 295/A. The word maliciously denotes a wicked, perverse and incorrigible disposition to do any act (Ward 4871) L.R.I.C.C.R.350. It means and implies to do an act which is wrongful and to the detriment of another. (23 Q B.D. 598).

The words used and their true meaning are never more than mere evidence of intention. But that is not enough in a case under section 295-A. It is the deliberate intention of the writer that is the test, and not the effect it has upon others. A strong and scathing criticism of a religious belief or of a ritual must hurt the feelings of those that profess such belief but if the object of the writer is not to deliberately and maliciously outrage their religious feelings but to convert them to his views, however wrong they may be, it would not be an offence under section 295-A though it may fall perhaps under section 153-A. A vile, senseless and scurrilous attack

on a religion couched in extravagant language might be regarded as evidence justifying the Court in inferring that it was the deliberate intention of the writer to outrage the religious feelings of people professing that faith.

Then again the word "outrage" is stronger than the word "wounding." It implies "gross affront to abuse."

In all such cases, therefore, it is the duty of the prosecution to prove, and not merely to ask the Court to infer, that it was the deliberate object of the writer to outrage the religious feelings of the class of His Majesty's subject and that he did it perversly and without any lawful excuse.

The prosecution has examined only one witness viz. Inspector Lyon to depose to the meaning and effect of the articles complained of. He is neither a Mahomedan nor a Roman Catholic. He belongs to the Church of England but he says that all Christians are Catholics and as a Catholic his religious feelings were outraged.

Though it is not incumbent on the prosecution in such cases to examine persons belonging to the particular faith, which is attacked or ridiculed in the articles complained of, I think it would have been better to call and examine such persons in order to enable the Court to correctly appreciate their religious feelings and sentiments concerning certain rituals or observances.

The prosecution also relies on certain articles appearing in former issues of the Magazine to prove the intention of the writer. But in order to use the articles other than those complained of, for the purpose of inferring the intention of the writer, it is necessary to show who the writer was and that all the articles produced were by the same hand. They must also appear to have been written about that time. Unless it be made to appear that there was a course of conduct or a definite scheme or some definite aim running through all such articles which led to the writing of the article complained of, the presumption of intention deducible form a writing much earlier in date is considerably weakened.

The prosecution has put in 3 articles Ex. B-1, B-2 and B-3 appearing in the issue of August 1933 and Ex. C-1 appearing in the issue of August 1932.*

I have already stated that under section 295-A the deliberate intention must appear from the article itself. Ex. C-1 would in my opinion fall under section 295-A. But there is no evidence that it is written by the accused. It is denied by the accused and the prosecution are not in a position to challenge his statement. It is written by some one under the nom-de-plume of "Embusque". It is a vile and scurrilous attack on Jesus Christ and written in very bad taste. This articles therefore must be eliminated.

As regards the articles B-1, B-2 and B-3, Inspector Lyon in his cross-examination had to admit that they were not of such a nature as would outrage his own religious feelings and I think no reasonable person on reading them could come to that conclusion.

But in view of the principles of law discussed by me above viz. that in cases under section 295-A the intention must be deliberate and must appear from the writting itself I do not think any useful purpose will be served by my dealing at great length the contents of these articles B-1, B-2 and B-3.

* See Article "Finding the Lord" By Embusque.

I now come to the writings complained of viz. Ex. D-2 and D-3. Ex. D-2 appears under "Notes and Happenings". At page 3 of the issue the accused has offered certain criticisms on what he regards as "superstitious beliefs" of the Roman Catholics. I have read the writing complained of over and over again and I am of opinion that it is absurd to impute to the writer a deliberate and malicious intention to outrage the religious feelings of the Roman Catholics.

The objects of the Association of which "Reason" is the official organ is given on the back cover of the Magazine. It is "to combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the masses of the country."

Such a magazine would necessarily attack some of the religious and social beliefs of all religions, and would to a certain extent necessarily wound the feelings of those that held such beliefs. The accused himself was born in a Roman Catholic family and is married into another Roman Catholic family. He has now changed his views and calls himself a "Rationalist". He is the Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association and as the editor of the Magazine he writes articles and contributions in the Magazine. He would naturally write articles attacking certain religious or social beliefs not with the deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of others but with a view to combat such beliefs and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the masses or to try and convert them to his own views.

If we bear this in mind the reason for writing the articles Ex. D-2, and D-3 appear very clear.

In Ex. D-2 he says "The Holy Year is in full swing and every stunt calculated to raise the emotion and piety of the faithful is being done to make it a success". Except the word "stunt" I do not see anything objectionable in the whole of that sentence. It may or may not be true but there is nothing in it which could be regarded as a deliberate attempt on his part to outrage the religious feelings of the Catholics. The use of the word "stunt" is not dignified. "Stunt" means "turn of work, feat of skill, performance, turn at a music hall or other exhibition". It is an American colloquialism. The accused uses it because of what follows about the Holy Staircase. To an unbeliever like him it would be a "feat of skill". If he had used the word "effort" instead of "stunt" there would be absolutely nothing to take objection to. In order to judge of the intention of the writer one cannot pounce upon an objectionable word here and there and make it a pivot on which to hang the whole issue.

He wrote it because, as he says in the next paragraph "It makes one smile to think that in this enlightened age there are still millions of people who believe in these holy relics".

He then proceeds to state in Ex. D-2 that "during the last Lenten festivals according to "Le Journal" of Paris, a perfect debauch of religiosity was witnessed in Rome". Objection is again taken to the word "debauch". Reading the context as a whole it means "extravagance" "intemperance" or "extravagant display". It is certainly an ill chosen word to use in connection with a religious belief. The accused uses it in conjunc-

tion with "religiosity" by which I presume he means "excessive religiousness". The sentence read as whole does not imply any "lewdness or immorality". He at once tells us what he means when he says that a "perfect debauch of religiosity" was witnessed in Rome.——The ascent of the Holy Staircase by the Pope on his knees and the adoration of the Holy Relics when he reached the top, was one of those impressive stunts which doubtless edified the superstitious Italians who always crave for these shows".

He again uses the word "stunt" and that is because the Italians "crave for these *shows*". It is not alleged that the "ascent of the Holy Stairs by the Pope on his knees" is a false or a malicious statement. Inspector Lyon knows nothing about it and he cannot say if it is a true statement of a fact. If it is true it may be described as a "feat" by a person holding accused's views about all religions and religious beliefs.

He then proceeds to say "The next stunt we are told will be exposition of the so called Holy Coat without seams which is preserved at the Cathedral of Treves at which it is expected that millions of spectators will be present".

Throughout the paragraph the idea running through the writer's head is that it is all a kind of show calculated "to raise the emotion and piety of the faithful". He therefore used the word "stunt" "spectators" "*Ascent*" of the Holy staircase on knees and *Adoration* of the Holy Relics and "*Exposition*" of the Holy Coat. To an unbeliever in these rituals they would appear as merely spectacular.

As to the Holy Coat there was a vigorous protest made in 1844 by a large number of Catholics themselves against its exposition and there appears an article even in the Encyclopædia Brittanica Vol. 11 and 12 to the effect that it was the cause of a large number of persons led by Johanes Rouge dissenting from the Holy Church. In Harnesworth's History of the World Vol. 12, p. 4893 a reference is also made to this under "Idolatrous Worship of the Sacred Relics". To protest therefore against the exposition of this Holy Relic cannot be construed as a deliberate attempt to outrage the feelings of the Catholic.

Ex. D-3 is an article occupying more than 2 pages of the Magazine. Out of it the prosecution only object to the passage occuring at page 7 which is as follows:—

"Some religions, Catholicism for instance, actually teach that devotion to ceremonial observances and orthodoxy are immeasurably superior to good works" Catholicism holds that moral offences are trifling matters compared with any deviation from the faith taught by the Church. The average Catholic would attach more importance to not eating meat on a Friday or not attending Mass on a Sunday than to moral obligations of a serious nature. We see this also with the average Mussalman who is very particular about washing his fingers and toes before saying his prayers, about assuming the correct posture and position while he would commit the most grievous offence the moment after he has said his prayers".

Whatever the witness, may say there is no doubt that almost the whole of the article refers to Roman Catholics and not to "Catholics" in general as the witness understands the word.

The accused is prompted to write the article with reference to the rejection by the Senate of the University of Bombay of a motion brought by Professor Gokhale

to encourage religious teaching in the Schools and Colleges under the control of the University. The writer congratulates the Senate for this action and he says that it would have been more useful to have proposed a comparative study of religions "which would free the mind from the narrow belief that only one's own religion is the true one".

According to the writer it is a fallacy to believe that only a knowledge of religion can impart moral ideas to man. He develops this theme and contends that with most religions it is a *sine qua non* that to obtain the full favour of gods it is necessary to belong to one particular religion in which one is born. Here one sees that morality as such plays but a secondary part in the ultimate destiny of the believer. And then follows the passage complained of.

In the whole of the articles there is nothing else to which prosecution take an objection. The accused may be wrong in stating the Catholic or the Mahomedan point of view. But it is his view that morality as such plays but a secondary part in the religious beliefs of the uneducated and uncultured classes. Most of the religious reformers also say that the followers of a particular religion have failed to realise the true massage of their prophet or religion and that they attach great sanctity to rituals and ceremonies. The writer is probably wrong in saying that the average Catholic would attach more importance to not eating meat on a Friday or not attending Mass on a Sunday than to moral obligations of a serious nature. But it is a matter of common observation that in almost all religious sects there will be found men who are very particular in the observance of certain rituals and ceremonies and yet who are guilty of grave moral delinquencies. The reference to the Catholics and the Muslims might be equally applicable to some men professing other religions as well.

In the next para. He says that it is now generally admitted that religion has lost its hold on the Westerners and probably the thoughtless in India do not realise that it is precisely the preposterous claims of religion and the little influence it has on morality that have drawn most intelligent and thoughtful people out of the Churches.

The article merely represents the writer's views on "Religion and Morality". I do not think that the articles falls within section 295--A.

I, therefore, acquit the accused.

Sd. H. P. Dastur,
6-2-34.

True copy.

H. P, Dastur.
Chief Presidency Magistrate,
Bombay.

Applied for on:—2 3-2-34
Ready on:—3-3-34
Delivered on:—5-3-34

PRESS COMMENTS.

RELIGION AND THE LAW.

Much comment has been engendered by the unsuccessful prosecution in Bombay of Dr. C. L. D'Avoine on a charge of outraging religious feelings. The case arose from two articles which appeared in *Reason*, the official organ of the Rationalist Association of India, of which Dr. D'Avoine is the editor and publisher. It is indeed surprising that anybody could have seriously believed in the application of section 295 A of the Indian Penal Code to the two articles. The principle underlying the section is simply this: that every man should be suffered to profess his own religion and that no man should be suffered to insult the religion of another. The necessity for such a law is obvious in any complex society; it is overwhelming in India. But the gravamen of the offence in this chapter of the Code lies in deliberate intention to insult the religion or wound the religious feelings of any class of persons. The law was from the first directed against deliberate insult and not against mere controversy or criticism. Section 295 A had to be enacted because the decision of the Lahore High Court in a well-known case showed that no existing section of the Code covered malignant and scurrilous attacks upon the founder of a religion. It is not enough for somebody to come forward and complain that his religious feelings have been outraged by what somebody else said or did. If that were the law, social life would become impossible. The statute stresses the malignity of the intent and motive, which must exclude all cases of free and frank discussion and honest criticism.

In the present case such malignity of purpose and deliberate offensiveness are wholly wanting. If the test were simply the possibility of outraging the religious feelings of a body of persons, all religious, social and intellectual progress would become impossible. It is satisfactory to find that the Chief Presidency Magistrate has taken a sane and robust view of the statute, and refuses to include within its purview mere intellectual argument and criticism, however distasteful it may be to certain people. The avowed object of the magazine in which the articles complained of appeared was to combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason, and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the masses. Such a motto by itself would outrage the susceptibilities of many orthodox denominations. If a prosecution of this sort were to succeed there would soon be an end to freedom of thought and speech so painfully wrested from the forces of bigotry and unreason. Rationalist opinion and activities are bound to offend orthodox sentiment in various quarters. But so would the open profession of every creed outrage the religious feelings of narrow bigots in every other creed. It is scarcely the province of secular law to concern itself with such controversies.

(*The Times of India*).

A JUST EXPOSITION.

We congratulate Dr. C. L. D'Avoine on his being acquitted of the charge of having deliberately and with malicious intention outraged the religious feelings of the Catholics and Muslims by insulting their religion. This foolish charge was brought against him for publishing two articles in "Reason", of which he is the Editor The articles objected to, appeared in the issue of September 1933 and were not materially different from the numerous articles which had appeared before in that magazine, the official organ of the Rationalist Association, and which dispassionately but critically expose superstitious beliefs and plead for a rational outlook in all religious matters. The prosecution was frivolous but would have had grievous effect on the right of the press in discussing religious beliefs had not the Magistrate, Sir Hormuzdyar Dastur, taken a just and sensible view of the articles and their influence on the readers.

No Malicious Intention.

To convict Dr. D'Avoine under Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code, under which he was prosecuted, it was necessary to show not only the articles wounded the religious susceptibilities of any community but also that he had a deliberate and malicious intention to do so. But the trying Magistrate definitely stated that he had himself read the writing complained of over and over again and that he felt it absurd to impute to the writer a deliberate and malicious intention to outrage the religious feelings of any community. He further pointed out that Inspector Lyon, himself, on whose evidence alone the prosecution relied to prove the effect of the articles on Catholics and Muslims, "had to admit that they were not of such a nature as would outrage his own religious feelings and think no reasonable person on reading them would come to that conclusion." The Magistrate believed, as most readers would. that the author wrote the articles because, in the author's own words, "it makes one smile to think that in this enlightened age there are still millions of people who believe in the Holy Relics."

A Service to Press.

We must congratulate the Magistrate, too, on the just and Rational view he took of the trend of the offending articles and the intention they disclosed. A few words here and there in an article might wound the susceptibilities of a few sensitive people. But the Magistrate rightly declared: "In order to judge of the intention of the writer one cannot pounce upon an objectionable word here and there and make it a pivot on which to hang the whole issue." The Magistrate has in short clearly and justly expounded the application of this new Section of the Penal Code, introduced in 1927 in consequence of the decision of the Lahore High Court in the "Rangila Rasul" case. He has thus done a service to the Press by vindicating its right to discuss religious beliefs in a dispassionate manner, even if such discussion should wound the susceptibilities of the oversensitive and the fanatical people. There is too much superstition and fanaticism in India and sound rationalist propaganda alone can remedy the evil. One of the good effects of the prosecution of Dr. D'Avoine is that it has attracted the sympathetic attention of thousands of thousands of Rationalists all over the

country. They will do well to organise themselves and combat superstition and bigotry by ceaseless rationalist propaganda.

Wanted Enquiry.

Few individuals have carried on such propaganda so consistently and boldly as Dr. D'Avoine who has rendered inestimable service to the cause of true progress in this country. His triumphant vindication by the Magistrate will, we have no doubt, stimulate him to more vigorous efforts in this direction. But the prosecution, which must have caused him no little annoyance, raises an important issue as to why it was launched at all. We have reason to believe that there has been in this matter some bungling in the Secretariat which has certainly not exactly covered itself with glory by a sudden decision to sanction such a silly prosecution. We have, no doubt, that all citizens in Bombay, who give serious thought to questions which are being discussed in "Reason", were shocked to learn of Dr. D'Avoine's arrest and prosecution and were wondering whether they were living in the twentieth century or in the mediaeval ages in countries where the Inquisition flourished. Lord Brabourne, we trust, will make searching enquiry into the history of the D'Avoine Case and see that the person or persons responsible for bringing the discredit of an amazing and foolish decision on his Government are dealt with in such a manner as to ensure that a scandal of this kind is not repeated.

(*The Bombay Chronicle*).

HERESY HUNT IN BOMBAY.

The acquittal of Dr. D'Avoine by the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, on the charge of "deliberately and maliciously" outraging the religious feelings of Catholics and Moslems, being a case of more than provincial and parochial importance, we make no apology to revert to it in order to discuss the serious issues it has raised. Dr. D'Avoine as editor of *Reason*, published certain articles which the police, who launched the prosecution contended, brought him within the mischief mentioned in section 295—A of the Indian Penal Code. The Magistrate, fortunately, took a reasonable and common sense view of the case and held that mere criticisms of superstitious beliefs and customs, though necessarily unwelcome to people who think they are an indispensable part of their religion, did not necessarily mean that the accused's object was to insult the religious feelings of others and acquitted the accused.

A Bigot's Venedetta

Before coming to the wider aspects of the case, we may as well dispose of one peculiar feature in it, which must have brought home to the magistrate, the flippancy with which action had been taken by the prosecution. Before initiating proceedings in a court of law against the accused on such a serious charge, the police, one would have thought, would have satisfied themselves that the articles under reference had actually outraged the feelings of the class concerned, but wonder of wonders, when it came to the

production of witnesses to prove the case, the only one produced was Inspector Lyons, a police officer who was neither a Catholic nor a Moslem. If the Police had thought that, on such evidence, they would have secured the conviction of the accused, they must have extraordinary notions of the duties on the prosecution. The whole procedure smacks more of a bigot's vendetta than an endeavour to set the law in motion to prevent possible breaches of the peace.

A Great Landmark.

From the point of view of the liberty of the Press, freedom of opinion, social and religious progress. Sir H. P. Dastur's judgment must be held to be a great landmark. In a country of warring creeds and faiths, where a large section of the people is steeped in superstition, and pernicious customs thrive on the pretence of religious, sanction, liberty of criticism not only of the creeds, beliefs and ceremonies of one's own religions, but of other religions as well, must be duly safe-guarded. Perverse attacks on other religion, intended more to annoy and shock than to convince and convert, must no doubt be penalised, but to taboo reasoned argument and intellectual discussion will be to prevent reform and perpetuate superstition. Sir H. P. Dastur has stated that such criticism must necessarily imply some offence to the ignorant and the fanatical to whom religion is not so much a matter of faith as of observance of rites and customs, but cause of action under the section would not arise unless and until there was deliberate and malicious intention to wound the religious feelings of others. The test, hence, is the intention of the writer and not the tendency or the effect which his writings are likely to produce. If the prosecution had succeeded in its object, a staggering blow would have been delivered at freedom of opinion in discussing religious matters and obscurantists would have hailed it as a victory. The prosecution sought to make the King-Emperor not merely the "Defender of Faith" but also the "Protector of Superstitions" and we are glad that the attempt failed, as it deserved to fail.

(*The Hindustan Times*).

THE RATIONALIST VINDICATED

The Rationalist Association of India is not so widely known in this country as it should be. It has an official organ named 'Reason' Recently an article appeared in that paper from the pen of Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, a medical practitiener of Bombay, for which he was prosecuted. The charge against him was that he had in the course of his article deliberately and maliciously outraged the religious feelings of Roman Catholics and Muslims by attacking certain religious social beliefs, ritual and observances. The writer considered these beliefs to be superstitious and advanced reason and argument for his contention. The Chief Presidency Magistrate of Bombay has acquitted him of the charge. The full text of the judgment is not before us but from a fairly good summary of it published in the Press we can gather the reasons he has given for the acquittal.

The judgment is of considerable importance though it says nothing new but reaffirms well-known legal principles

Nonetheless it is very timely and deserves the attention of everybody who is alarmed at the growing spirit of intolerance and bigotry along with the rising tide of communalism. Communalism prospers on political favouritism and feeds on fanaticism. And fanaticism is being encouraged in our country in manifold ways. We do not know if it is a reaction to nationalism of which we have had a spell during the last half a century. Political exigency has made not a few of the seekers of leadership, otherwise cultured, conform their conduct, outwardly at least, to the claims of the most rabid fanaticism. The example of the big has infected the small and we find to-day the ostentatious revival of customs and practices that the civilization and culture of a new century has discredited. But even more than this sudden access to religious zeal on the part of the elders of the generation the sinister movement towards poisoning of the minds of the young is a matter that should engage anxious attention of all those who are for progress and who nurse the hope that India would one day, not far off, take her place among the free and progressive nations of the world. The school educational system, particualrly the curricula of the studies, which we have noticed in these columns from time to time, is being subjected to a process that is calculated to harden the young mind and make it run into channels of communal and sectarian isolation. It is appalling to think of the type of citizens that the process is bound to produce. It cannot but seriously affect intellectual progress. A mind spoonfed by dogmatic teachings, from which the spirit of search for truth is carefully divested, cannot produce leaders in the domain of science, art or literature. The process is making for intellectual stagnation and spiritual bankruptcy.

The case under notice illustrates the length to which intolerance of honest views honestly expressed has gone among certain people. The case must have been instituted at the instance of persons either of the Roman Catholic or Islamic persuasion who fancied that their religious feelings had been outraged. If the Government instituted to the case of its own motion so much the worse for it. The prosecution itself was half-hearted for only one witness had been examined by it, namely, Inspector Lyons who, the Magistrate observed, was neither a Muslim nor a Roman Catholic but who belonged to the Church of England. This witness, however, said that all Christians are Catholics and as a Catholic his feelings had been outraged.

The Magistrate has, in his judgment, made a distinction between the case before him and the notorious Rangila Rasul Case wherein it was held that Section 153A was not meant to stop religious polemics, however scurrilous and in bad taste they might be. In the Rangila Rasul Case the Lahore High Court held that the writer had the deliberate and malicious intention of insulting or wounding the religious feelings of a class of his Majesty's subject. But in the case before him the Magistrate held that the intention of the writer was not malicious. The word "malicious," the Magistrate observed, denoted wicked, perverse, and an incorrigible disposition to do any act. It was the deliberate intention of the writer, he said, that was the test and not the effect it had upon others. Otherwise, proceeds the Magistrate, no social reform would be possible. The intention of the writer was to be gathered from the actual

words used. Did he intend merely to wound the religious feelings of a class of people or was his object the combating of what he considered to be social abuses or superstition? One could wound the religious feelings of any class of people by pretending to combat what he considered to be superstitious practices or beliefs. The Magistrate remarks that it was a matter of common observation that in almost all religious sects there would be found men who were very particular in the observance of certain rituals and ceremonies and yet who are guilty of great moral delinquency. The writer of the article complained of, had congratulated the Senate of the Bombay University for its rejection of the motion to encourage religious teachings in the schools and colleges for according to him religious teachings generally speaking, has degenerated into the observance of rituals and ceremonies. The Magistrate finds nothing wrong in these views of the writer and considers that his article was quite consistent with the object of the Rationalist Association which was "to combat all religious and social beliefs that could not stand the test of reason". To do this, observes the Magistrate, some religious beliefs of some religious would have to be attacked and that would to a certain extent necessarily wound the feelings of those who held such beliefs.

Communalism must flourish if religious fanaticism is encouraged. For the moment it seems fanaticism is getting on quite prosperously encouraged and protected by many quarters, some the least expected.

(*Amrit Bazaar Patrika*).

A TRIUMPH OF REASON.

There is a stage probably in the development of every community when giving expression to an opinion not generally held by a majority of the members is considered to be a very dangerous crime and is punished severely. Moreover, the punishment is quite out of proportion in many cases to the gravity of the "crime" and irrespective of whether a breach of peace is threatened or not. The persecution of the heliocentrists, the Christians, the Reformers, the Jews, the Birth-Controllers, the Pacifists, the Heterodox and even the political opponents are all different manifestations of the same general fear of anything different from the general run of thought.

It is the general belief, that we in the 20th century have now got over that phase of barbarism and that nobody is punished for an expression of mere opinion, so long as no incitement to any action against the laws of the country is involved. How wrong this belief is, is shown by various instances of prosecutions under the so-called blasphemy and obscenity laws, launched by governments in practically all countries. Even in England, supposed to be one of the most tolerant of countries, these laws still continue to be on the statute book, a menace to the free expression of opinion. In India there was no blasphemy law until recently and were it not for the deliberate policy of the Indian Government to placate the orthodox sections of the different communities, the law might not have been passed. The desire to

gain friends among the Indian public men, of whatever sort, resulted in placing upon the statute book a law which declared as a crime the attacking of any religion with malicious intention to wound the feelings of its followers.

The first prosecution under the law in the Bombay Presidency was launched recently against that well-known rationalist writer, Dr. D'Avoine, the Editor of *Reason*, the organ of the Rationalist Association of India, Bombay. The articles objected to were published in the December issue of the magazine and one of them contained an attack on the proposed resolution in the Senate of the Bombay University for the introduction of compulsory religious instruction in the Colleges. Fortunately the learned Chief Presidency Magistrate of Bombay took the correct view of the matter and acquitted Dr D'Avoine. The acquittal was based on the absence of any malicious and deliberate intention on the part of the accused to wound the religious feelings of the communities concerned. If this sane and eminently reasonable view is not taken, any criticism of the beliefs and superstitions of a community would be impossible. In fact, reformers will be so handicapped that no agitation against the age-old customs would at all be possible. Even Mahatma Gandhi's anti-untouchability movement must then be banned, for, surely, it is by now quite evident that the religious feelings of the orthodox Sanatanists are being wounded every day.

Nobody apparently is concerned about the feelings of Rationalists. There is nowhere a law to protect *their* susceptibilities and inner convictions. If the law were to be entirely impartial, the religiously minded should also have been prohibited from attacking, say, atheists like the present writer. That is however not the case and any religious writer can attack a rationalist in any way he likes. Of course, I do not object to it so long as the same freedom is granted to me. If, in future, the blasphemy law is to be administered with the same liberal spirit as the Chief Presidency Magistrate showed, it will have been rendered much less objectionable.

With the general spirit of intolerance rampant in the world, with Hitlers, Mussolinis and Stalins threatening everybody who dares utter a single word against the established creed of the men in power, it is indeed a gratifying sign that in India, of all countries, an honest and straightforward criticism of irrational religious beliefs is not considered a crime.

(*The Servant of India*).

THE D'AVOINE CASE.

Dr. D'Avoine is a medical man in Bombay who is a rationalist and who edits a journal called *Reason* which is the mouthpiece of the Rationalist Association of India. The journal exposes superstitions and has to criticise, by its very nature, religious beliefs. And the freedom thus to examine and criticise beliefs is one of the privileges of a civilised life. But there may be over-sensitive people whose feelings are easily wounded, and the police recently prosecuted Dr. D'Avoine for having published some matter that came, according to the police, under criminal law, incorporated into our Statute, soon after

the well known Rangila Rassool case. Dr. D'Avoine is a respectable gentleman and the readers of his journal are educated people. His prosecution was a surprise even to orthodox people. The Chief Presidency Magistrate, however, after listening to the evidence brought before him by the police, has discharged the doctor and in his learned judgment his worship has clearly laid down that in order that the particular section of the Penal Law may apply in such cases, the malicious intention of the accused must be proved, and the accused could not be convicted merely on the ground that religious feelings of some people were wounded. And all comments made in the press on his worship's interpretation of the section, express the opinion that his worship gave the only interpretation possible. If the interpretation were otherwise, there would be no liberty of expression. In fact, the tendency in this country to magnify religious issues into a size far beyond them, must be curbed in time. In such depressing circumstances, the decision of the chief presidency magistrate in the D'Avoine case comes as a refreshing breeze. On the ground of amazing notions of religious feelings being wounded, riots have occurred outside and inside theatres, cinema films have been stopped, requests are made to universities to withdraw famous books of eminent authors. Day by day we are getting into a stifling atmosphere. A tremendous effort is necessary to teach people that feelings must be ruled by reason, and that is one of the serious tasks with which lawmakers are entrusted. Dr. D'Avoine had to undergo an amount of unnecessary mortification, but the judgment his case has elicited is a document of great importance and it vindicates the liberty of expression to some extent.

Bombay correspondent of the Leader on February 25th, 1934.

NO INTOLERANCE.

The first recollection that comes to the mind after reading the judgment of the Chief Presidency Magistrate in what is known as the "Reason" case, is, who initiated and who sanctioned such a foolish prosecution. The Section under which the charges were framed was added quite recently to the Penal Code, with a view to preventing or punishing the publication of writings deliberately and maliciously intended to insult and wound the feelings of persons holding particular religious beliefs.

It may be desirable to have some special law to deal with writings of a purely mischievous character, which are calculated unnecessarily to wound people's feelings and, potentially, to create breaches of the peace. And "*perse*" we have no particular quarrel with the Section. But it is obvious that a definite and distinct line must be drawn between such writings and the expression of views which anybody is entitled to hold and publish as long as they are expressed in reasonable and moderate language which is not written with the merely mischievous intention of wantonly wounding the feelings of others.

Clear Judgment.

The Magistrate made this very clear in his judgment and we confess to a

feeling of relief that the case came within the purview of one who was able to apply a calm and judicial mind to the scrutiny of the impugned writings and judge them from the point of view of reason and toleration and the natural right of mankind to hold what views are acceptable to his own reason and freely publish them; for there is a grave danger in a case of this kind, if it happened to be heard by a judge or magistrate whose mind is naturally prejudiced against persons who speak or write against religion. Past experience and especially the long battle which was fought in the Courts for the freedom of the Press in England has taught us that the application of prohibitive laws of this kind is not always safe in the hands of judges, who, themselves, hold strong religious views.

We hope, however, that the failure of this case will teach a lesson, not only to the Government of Bombay but to Secretariats throughout the country, that this section of the law was never intended to stifle the expresson of reasonable views and public argument on religion and that the machinery of the law does not exist to subserve intolerance.

No Excuse.

There was no excuse for launching this prosecution. It is not short of monstrous that the law should have been set in motion to gratify, apparently, religious bigots, who, themselves, indulge very freely in the language of sheer intolerance and abuse when writing and speaking of those who are not prepared to accept their religion or to have religion kept in a glass case. "I have read the writing complained of over and over again and I am of opinion that it is absurd to impute to the writer a deliberate and malicious intention to outrage the religious feelings of the Roman Catholics" said the Chief Presidency Magistrate and we cannot imagine any reasonable man coming to a different conclusion.

Dr. D'Avoine is a man of great intellectual culture, who has formed certain views in regard to the religion in which he was brought up, and, obnoxious though they may be to the orthodox and people who are more fanatical about superstitious beliefs than the ethics of religion, he is as fully entitled to ventilate them in the plainest language as any priest is to consign unbelievers to hell everlasting, which is his own cheerful contribution to tolerant discussion when we come down to "brass tacks." The views for the expression of which Dr. D'Avoine was indicated might have been worded in much stronger language than they were without coming within the prohibitive terms of the section. The passages, particularly indicated by the prosecution as objectionable, merely ventilated opinions which, on the one hand, occur quite commonly in the admonitions of Muslim preachers and, on the other, are held by many devout Catholics, who do not regard their religion as a static affair which is bound to cling to every sort of superstition which became attached to it in

ages of less enlightenment than that in which they have the good fortune to live.

Never Again !

Had this prosecution succeeded a new and a very grave menace to the freedom of thought and writing would have been created in this country, where in the midst of so many warring creeds and such a wealth of superstition of one kind or another there is special need for mutual toleration, not only between the followers of one faith and another, but for the free and reasonable expression of the views of those whose intellectual reasoning does not permit them to accept superstitious beliefs Obscene and outrageous writing are to be condemned and should be penalised, but to attempt to bring intellectual argument within that category is ridiculous and disgraceful and it is to be hoped that the official power to institute a prosecution of this kind will never be used again with such complete lack of justification.

(*The Sentinel*)

Condemnatory articles against the Prosecution also appeared in the Pragasha of Goa, The Bombay Sentinel, The Free Press Journal, The Hitavada, The Maharatta, The Sanj Vartman, The Praja Mitra, The Hindu, The London Free Thinker & The Bombay Samachar.

THE USUAL ANSWERS.

Anyone who is enterprising enough to discuss the topic of religion with his fellow-beings is sure to be rewarded. The reward will seldom take the form of bouquets or compliments. As often as not it will be accompanied by open disapproval, which sometimes may develop into vilification, abuse or even slander. Whether the risk of such consequences is worth while must be left to the judgment of the individul. But whatever the consequences may be, the clash of opinion which result's from religious discussion cannot but sharpen one's powers of reasoning and give one a fresh insight into human mentality. It will never add to one's respect for the effects of religious teaching upon human character or intellect.

One peculiar result of such discussions is to emphasize the sameness of the answers given to arguments against the existence of God and the supernatural. The particular wording of these answers will, of course, vary in many instances. But, shorn of their distinctive trimmings, we are left with about half-a-dozen at most. Let us, therefore, examine a few of those which are most commonly encountered.

(1) "Look at the beauties and wonders of nature! There must be *something* behind it all."

This, of course, is what the high-brows call "The Argument from Design," converted into popular phraseology. But to anyone whose mind has matured beyond the age of ten years, the extraordinary childishness of this argument must be crystal clear. Yet it is surprising how many apparently intelligent people still make use of it.

The first point to note is this. Because there are beauties and wonders in nature, we are expected to agree that the "something behind" it is also beautiful and wonderful. The next point to note is that we are expected to give this "something behind" the name of "God." And lastly we are expected to respect, nay, even to worship, this "something behind" or else to lie under the suspicion of being cranks or criminals if we fail to do so.

When we point out that diseases, deformities, accidents, famines, plagues, cataclysms and all the other horrors of nature are as much a part of the whole as its beauties and wonders, we are met either with disgruntled silence or else with some counter-statement as unintelligent as the original one.

Now if "God" is the only "something behind" nature, then it is clear that he must be behind its unpleasant features as well as its pleasant. In this case why should the Atheist be condemned for refusing to respect, much less worship, such a thing? On the other hand, if "God" is not the only "something behind" the horrors of nature, then there must be something else—perhaps even several other "somethings." And, by all the evidence of nature itself, this "something else"—or these several other "somethings"—must be fully equal in power to "God." For they carry out their horrible work with as much impunity and with as obvious results as "God." So it would appear that, with at least two such powers behind nature, it is a trifle inconsistent to lavish all respect upon one alone. Possibly if a little less time were spent in adulation of "God," and a little more in flattery and propitiation of the "something else," the effect upon nature as a whole might be more agreeable to us humans. Unfortunately it is only so-called "savages" who are consistent in this respect, and who devote their religious attention to both sorts of "something behind."

The trouble is that all God-believers are shocked at the suggestion that anything else can be equal in power to their special divinity. Indeed they assert that he is not merely the creator of all nature, and therefore "behind" all its aspects, but they assert further that he is all-good and all-powerful. And this results in such odd remarks as that the unpleasant events in nature are "God's ways of reminding us of his existence"! Or, alternatively, that "God has given the Devil (which is their name for the "something else") a temporary power in the world."

If either of these statements be true, then it is a rank impossibility to make God's omnipotence tally with his all-goodness; unless, of course, language is nonsense and words can mean two different things at the same time. The "beautiful" design of God's creation begins to look decidedly messy! His omnipotence becomes impotence: and his all-goodness takes on a muddy shade of part-badness. What, for instance, would one think of an all-powerful friend who reminded us of his existence by dashing our heads with a rock, or by sticking germ-infested pins into us! Or even of one who did not do this himself, but

allowed one of his servants to do the same sort of thing.

The God-believer's reply to this is always the same. "God's ways are mysterious!" Oh, how they do love that word "mystery," these muddle-pated worshippers of ignorance. Any absurdity, any contradiction, any futility in argument or fact is swallowed as the gilded pill of "mystery" if it relates to that vague "something behind" which they call "God." In no other sphere of thought except religion is such nonsense tolerated for a moment.

To the Atheist there is nothing mysterious about a raging toothache, a twisted spine, or a landslide that overwhelms a whole village of 489 inhabitants, men, women, children and babes alike. (This occurred at Goldau in Switzerland in 1806.) Nor is there anything mysterious in the fact that certain aspects of nature are considered to be beautiful or wonderful. Nor that what may be beautiful, or fortunate, for some persons can be ugly, or unlucky, for others. For the Atheist realizes that beauty and ugliness, good and evil, are merely relative terms which vary according to circumstances; and that "God," and "the Devil" are fictions of the human brain inherited from a dim past when men knew less about the causes of certain phenomena than they know now.

What is strange, however, is that persons who profess to be intelligent and are, in fact, intelligent in other spheres of thought, should abandon their intelligence when they come to apply their reasoning to beliefs which they have been forced to swallow "at their mother's knee." Yet, when we realize that this "God" idea is just the very one which is acquired at an age when most people are too young to do anything but believe what they are told, then even this strange behaviour begins to be understandable. For it is well-known that the most difficult thing in the world is to rid oneself of prejudices and habits of thought instilled during childhood.

Unfortunately these antique superstitions and oldwives' tales about gods, devils, angels and other imaginary creatures, are not limited in their effects to the individual. It is, indeed, bad enough that they warp the intelligence of children to such an extent as to affect their adult judgment in later years. But when it is realized that these beliefs are tied up to moral standards that are pitiably out of date, the cumulative effect upon the society which accepts them is tragic. Furthermore, when we begin to notice that behind all this irrational thinking and twisted morality there flourishes a vast army of parasites, whose aim is to advertise and perpetuate these absurdities for their own benefit, it behoves all who have come to their senses to do their utmost to expose this rotten hoax upon humanity. For as long as it profits priests, parsons and pastors to batten upon the lies which they so sedulously preach, so long will humanity suffer under the triple curse of ignorance, credulity and bigotry.

No one denies that there may be a few uneducated ministers of religion who are sincere in their belief that without these supernatural fantasies morality would go to the dogs. But their fears are quite unfounded and utterly contradicted by experience. No one denies that there are ministers of religion who genuinely wish to improve the morality of their flocks. But the Atheist firmly denies that any consistent standard of morality can be based upon beliefs that are inconsistent

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and self-contradictory; and he asserts that in any case morality has nothing to do with the so-called "supernatural." Moreover, he declares, with the evidence of all history to back him, that it is positively immoral to preach as truth what has not been and cannot be proved true.

"*Look at the beauties and wonders of nature!*" Yes, look and take your fill. But why remain blind to its horrors and evils? What is rugged grandeur to the tourist is a horrible eyesore to the local inhabitant. A wonderful view to some is a mere monotony to others. A feast to the locust is a plague to the farmer. A painful death to one creature is a victory or a pleasant meal for another. And so on through the whole gamut of nature which, apart from human judgment, is morally and æsthetically neutral.

"*There must be something behind it all.*" Yes, of course, there is—if by "something" we mean some cause or causes. And the "something behind" all these relative aspects of nature is nothing more nor less than our common-or-garden human preferences and dislikes. These, in their turn, differ in each individual according to his inherited and acquired characteristics; and they vary according to the circumstances of time and place. If these be "God," then "God" is human.

(2) "But we must believe in something!" Or, alternatively, "We must believe in something *higher* than ourselves."

Here again, be it noted, we are expected to give that something the name of "God." But what this answer really amounts to is this: that the speaker, having jettisoned nine-tenths of his religious beliefs, still imagines it to be his duty to cling to the remaining one-tenth. In some cases he has thrown overboard his belief in miracles or the virgin birth of Jesus. In other cases he has ceased to believe in the resurrection or the use of prayer. But to whatever degree his unbelief may have reached, he refuses, for reasons usually unknown to himself, to scrap his belief in the one thing which is the sum of all the absurdities he has already discarded.

How can this inconsistency be accounted for? Does the man really feel convinced about the existence of this "God"—this grand old phantom of all superstitions and myths? After having removed every contradiction, every illogicality, every lie from his religious philosophy, does he really think that the vague supernatural residue contains any truth in it? What reasons, if any, has he for the somewhat fatuous assertion, "We must believe in something."

Like so many religious slogans, this one may mean almost anything or nothing. The background and context of it have to be analysed before any sort of sense can be extracted from it. And the background in most cases is sheer ignorance or thoughtlessness. The obvious contradictions and impossibilities of religious belief are easily, and even contemptuously, swept aside, because they clash too forcibly with the facts of experience. But the less obvious are left to float undisturbed in a fog of indifference. They have no practical application and are therefore ignored. And, except upon special occasions, they are never brought out into the arena of discussion. Hence their persistence and their immunity from the criticism of logical thought. Hence the "something" which is anything or nothing.

It is the context in which this slogan makes its appearance that determines the special purpose of its use. The "wicked Atheist" story, so persistently broadcast by priest and parson, creates an atmosphere of distaste or fear among ordinary folk, such that the great majority of them will hastily dissociate themselves from any suspicion of total disbelief. That is one reason why so many declare they *must* believe in *something*.

Then again, there is the "loyal and royal" sentiment which, in the opinion of the upper circles and those who ape them, has to be maintained at all costs—despite the snobbery and servility which are their inevitable accompaniment. The aristocracy are said to be "higher" than we are; the King and all the Royal Family are "higher" than the aristocracy; and so on till we arrive at the biggest, most aristocratic, most royal Boss of all, namely, "God." To cast aspersions upon this purely imaginary acme of loftiness would be equivalent, or almost equivalent, to a profession of Communism or Bolshevism or some equally ghastly political creed. And that would *never* do! All of which give a reason why so many declare that they must believe in something *higher* than themselves. The fact that they have not one atom of verifiable evidence in proof of the existence of this elusive "something" does not, of course, matter in the least. They *must* believe because they simply *dare not* do otherwise.

A third context is that in which the self-importance of the speaker is at stake. Whatever other arguments may be adduced for the possibility of a life after death, undoubtedly the strongest is that which says: "If I am not immortal, then the rest of creation isn't worth a sneeze." This argument is seldom consciously admitted and, of course, never perhaps in the form just given. But it can easily be inferred from the attitude of the speaker, as well as from the other arguments he favours. And since the evidences for a "future" life are nil, or else hopelessly entangled in humbug, the speaker usually prefers to avoid entering upon a discussion of this particular theory and takes shelter behind the vaguer, and therefore safer, belief in "something." That this "something" is nothing more and nothing less than his own almighty importance in the scheme of things makes it all the more essential that he should withdraw it from the light of logic, and camouflage it under the conveniently vaporous term "God."

Taken at its face value, this slogan is merely a childish platitude. "We must believe in *something*!" Well, of course we must. We must believe in the evidence of our senses, combined with every possible means of verification at our command. Admittedly the evidence of our senses is not always completely reliable. But, if we were to act upon the opposite theory, namely, that such evidence is never to be believed, then we would be entirely deprived of any reason for belief in anything. We must begin somewhere—and that "somewhere" is the data which we call sense-impressions, or experience. But even so, it should be empasized that our beliefs are never absolute unless absolute proof of their truth is forthcoming. In other words, we must believe in everything that is capable of being proved true. And we must not believe in anything the truth of which is doubtful. In such cases our belief should vary in certainty in proportion as it is possible to prove the truth of the evidence which supports it.

Thus I believe as an absolute truth that two and two make four. Why? Because if any exception, to this truth were admitted, then mathematics would be guesswork and language would be all nonsense. I also believe as an absolute truth that there is no life after death. Why? Because if "death" means the cessation, or the end, of "life," then "life after death" is a flat contradiction in terms, or language is all nonsense. I also believe that Napoleon was a man who lived upon this earth at one time. In this case my belief is not quite absolute because my evidence is not quite absolute. But it is near enough to being so for most practical purposes. Nevertheless I would not discard evidence to the contrary as impossible. Lastly I do not believe that Jesus, as portrayed in the Bible, was a man who lived on this earth. Here again my belief is open to modification, though whether such a person did or did not live in reality is a matter of as much indifference to me as whether Napoleon really lived or not. As a problem of evidence both questions interest me. As a matter of history I find my belief in the one stronger than the other solely on account of the evidence. As a matter of fact neither concerns me at all.

So much for *belief*. As for believing in "something higher" than ourselves, the foregoing remarks apply with equal force. When I stand under a tree, I believe in something higher than myself— the tree. The religious person will object to this seeming flippancey. By "higher" he says that he means greater, more sublime, more marvellous, more all-embracing— and so on through a long list of terms which are usually even vaguer than the word "higher." When we ask for explanations or concrete illustrations of what each of these terms means, we are brought face to face with a fog of loose thinking, which it is not easy to penetrate.

Grant that I believe in London, or Mr. Oliver Hardy, as being "greater" than Cambridge, or myself, respectively. Grant that I believe in kindness, or a beautiful sunset, as being more "sublime" than cruelty, or an east-end slum, respectively. Grant that I believe in England, or a gushing hostess, as being more "all-embracing" than Sussex, or a mysogyist, respectively. Grant that I believe all these things on the evidence of my senses as verified by the corroborative witness of others, where does that elusive entity "God" come in? The religious person would have me exaggerate, in imagination, all these comparative terms, until my imagination is incapable of exaggerating them any further. And when the bursting point has been reached, that is "God"!

This, as an effort of the imagination, is, of course, very entertaining to some persons, though a trifle idiotic to others. But at best it is no more than an effort of the imagination. It proves nothing. For the imagination can just as easily exaggerate such terms in an opposite sense, and can invent a "something" bursting with infinite lowness, smallness, meanness, cruelty, ignorance and so fourth. And we are once again up against the competition between the two imaginary "powers" which I referred to in my previous article, together with all the illogicalities and inconsistencies which such a theory contains.

The difficulty which the Atheist encounters, with people who give such answers as the one that has been discussed, is that these answers are a clear indication of the absence of thought. And

it is remarkable to note that this absence of thought is the unfailing companion of credulity—the readiness to believe in the existence or truth of anything without bothering to verify the evidence. Yet even though discussion may not convince the God-believer of the purely imaginary nature of his mental idol, the Atheist can rest happy in the knowledge that the seed of criticism and commonsense almost invariably bears some good fruit. Unless a person is mentally defective, or a conscious self-deceiver, Truth is bound to oust his false beliefs in the long run. And for this reason even the most inconclusive discussion of religious subjects should not deter the enterprising Atheist from trying again when the opportunity presents itself.

"*We must believe in something.*" Why, certainly! But, in the name of commonsense, don't let us believe in anything just because we were told to do so when we were babies. Let us insist on some verifiable proof of its existence and reality first.

C. S. FRASER.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

A student of the St. Xavier's College, Bombay, has sent us the magazine of that college for February last with a request for comments on the passages "Science and Divines" which appear on pages 108 and 109 of that magazine. The writer of those notes takes Prof. M. N. Saha seriously to task for saying, at the recent session of the Congress of Science held in Bombay, that "The Darwinian Theory of Evolution had knocked the bottom out of the Biblical Myth about the Origin of Man". He calls this a trespass into the ground of Religion. Why a trespass? Why should the Biblical account of the Creation of Man be considered a religious question which Science has no right to assail. Either that account is the true manner in which man came into existence or it is not. Science considers it is not, and a Scientist has a perfect right to explain how erroneous is that account in the light of the science of biology. It amazes one to learn that the writer of those notes considers this, not only a trespass, but an "extra Scientific Statement". The inference is that priests must not be contradicted when they teach erroneous theories about the origin of man or the Universe. By what right do they make these subjects their own province? Are they afraid that scientists, who enlighten people on these questions, are doing them real harm by showing on what erroneous ideas their religion has been founded?

* * *

Prof. Saha also spoke on Astronomy, of which he is a great authority. He naturally referred to the vast strides the study of that science has achieved and showed how compared with this, the idea of creation as depicted in the Bible was childish and utterly erroneous. This is also considered to be an extra scientific statement, which that writer thinks Prof. Saha had no right to make! After this it is hard to convince us that priests are not afraid of the scientific light which is thrown on questions that they exploit, and it is, indeed, comical to hear them assure us that "True Religion has little

to fear from true Science." Those notes try to convey the impression that since many priests are well acquainted with science, for instance, L'Abbe' Lemaitre of the Louvain University of Belgium, who is a recognized eminent astronomer like Jeans and Eddington, and since his scientific knowledge does not disturb his religion and that of other "Scientific" priests, that writer does not consider that religion is incompatible with science. Prof. Saha is represented as being rash in making such statements. We quite agree that, from a priestly point of view, such statements which show the myths of the Bible are very undesirable and rash.

* * *

It is amusing to learn that Roman Catholic priests have no fear of the inroads science has made on their cherished beliefs. The assurance that all is well with their religion is, of course, pure bunk on their part. The fundamental dogmas of their creed are based on the accuracy of some of these Biblical accounts. We showed this in our article on the Myth of Creation in our last month number. Small wonder, that the Church 300 years ago, realizing the true import of the then new Copernician doctrine of the solar system, condemned such teaching and persecuted those who taught the same. Bruno was burnt at the stake for teaching the heliocentric doctrine, though today they try to make believe that he was then murdered for other theological reasons. Galileo, at any rate, was imprisoned for this offence and Copernicus, himself, was obliged to keep away from Papal influence to escape a similar fate. At that time, the Church was candid enough to admit that the heliocentric doctrine was contrary to the Scriptures and damaging to the Catholic faith. In exercise of its right to determine what true science is, the Church, in the Pontificate of Paul V, stepped in and, by the mouth of the Holy Congregation of the Index, delivered, on the 5th of March 1616, the following decree :—

"And whereas it hath also come to the knowledge of the Said Holy Congregation that the false Pythagorean doctrine of the mobility of the earth and the immobility of the sun, entirely opposed to Holy Writ, which is taught by Nicolas Copernicus is now published abroad and received by many. In order that this opinion may not further spread, to the damage of Catholic truth, it is ordered that this and all other books teaching the like doctrine be suspended, and by this decree they are all respectively suspended, forbidden, and condemned."

* * *

After this it leaves us cold what scientific truths the Church choses to accept or reject. It leaves us colder still when we are assured that priests, like L'Abbe' Lemaitre, feel no misgivings about their religion in the light of modern knowledge. Father LeMaitre, of course, is a mathematician. He has no authority to speak on the science of Biology which treats of the origin of man. As regards his equanimity about modern Astronomy not being in conflict with the Mosaical Cosmogony on which his religion is founded, he does not enlighten us how he harmonizes this with modern knowledge. His mind must have several water-tight compartments, like many others who are so complacent about their belief. While modern knowledge finds room in one, absurd myths and legends are lodged in others and they are not allowed to clash. The fact is that many priests, who have

committed themselves by a vow when quite young to defend an untenable creed, are obliged to resort to all sort of intellectual jugglery to do this. One can only pity them and also rejoice that in these days many sincere and upright thinkers consider this as pure intellectual dishonesty. Dr. Barnes, the Anglican Bishop, admits that these Biblical myths have been exploded by Science, yet he thinks he can still call himself a Christian !

* * *

On the 19th of this month will be celebrated the centenary of Kursondas Muljee who was a bold social reformer and a fearless freethinker. He mercilessly exposed all the gross abuses and scandal that were current in the religious world of a certain Hindu community in Bombay. As was to be expected, this led him into serious legal trouble. He was prosecuted before the Bombay High Court in 1861 and was honourably acquitted. In a very interesting article published in some Bombay dailies, Mr. Lakmidas Rowjee Tairsee, quite recently, gave a brief account of the life and work of that remarkable man. What strikes one most was his fearlessness to attack those powerful Maharajs who were the cause of those scandals. With the exception of a few right minded persons in his community, he had every body against him; but he did not flinch in his task and in the end he was rewarded by the reforms that his attacks introduced. India is such a country that any one who decries against priestcraft is always looked upon as a bad man; but Kursondas quite bravely defied all this and won in the end.

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The annual general meeting of the Association was held at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay on Tuesday the 6th March at 7-30 p. m. The following were present:—

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, Dr. C. L D'Avoine, Mr. D. R. D. Wadia, Dr. G. Coelho, R. D. Karve, Mr. M. R. P. Masani, P. Tricumdas, Dr. S. B. Gadgil, J. Ward, T. Labelle, A. P. Costa, A. K. Divekar, Dr. M. B. Thakore, M. H. Vakil, R. B. Lotevala, Dr. T. J. Thomson Wells, E. J. Marquis, A. Raptokos, S. A. Brelvi, L.R. Tairsee, Mrs. P. D. Wadia.

Dr. Deshmukh occupied the chair.

The notice of the meeting having been read, the minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The Secretary read the annual report and the Treasurer the statement of accounts.

The president moved the adoption of the report and the statement of accounts.

In considering the report Mr. Masani was of opinion that the Association had not done anything to carry out the primary object of spreading the movement amongst the masses. He therefore suggested that at the first meeting of the new committee the latter body should consider ways and means of executing our first object. One of the means of doing so was to distribute pamphlets in the vernaculars in the mill area to the mill hands and he opined that the cost should not be too much for the Association to bear.

Mr. P. Tricumdas supported Mr. Masani. He gave the example of "The Rationalist" of Madras which was sold in large numbers within a few months after its foundation. He put this down to the fact that "The Rationalist" was more of a live organ dealing with all subjects that affected ordinary human beings while "Reason" was more detached. In his opinion it was not enough to have lectures limited to the intelligentia but he wanted the association toorganise lectures to the working classes. He further thought that the formation of a Birth Control Clinic under the auspices of the Association would go a long way.

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine considerd the suggestion of introducing rationalistic literature amongst the masses impracticable as they did not have the preliminary education to follow the above. He thought that more good would come if these leaflets were distributed in areas inhabited by middle class of people and in places frequented by them. He felt that the word masses in the objects of the Association was a wrong one and ought to be changed.

Mr. Dubash suggested that greater use must be made of the press for the purposes of propaganda. He put forward the suggestion that Rationalists must fight for a status as a distinct unit of society with their own social laws and ethical code. Even though the Rationalists by renouncing religion have attempted to throw off the slavery of these bodies yet, in ordinary life as it exists a Rationalist is tried and judged by the existing laws which are all base on religions that have been renounced.

Mr. Ward advised caution and thought that the first thing the Association should do was to capture the intelligentia of the country and the field in this direction was hardly touched.

The report and the audited statement of accounts was then adopted.

The following office bearers were then elected:

President, G. V. Deshmukh; proposed by D. R. D. Wadia, seconded by T. J. Wells.

Vice-Presidents Dr. A. S. Erulkar, C. L. D'Avoine; proposed by G. Coelho, seconded by Mr. DaCosta.

Treasurer D. R. D. Wadia, proposed by R. D. Karve, seconded by M. H. Vakil,

Executive Committee, M. A. Somejee, T. J. Thompsom Wells, S. S. Brelvi, R. B. Lotevala, M. H. Vakil, V. Khanolkar, P. Tricumdas, M. R. P. Masani, proposed by C. L. D'Avoine and seconded by R. D. Karve.

Honorary Secretaries G. Coelho and R. D. Karve, proposed by M. R. P. Masani, and seconded by P. Tricumdas.

The President moved .....

"That this meeting of the Rationalist Association of India greatly appreciates the services rendered in the Reason case by Messrs. F. S. Talyarkhan, C. N. Kanuga, R. F. S. Talyarkhan and as Counsel and Messrs. Mahimtura & Co. Solicitors and resolves that a token be presented to them as a mark of appreciation."

Carried unanimously.

The President moved.....

"That this meeting thanks our honorary auditors for having so kindly audited our accounts for the year under report."

Carried unanimously.

With a vote of thanks to the Chair the meeting terminated.

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Annual Report for 1933

1. **Office-Bearers.**

President

G. V. Deshmukh, M.D., F.R.C.S.

Vice-Presidents

A. S. Tyebji

C. L. D'Avoine, M.D.

Honorary Treasurer

D. R. D. Wadia, Bar-at-Law.

Honorary Secretaries

G Coelho, M.B., M.R.C.P.

R. D. Karve, M.A.

Members of Ex. Comm.

A. S. Erulkar, M.D.

V. R. Khanolkar M.D.

R. B. Lotevala

S. A. Megherian

Miss P. N. Nariman

M. A. Somejee, M.A., Bar-at-Law

T. J. Wells

M. H. Vakil, M.A., B.L.

2. **Members.** The year opened with 182 members—Of these four were life members. The year ended with 181 members. During the year 22 refused to renew their subscriptions, three resigned, three died. Five ordinary members became Life members. There were 27 new members.

3. **Reason.** 500 copies of this monthly are printed and distributed. Besides the members a large number of libraries all over India are maintained on the circulation list. Because of financial difficulties it has not been possible to increase the size of the journal. It is also difficult to get contributions.

4. **Library.** More books have been issued to the members than before. Our donors this year have been Lt. Col. Sanjana, Mr. Ram Gopal, Mr. D. R. D. Wadia and Mr. DaCosta. Mr. Sanjana continues to send his copy of Free Thinker which is afterwards circulated amongst a group of Muslim Rationalists who are running a circulating library.

5. **Finance.** A separate statement of accounts will be presented by the Honorary Treasurers. From that it will be evident that we are badly off. During the year some gentlemen were good enough to offer us donations; some have been paid some are still outstanding. The Committee hopes that these persons will be good enough to pay in their contributions early.

6. **Other activities.** A public discussion on birth control was organised by the Association. Drs. Khanolkar, Erulkar, Mr. Vakil, Mr. Karve and Prof. Asana took part. The meeting was packed. It created a great deal of interest and was followed by meetings on the same subject in other learned societies in Bombay.

7. **Government prosecutes the Editor of Reason.** At the end of the year, on the 5th of December, sanction was accorded by the local government of Bombay to prosecute the Editor of "Reason" for articles that appeared in the September issue of "Reason" under section 295-A. Copies were seized from the press and the C. I. D. officers visiting the offices of the Association "requested" for all the available copies of the September issue of "Reason". The result of this will be embodied in the report for the year 1934.

8. **Hony. Auditors.** Messrs Cornelius and Davar have again kindly acted as our honorary auditors.

DINNER OF RATIONALISTS

The annual meeting was followed by a dinner when Dr. D'Avoine was congratulated on his acquittal. The Moorish Room of the Taj Mahal Hotel was filled with members and their guests. Amongst the guests were Messrs. F. S. Talyarkhan, C. N. Kanuga, R. F. S. Talyarkhan, Mr. Mahimtura our Counsel and Solicitor, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Mr. Huseinbhoy Laljee, Raja Bahadur Govindlal Pittie and Mr. B. G. Horniman. There was a fairly good attendance of ladies this year. Mr. Horniman in proposing the toast of Dr. D'Avoine congratulated him on the bold fight he had put up against superstition. He drew the attention of the gathering to the religious journals which indulge in abuse and in villification of their opponents, and to religious leaders who also do likewise. But all these carry on unhampered. The acquittal of Dr. D'Avoine meant that we have the right to say what we think is right so long as one does not go out of one's way to outrage the feelings of others. He was not sure whether this was a precursor of other triumphs, but all the same, he advised caution as the fight for freedom was not yet over. Mr. Tairsee, supporting Mr. Horniman, referred to Kursandas Muljee and Bradlaugh who were both reformers and ultimately won their point. He said that vested interests were against Rationalism and the chief opponents were priests who ran religion as a profitable business, and a business without capital to boot. They were trying their level best to keep people in religion. His sympathies for Dr. D'Avoine were perhaps greater than those of others as he had suffered like the doctor. Dr. D'Avoine in his reply thanked the speakers and the friends who had met there to congratulate him as well as all those who had written to him or congratulated him personally. He did not consider it as a personal triumph, but as a vindication of free expression of opinion. After discussing the case with his Counsel he was satisfied that he would to be acquitted. His great fear was that, if convicted, it meant an end not only to his writings but to the liberty of free expression. He was very thankful to Mr. Talyarkhan and Mr. C. N. Kanuga and his Solicitors for the able way they had conducted his defence.

Dr. Deshmukh, the President, then gave the toast of Messers F. S. Talyarkhan, Kanuga, R. F. S. Talyarkhan and Mahimtura. He said the Association was very poor and could not afford to pay the high fees that might have been necessary. But both Mr. Kanuga and Mr. Talyarkhan as well as the Solicitors on being approached willingly gave us their services without any remuneration. The Association was very thankful to them and he requested them to be good enough to accept the small tokens that the Association offered to them as a mark of appreciation. Mr. Talyarkhan, replying, spoke of the great field for Rationalism and wished the Association success as there was a large scope for the Association to work to clear the long night of ignorance and superstition in India. Mr. Kanuga associated himself with Mr. Talyarkhan.

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai gave the toast "Prosperity to the Rationalist Association of India." He spoke of the terrible exploitation of the mind that has been systematically carried on by priests for centuries, and dwelt at length on the function of the Association which should be to put an end to this exploitation. Priests, he said, had exploited the mind of man for the basest of purposes and in this their methods were despotic.

Dr. Coelho thanked Mr. Desai and the guests for their good wishes. He pointed out that the Rationalist Association of India was a little candle-light flickering in the dark night of superstition and invited all those that felt the curse of superstition to join the Association so that it may swell to a bright light lasting right through the night and facilitating the on ward march of progress.

RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA.

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 1933.

RECEIPTS.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	PAYMENTS.	Rs. a. p.
To Balance at Bank 1-1-33	636 2 3		By Postage	73 13 6
To Balance (Deposit with Secretary, Blavatsky Lodge) ...	25 0 0		„ Printing & Stationary ...	14 0 0
		661 2 3	„ Bank Charges & Commisson	1 0 0
To Subscriptions: Life Membership	400 0 0		„ Rent for Meeting ...	10 0 0
Annual Ordinary Membership ...	710 0 0		„ "Dinner" Expense ...	230 0 0
		1,100 0 0	„ Magazine "Reason" ...	1,033 8 0
To Donations: General ...		180 0 0	„ Printing etc. ...	43 7 0
„ Magazine "Reason" Sales Subscriptions ...		41 8 0	„ Cash & other Balances Balance with Central Bank of India Ltd., on current account on 31st December 1933,...754-5-9	
„ Subscriptions for Dinner...		192 8 0	„ Deposit with Secretary Blavatsky Lodge....25-0-0	779 5 9
		Rs. 2,185 2 3		Rs. 2,185 2 3

Examined and found correct subject to Report of even date.

CORNELIUS & DAVAR,
Incorporated Accountants (London).
Honorary Auditors.

Bombay, 16th Feb. 1934.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

Vol. III : No. 3 **April 1934**

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS.

The centenary of Karsondas Muljee, the fearless Hindu social reformer, was celebrated with great pomp at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall, Bombay, on the 9th of March last. In the absence of His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda who was unfortunately prevented by illness from presiding at this function, Her Highness Maharani Gaekwar was elected to the chair.

Long before the proceedings started the vast hall and galleries were packed to suffocation. It was unfortunate that many, who were anxious to pay their

homage to this Indian "Charles Bradlaugh" had to go away disappointed as it was impossible to secure even standing accomodation. Several speakers, among whom were Mr. K. Natarajan, Mr. Maneckji Patel, Mr. Lakmidas Rowjee Tairsee, Mr. K. M. Munshi and Mr. Chagla eulogized the great work the late Mr. Karsondas did in the teeth of fierce opposition and the salutary reform he introduced into the religious and social atmosphere of an important Hindu community in Western India. The address of H. H. the Gaekwar of Baroda was read by a Colonel of the Baroda army. In it he gave expression to very broad and liberal ideas on social and religious progress which were listened to with wrapt attention. These enlightened ideas of H. H. do great credit to him as a progressive and cultured Prince.

* * *

It is impossible to realize the depth of moral degradation and religious imbecility in which that community had fallen unless one reads the legal proceedings instituted against Karsondas Muljee in the High Court of Bombay in 1862. That prosecution was launched against him by some of the "holy" Maharajas he had exposed. Fifteen or twenty years ago these could be read in a booklet entitled the *Ras Lila Case* obtainable at some book-sellers in Bombay. The present writer, who had the opportunity of reading this, was horrified to learn the abominations and practices perpetrated by those Maharajas under the cloak of religion. It is really a wonder that religion can so hypnotize people as to make them submit so abjectly to the outrages of their priests in the manner that community did. When it is recalled that that community, which is a large one, is one of the richest in Western India and contains many intelligent and successful business men, it revolts one to think that, not only did they submit readily to the abominable wickedness of those holy priests who dishonoured and outraged their wives, sisters and daughters in the most disgusting manner, they actually resented and protested against the exposure of these priests by Karsondas Muljee. It is hard to believe, yet it is a fact that with the exception of a few upright individuals in that community, they all turned against Karsondas and sided with their corrupted priests! It is the same story all over the world. All reformers of a corrupted system of religion have always met with the hostility of the people who mistake them for enemies of their religion. Such is the inevitable result of blind faith and bigotry.

* * *

One must not imagine that such stupid people have all died since 1862. They are even more numerous to day, at any rate, in this country. One has only to speak against the degrading superstitions the priests of any religion teach and encourage, for the people concerned to raise their ignorant voices in indignant protest. As Voltaire truly said: "To enlighten such people is a dangerous and thankless job. They are like the patients who sometimes assault their physicians" Karsondas' life was often in danger when he was dealing with that question. Yet, as Sir John Beaumont, The Chief Justice of Bombay, said when presiding at another function recently held in Bombay in honour of Karsondas, "He, Karsondas, was not anti-religious. He did not attack any of the principles of the Hindu faith. What he attacked

was the abuses which had grown within that faith. History showed that in almost all religious systems the priests had a tendency to make claims amongst an ignorant congregation which the founder of the religion never intended to make; to assert an intimacy with the deity which no human being could in fact enjoy; and to take advantage of their claims in order to commit acts which were wholly wrong." "That phenomenon," continued Sir John Beaumont, "was not peculiar to the Hindu religion. The same sort of thing also happened to Christianity in the Middle Ages. History has shown that it was very difficult to combat such abuses, for not only did priests have great temporal influence, not only were they able to cause a great deal of trouble to their enemy in this world, but they can also threaten him with unknown penalties in the next and therefore they have considerable advantage at the start."

Every sensible person will, of course, agree with what Sir John Beaumont said. One, however, must not saddle the Middle Ages only with all the abuses that have disgraced Christianity. There are still many such abuses and disgusting superstitions in that creed which are a disgrace to our present civilization. Only, one must not speak about it; there are still millions of ignorant and bigoted Christians who vehemently resent any attack on such practices. When they cannot safely crack your head, they run to the police for protection! This alone shows the immense power the priest still wields over the masses. By a curious process of reasoning these thoughtless people, these poor victims of a debased system, have been made to believe that it is sinful to say that a priest can do wrong; that all who speak against priests are the enemies of religion; that they are wicked people and should not be listened to as they are all liars; and whatever the priests do is always for the good of the people, for the cause of civilization and for the greater glory of God! Therefore all who decry against priestcraft are the emissaries of Satan, the sworn enemies of God. It is by such reasoning that Socrates was executed, Jesus Christ was crucified. Thousands of brave reformers have suffered for their boldness in attacking priestcraft.

We, Rationalists, are optimistic enough to believe that education will in the end enlighten people and enable them to see things in their true light—perhaps so; but one must not forget that the priest can still command great influence and can command the support of millions who are too ready to listen to him.

* * *

Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore was not the only person in India who was shocked at Mr. Gandhi's outburst on the Bihar Earth-quake. It surprised many that Mr. Gandhi should have taken advantage of this awful calamity to exploit popular feelings. Mr. Gandhi did so in the best style of any blatant Christian preacher. He thought that God had sent that fearful calamity as a punishment for the neglect of the Harijans. As Dr. Tagore truly said, it surprises one that a person of Mr. Gandhi's culture and education should ascribe a natural phenomenon caused by the inexorableness of universal laws to the wrath of a capricious God. Rather than calling this the work of a wise god, one would be justified in putting it down to the mischief of a male volent fiend, blind in his fury and pitiless in his execution. It was, and is still, the fashion with Christian preachers to raise the hair of their followers with such stories of the

wrath of God after a great calamity. It is at such times that the priest never misses the opportunity of warning people that "a just and offended God punishes severely those who neglect the Church and do not listen to priests." The belief in the wrath of God is a profitable business for the Churches. It matters not whether it degrades God and reduces him to the level of a petty tyrant, cruel and revengeful. FEAR is, indeed, the motive power that keeps the Churches going.

* * *

Nothing, in our opinion, can beat certain Roman Catholic bigots of this city for sheer stupidity. Our acquittal and the universal approval of it in India seem to have upset them very badly. As a matter of fact, they alone were jubilant when the case was pending as they expected a sure conviction. In their sulleness and mortification they vented their spleen by proclaiming in the press that (1) While the case caused considerable interest, they alone were indifferent about it (2) That they did not care two hoots about rationalistic literature in general and our writings in particular as their faith is above reason (3) That their Church has stood the onslaughts of Rationalism triumphantly for the last nineteen hundred years and it is not likely to be perturbed by rationalistic propaganda. As regards the first everybody knows today who ran to the Police for protection, believing as they did that our efforts in the cause of Rationalism here are meeting with considerable success ; the second assurance is superfluous as no Catholic is permitted to read rationalistic writings; the third only proclaims their profound ignorance of the history of their church, its present condition and the crushing victories that Rationalism has already won over it, though it is only two centuries old. They cannot even realize that during its career the Church had to contend a good deal against rival creeds which it suppressed by force, but never before met the formidable forces of Rationalism except quite recently. Already the bottom has been knocked out of the church. They are unintelligent enough not to understand that other religions also seem apparently strong as they have still millions of adherents.

THE MYTH OF THE RESURRECTION.

A reader of "REASON", who is evidently not a Rationalist, has sent us an article on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ which he found in a religious journal. He seems to think that the article in question is so interesting as to deserve the serious consideration of all Rationalists. That article entitled "Reason and the Resurrection" is taken from a book, "Conversions to the Catholic Church" by Christopher Hollis, who says that he was converted to the Catholic Church from the Church of England. Though we find nothing remarkable in it, it being of the usual type written by people of a credulous disposition, we have decided to notice it in these columns to show the fallacious arguments that still prevail on this question. That article, as one may guess, purports to prove that the resurrection of Jesus rests on undeniable evidence, and that if it was not a fact his disciples would not from the beginning have preached it with the conviction that

made them suffer death rather than denying it. He also opines that if the resurrection was not a fact Christianity would not have come into existence. Most Rationalists will not agree with this. Without the story of the resurrection, Christianity would, doubtless, have been robbed of a good deal of its supernatural claim, but there is no reason why it should not have come into existence notwithstanding. Several systems of religion before Christianity flourished very well, and some of them like Hinduism and Buddhism are still going strong; while Islamism, which is today a widespread religion, did not require any story of resurrection to become one of the great religions of the world. It is also a fallacy to imagine that Christianity originated all of a sudden with the mission of Jesus Christ. It was a growth from earlier beliefs and speculations, and took shape in the ordinary way. To deny this is to assume that Judaism was the only religion which prevailed in Asia Minor and that no other cults existed. The story of Jesus might have given it an impetus which it needed to spread; but this is a different story to the belief that it originated like wild fire soon after the alleged resurrection in Palestine. Many eminent scholars today, who have devoted their lives to the study of this question, believe the story to be a myth based on some legends current in that part of the world two thousand years ago. It is difficult to reject this opinion as the nature of the case proves it to be, indeed, a legend.

Christianity, in effect, claims that its Founder was publicly slain in a populous city, was buried in it and came to life again after spending some thirty six hours in the grave. This is alleged to have taken place at a certain time in the history of the world. It, therefore, falls within the sphere of historical science, and the methods of that science must be employed to establish it on a historical basis. Mr. Hollis admits this for he says, "One had to approach the question exactly as one would have approached any other historical question—to consider the evidence for and against Julius Cæsar's crossing of the Rubicon".

Did Mr. Hollis do so conscientiously? At the outset we find him to be temperamentally not a fit person to do so. He is, assuredly, too easily convinced, and he entertains some unjustifiable bias and prejudice against certain people who, he says, denied that story. He says, in effect, "that these early enemies of the Christians denied the Resurrection but they never denied the existence of Christ nor the crucifixion as they obviously would have done had it been possible to do so". Why should they have denied the existence of Christ or his crucifixion if they were sure that these were facts? There is nothing strange that a certain person may have existed and that he was publicly executed; but the story that the person, who was dead and buried, came back to life is so absolutely contrary to all human experience that any one is quite justified in demanding the most rigorous proof and evidence to that effect. Is that forthcoming? Please note the gratuituous assumption that these deniers, probably honest and sincere people, were actuated by bad faith. Is not this the familiar method of Catholics to raise prejudice against their opponents?

What reliable and unimpeachable evidence have we that the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus were facts that cannot be disputed? We have none; except a few unreliable documents that have come down to us, known as the Gospels and Epistles, written long

after these alleged events are said to have taken place by people who could not have been eye witnesses to these things. It is remarkable that not a single historian or writer living at or shortly after the time Jesus is said to have moved about in Palestine preserves even his name. These early Christians were obliged to resort to the dishonest practice of interpolating a brief passage in the works of Josephus to make it appear that he knew something about Jesus. Even theologians today are obliged to admit that the passage in question is a spurious one!

Yes, this remarkable silence of the great historian and philosopher who lived at that time is most significant. As Professor Schmiedel, who is an acknowledged great Biblical scholar says, "The meagreness of the historical testimony regarding Jesus, whether in canonical writings outside the Gospels or in profane writers such as Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonis, and Pliny, is most pronounced." Yet, Jerusalem, at that time, was a cosmopolitan city, and many of its inhabitants, besides the Jews, should have heard of the wonderful events which are said to have taken place within its walls. Are we to believe that human nature then was different from what it is now? Is it possible to imagine that everybody, except a few disciples and women, was indifferent about such a wonderful story? What could have prevented a risen God from walking publicly in to the city to confound his enemies and to proclaim his glory? Nothing of the kind took place. Even St. Paul did not know anything about it! How does a believer account for this significant silence? The Gospels, themselves, throw light on the question. It is clear on reading these writings that they were not written by eye witnesses. We know today that they were written by people who tried to put on record the beliefs and traditions current among the disciples and early followers of Jesus some decades after his death. Few, to day, would dispute that the earliest Gospel, that of Mark was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70; Matthew, about 119 A. D.; Luke, between 100 and 110; and John between 132 and 140. It is certain that the authors of these Gospels depended on earlier materials and that they were not very critical about what they heard. If these were written by people who were perfectly acquainted with the alleged facts they set out to put on record, they would have surely not contained so many discrepancies. It is well known that the narratives of the resurrection contained in the four Gospels present many remarkable discrepancies which seriously deteriorate their value as evidence. While it is true that the narratives of an event by different historians may contain unimportant discrepancies, which do not necessarily impugn the reality of the event narrated, those found in the four Gospels are not of that nature; they contradict one another on very vital points which render them useless as reliable evidence. The following shows a few of these serious discrepancies as found in the four Gospels:—

(1°) They differ as to the number of the women. John mentions only *one*, Mary Magdalene; Mathew *two*, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary; Mark *three*, the two Marys and Salome;—Luke, *several*, the two Marys, Joanna, and "certain others with them."

(2) They differ as to the number of persons in white raiment who appeared to the women. Mark speaks of one "young

man"; Matthew of one "angel";—Luke of two "men";—John of two "angels" According to John, also, the appearance of the two angels was not till Mary's second visit of the Tomb, after Peter and John had been there.

(3) They differ as to the words spoken by the apparition. According to Matthew and Mark they asserted the resurrection of Jesus and his departure into Galilee, and sent a message to his disciples enjoining them to follow him thither. According to Luke they simply stated that he was risen, and referred to former predictions of his to this effect. According to John they only asked Mary, "Woman! why weepest thou?"

(4°) They differ in another point. According to Mathew, Luke, and John, the women carried the information as to what they had seen at once to the disciples. According to Mark "they said nothing to any man."

(5) They differ as to the parties to whom Jesus appeared. According to Mark it was to no one. According to Matthew it was first to the two women, then to the eleven. According to John it was first to one woman then twice to the assembled Apostles. According to Luke it was first to no woman, but to Cleophas and his companion, then to Peter, and then to the assembled eleven.

(6) They differ as to the locality. According to Mark it was nowhere. According to Matthew it was first at Jerusalem and then at Galilee, whither the disciples went in obedience to the angelic command. According to Luke it was in Jerusalem and its vicinity and *there alone*, where the disciples remained in obedience to the reiterated command of Jesus himself. (Luke XXIV 49, 53, Acts 1-4.) Luke and Matthew thus contradict each other beyond all possibility of reconciliation. Matthew tells us that Jesus commanded them to go into Galilee, and they went thither; (Galilee is at least a 100 miles distant from Jerusalem, beyond the mountains of Samaria). Luke tells us that he positively commanded them "not to depart from Jerusalem," and that they remained there (xxiv 53). If Matthew is right, the story of Thomas, one of the eleven who was in Jerusalem some days after the event and would not be convinced unless he saw Jesus personally, becomes nonsensical. According to Matthew he, also, should have gone into Galilee. John, also one of the eleven, contradicts the departure of the disciples to Galilee. But Luke contradicts himself quite flatly on another point. In the Gospel he represents the Ascension as taking place on the evening of the third day after the crucifixion: such is the clear meaning of the text (as may be seen from verses 21, 33, 36, 50):—in the Acts he places the Ascension forty days after the Resurrection, and says that Jesus was seen by his disciples during the whole interval!

After a critical study of these Gospels and Epistles one can arrive at the only sensible conclusion possible, the only one that can be reasonably accepted, namely, that certain followers of Jesus, who it is quite possible was executed in Jerusalem, not by the Jews who had no legal right to do so, but by the Romans who were then in power, firmly believed that he was resurrected and they preached this with all the conviction they were capable of. Believers lay great stress on this, assuming as they do that these timid and uninfluential followers would not have done so unless they were absolutely convinced of the resurrection of their Master. It is precisely this erroneous

assumption that leads to a great error of judgment on this question. Many people are apt to imagine that these early followers of Jesus must have been people of great intellectual culture who were incapable of entertaining any erroneous beliefs or ideas and what they believed to be true must be sufficient for us. As a matter of fact, they were a very credulous lot who believed many absurd things. They certainly believed it to be an every day occurrence that dead men came back to life again. The story of Lazarus, and that of the saints who rose from their graves in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified, and other such stories show that such men did not require much evidence or proof to believe in resurrections. A mere rumour must have been enough for them especially as their minds were already prepared for such an event. A favourable state of the mind, as we all know, can account for many things that would be impossible to one not so disposed. Mr. Hollis says that their preaching met with enormous hostility. One can quite believe this; because it must have been quite natural for the people of Jerusalem to take them for a crowd of lunatics to preach such nonsense. Would it have been so if the people of that city were convinced that such an extraordinary event had really happened? On the contrary, it is more than probable that a tremendous reaction in favour of Jesus would have set in which no enemies of his could have stemmed. But Jesus, after his alleged resurrection, did not appear publicly in Jerusalem to cause that reaction and to confound his enemies!

Mr. Hollis seems to attach much importance to the, now, discredited story of the "empty tomb" (See Encyclopedia Biblica par 138 where the reasons are given why the story of the empty tomb cannot be entertained.) This story, in effect, is to be found only in the very Gospels that we have discovered cannot be trusted as unimpeachable evidence. Possibly he also believes the story that Roman soldiers were placed at the grave, an evident clumsy invention of later dates!

We have also to bear in mind that the disciples of Jesus, who expected the end of the world to take place in their lifetime, and the kingdom of the Messiah to be established in heaven, may not have believed in the actual resurrection of his body, but of his spirit. Here, again, the Gospels seem to indicate this. Most of the apparitions recorded were, indeed, in the nature of a spiritual manifestation. Even Peter did not clearly recognize Jesus when he appeared to him in Galilee, and the others to whom he appeared experienced the same difficulty. Whatever may have been the belief of these men, it is simply preposterous to ask us to believe as they did because some of them gave their lives for their convictions. This might have some weight if we did not know that the devotees of other religions, held by Christians to be false, have frequently given their lives for the faith they professed.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

RATIONALISM AND INDIAN RECONSTRUCTION.

(A Prospect of good-humour in Indian Life.)

Let me consult an astrologer as to the problem that confronted me in my fifth year, which recurred forty years after, to a whole set of brains. In the early nineties, life here was freeer. At least, that was the child-experience that walked the streets nude without protest. Civilisation crushes even the cradle under cumbrous clothing. The trappings of the full-suit lend decency to boyhood, though latterly the half-knikker attested the relativity of good taste for even the adult. It is fabled of Paris, that skirts promise to meet other vestments, but to the new-world is given the colonial order to patronise nature in all naturalness. Mr. G. B. Shaw as witness his African black girl forgot her god-quest mending her husband's clothes which she could not persuade him to cease to wear. Before India is held the picture of the loin-cloth. Will that go to—? One half of human want in this world, and the opportunity of the other, hangs on whether, and in what degree, clothes hang about us.

Who has got to search long to find reasons for both the ends of fine feeling? In mediæval times, cleanliness was a point of theological debate. Henry C. Lea's documented book, "the History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church" proves the rigours of clerical observance that left no time to take good care of God's temple by washing or cleaning. Disease was hailed as the divine pleasure to sound the devotion to the Lord. To adminster drugs to alleviate pain ill-accorded with orthodox notions of human ethics. Our faiths were not farther from Catholic rigour. "Kimaushadhaih klisyasi mudh durmate" (the stupid and perverse man that bothers about drugs or medicines, Mukundamala, Sloka 31, line 3.) is the voice of the same spirit. It is an unstinting allegiance to the supernatural. Withal, reasons are assigned even by the visionary for his dreams. To wash, to clean, and dress properly, even they are not absolute axiomatic postulates.

The variety of human reason is such that there is not a place under the sun whereat it does not enter its caveat. It has a hold on the hair, on the head, on the chin, on the face which it variously remarks. It perforates the ear and the nose, and tears the skin. Religion touches the barber's shave, the washers tub, and the cobbler's shoe. Thanks to the Golden Bough (our tenderest sympathy to Sir James G. Frazer for the blindness that has overtaken him in old age) even the waste nail-clippings have had a sanctity of theirs. And religion is nothing if it is not man's first, primary, reason, though a supernatural one, for the universe and his own place therein.

We close a third of the present century. In England—and France counts a yet earlier record of Rationalism—it stands for the age of the Rationalist Press Association, a body organised to propagate the doctrine of the supremacy of reason. Here we now witness the new birth of an avowed rational press. But the margin of thirty years between a father-land and a mother-country is not great disparity, provided the temperaments agree. The century and half of the joint lives of partnership is on one side. But human will is not produced

in straight lines, so that the parallellism once started in chance history may remain constant. Incompatability of temper is not uncommon at advanced ages of the contracting parties. Visions of an economic culture are not the less obtrusive. Where domestic relation is none too facile for an inert massive dame yoked by irritatiug steel to force marching ahead of reason, the rub is there, soft though the eye-wash within, and neat the whitewash, without.

That is rambling into the field of political or economic reconstruction, on which mostly social life is grounded. Some even hold that Rationalism is identical with Socialism, which may be left for examination later. Here it is permissible to point out that India is not ruled from Johnson's Court, the Head Quarters of the R. P. A., but from Whitehall, the bureaucratic centre wherefrom emenate its naval, military, administrative impulses. Not in the volumes of rationalist literature, but through ordinance and rule impressed in the blue books and white-papers, is the destiny of the evolution of the entire continent sealed. Just as for an individual a sense of fatality, divine coercion, cripples the freedom of moral responsibility, even so, for the vast country, freewill is determined from without. Apostles of English liberty, seers of social wisdom, spirits that moved in J. S. Mill, Bentham, Spencer, Bradlaugh, and the rest, Rationlists, past and present, do you hear?

Till lately, John Bull had been a good-natured Banya gentleman. He had the sense to give and take, though the Guzerati Banya that towered into the Mahatma would complain that he took more than he ever gave, or even intended to give. Since when the head of Oxford-culture gave away Indian reins, English humour seems to have gone into the waning moon. In times of uncommon penury and want, good-humour is the last thing to stay. "You will teach me, eh, will you?"—thundered a husband, power-drunk. And the wife knows she is in the grip of hunger, of relentless waste, her house ill-furnished, and disorder, stores empty, and the children crying from hunger, ignorance and disease.

Little indeed is the possibility of reconstruction handicapped by empty purse, and an enfeebled power to sense things aright. Science is a costly midwife. Birth-control tends to lessen unborn entries into misery-competition. Even that we are not free to teach. Like the mediæval canonised saints, there be clerics that raise the hue and cry against wanton interference with God's mystery-plan. Ecclesiastical justice has a soft corner for germ-plasm. Where it does not impregnate, they are powerless to banish disease, but where it is sought to regulate, they have their hoarse sermons ready. Abhorance of the science of medicine is reincarnate in our century in the modified form, though drugs and the use of anæsthetics to soften pain and ailment have survived the primitive gods.

Control or none, children are born. Feed and clothe the child one must, in the hot as in the cold climates. But before it begins to feel that it is one among the millions that open their eyes under the same sun, before it knows the unity or similarity of child-life, in food and raiment, in the way the hair is worn, tuft and pigtail, and all that marks for the peculiar community of the accident of its birth is soon impressed on the little person. In its first syllables it lisps the spirit of the Fearful Person that haunts

its memory ever thereafter. The black Krishna, the white-robed Jesus, or the brown or yellow Prophet fills the miraculous presence. Juvenile queries are referred back to the sayings and doings of the unexplained faith, and life expands entwined on one or other of the historic creeds. Mostly it is the survival of the fear in the jungle.

At school careful design curbs bubbling originality. Inconvenient questions are avoided or duly punished. And thanks to an obliging overlord, religious instruction is not farther away from entrance. Christian Missions tell bible-prayers, and Moslem schools gain their birthright. A little attention will sound the Gita tunes for the Hindu too. Tight compartments revive diversities of faith, which the comparative method may turn to advantage. Are we going to accentuate these differences, or are we to obliterate the demarcations? Are we going to plan a programme of conscious activity or shall we ride on the policy of drift? It all depends on the place you give to the race-horse of Indian Reason.

Elsewhere human genius has probed into the problems of society. Eugenics, the young science of population minds the balancing of supply and demand. Family limitation, contraceptives, sterilisation of mental defectives and the physically unfit, diseases, its cure and prevention, segregation &c. are some instruments in her laboratory. In medicine natural therapy is fast replacing the methods of secrecy and witchcraft. Even psycho-therapeutics is claimed to be broadbased on natural science, more than on supernatural intervention. While we have not yet taken to sectarian merger or the fusion of the castes, or reached anywhere near untouchability, education, housing, sanitation and secular morality concern high and low alike. Unemployment has not caught the ear of the temple, and the Mutt, cloister, church or mosque, whose spiritual quests ought to mould man into better shape. Properly harnessed, does not the wealth beneath the idol and the Peeth, contribute to the common weal? When may charitable foundations cease to feed the idler? When to turn them into poor-houses, the nucleus to provide for the destitute, weak, disabled, maimed or the diseased?

Are women to be put forward as an eternally distinct species of animals? Or will they share with men in greater abundance, the benefits of education, vocational training, fine arts or learned professions? Where are they now in the matter of competence for maternity or child-welfare, in public service or franchise? Will they ever become really indepedent to handle the purse? Going down, when will the prostitute and the dancing girl cease her trade? When shall tolerated houses disappear? And in the name of religion which was man's jealousy, shall marriage remain for ever the over-stressed mystery-affair in life that it continues to this day? Severally, and by appropriate organisation, legislative and judicial assistance, when will infant-marriage, money-making alliance, or close-circle-union become social impossibilities? By all these means, will remarriage, intercaste marriage and inter-racial union be promoted to mitigate caste-prejudice and remove the colour-bar? Where the union proves unsuccessful, when will men and women be free to tell each other their minds plainly, without society interposing shackles to perpetuate the

conventional lie? When will man regain the sense of proportion that his existence bears to the vast universe? When do the ghosts that he raised in individual and social life disappear? To our nearest neighbour a visitor from Mars, when shall he appear just a man, no more, no less? With no pretentions to mysterious supernatural association, when will human reason plod along the weary path of social experiment and failure, and in the lessons of defeat that nature provides, vision forth the promise of further stages in evolution?

Some Rationalist friends also ask for my card. Some hold that none may be a Rationalist that is not a Socialist. It may be right. But as every judgment, it may be only relatively correct. It would be also true to say that none may be a Rationalist unless he is a cleric; at any rate, a stranger to Clericalism may not make a good Rationalist. Socialism is an economic issue. Money is a sectional phase of human life, howsoever important its domain. If you please, you may call it rationalist economics, just as one may speak of rationalised engineering, law, medicine, or something else. Rationalism has a wider, more comprehensive rôle. It is essentially a mental attitude, opposed to the acceptance as truth of the dogmatic supernatural claims of religion. A Catholic may be an engineer, lawyer, or doctor, as also a Protestant, and the Rationalist. The basic investigations of their respective faiths lead each one of them to behave differently from the rest, perhaps, even in the very exercise of their callings; though one would be a bad engineer that prays that the river-flood may subside, be a bad doctor that prays for his patient's recovery, and the bad lawyer that prays that his client may win the cause. The Rationalist is on firmer ground with regard to his facts than the religionist professional whose basis is relatively more fictional. So too, the religious economist is more allied to individualist capitalist exploiter than to Socialism. But on that very score, Socialism does not connote Rationalism. The coercive element may intrude therein. Rationalism fights arbitrary authority on all fronts. Reports of enforced socialism verging on the irrational are conveyed regarding Bolshevist regime. We may not judge of their truth, as interested mud-slinging or white-washing does not help in its discovery.

I only repeat in this context what Prof. H. J. Laski reminds us in his article (Rationalist Annual, 1934) on the "Social Obligation of Rationalists" that 'eternal vigilance is the inescapable price of freedom' here, there, and elsewhere. Rationalism stands for individual liberty, no less than for social emancipation. "Scientific socialism" may be a more practical ideal than the vision of an "enlightened anarchy," where each citizen is a sage, and there is no need for government from without in any form. But even Socialism may not avoid class-war, or group conflict. The highest reach of the natural philosopher has gained the nomenclature 'scientific humanism' which in its sweep round the planet is one entire race. Liberal rationalism ought not long to remain the preserve of the few, but the possession of the many. Its spirit ought to remain constantly inclusive, unlike religion which is nothing if not exclusive. Else it withers away even faster than faith, for it has not its backing in wealth or power. As freedom is relative, so will

Rationalism be wholesomely relative to the environment as the body of reference. After Einstein, we are no longer believers in the absolute, good or bad, the God or the Evil one.

Doubtless, India is the land of the idolator. We shall be missing the real spirit of our lives, were we to neglect that fact. Discarded idols need something to replace with. Rationalist efforts may succeed by a judicious displacement of idolatry through ideolatry. It is not worse than Bibliolatry, Mariolatry, Hitlerolatry or Mussolini-worship. Man has nowhere ceased to worship ideas. What we should guard against is the tendency to transfer such worship to the men that are responsible for these ideas. When we respect ideas, we are aware that they may be only partially true, as no truth that is absolute is within human reach. We presume that truth has limits. But when we begin to deify men, we lose light of the natural. Hero-worship is a subtle insidious process of supernaturalism, and is the worst enemy that reason has to contend against As Carlyle stressed, Odin who invented rhunes (the primitive script) was acclaimed as God by fellowmen and he too felt that perhaps he was the divinity that others supposed to rest in him. Such petrified allegiance, resting on the so-called religious sense, brings in the whole volume of the spirit of mystification. Human nature the world over is given to ideolatry, which is another name for the worship of reason. But while elsewhere man employs reason, India loses herself immersed in the worship. A concrete instance will illustrate this indiscriminate submission. Man has long reflected on the prosperities of the circle. He invented the wheel. While machine-industry the world over pays practical homage to the plain and the cogged wheels in the million, India yet paints with saffron, turmeric or kunkum, and breaks coconuts on the wooden wheels of bullock-bandy, or the more recent spinning wheel. We have not applied Vishnu's weapon to our industry on any appreciable scale, but chant learned verses in praise of the Charkra. We seem to possess an innate aptitude to symbolise readily, and employ the remote figures of speech in our daily affairs, and think in terms of the synecdoche, and metonymy. We have lost the real spirit of the Bhagvad-Gita which taught:

Yyavasayatmika buddhir ekeha
kurunandana
Bahusakhayanantascha
buddhayoavyavasayinam (II 41)

(Determinate reason is one-pointed, O, Joy of the Kurus, varied and unceasing are the ratiocinations of the irresolute)

Given any set of facts, to reason out the effect should not be difficult. Failure results from defective reasoning led by an imperfect knowledge of the data. This Buddhi Yoga (the exercise of reason) is expressly enjoined throughout. (See, II, 39, 40, 49, 50, X, 10, XVIII, 57). We may fold up the book, if we please, and folding our brains, we may worship the volume with flowers and sweet food-offering, secreting at the same time the reasons that give it the sanctity in some under-pocket beyond reach. Let Rationalism pick these secret pockets bare to evaluate their content.

Small as is our orbit, man has woven so much falsehood into the fabric of his mental cobweb that in tints of light and shade it baffles research even as the cosmic ray. Mystery pervades the stratosphere and beyond. An expand-

ing universe, spiral nebulæ, stars and planets run forth as ever they do. While the birds sing, and the bees gather honey from the earthly flower. Our nearest ancestry toiled its time without bank accounts, cheques, exploitation, and savage exclusion from the fruits of nature. All that the visitor from Mars has on record of the storms that rose in the depths of the skull began when man lifted his head a few feet higher from the ground. We, that have forged an eminent consciousness, confound the issues of life now prevalent, as also mar that which is yet to come. To signify the import of the problem to us and our successors, I collated at random a few of the more insistent questions. Shall we, as reasonable men and women, apply a conscious direction and control, try to answer them as waking men should, or will they be left to be carried on the winds, wherever they listeth, as if man was not born here? Our attitude towards the destiny of the race, the snapshot of our hazy pose, our blurred figure, the outcome of a shaking head, shall we present that as trophy to the Martian visitor, the token of pity to the poor confused Earth? While our senses last, no, an emphatic NO.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

A COLOSSAL FOLLY.

It is difficult to find adequate words to describe the reactionary Bill which Lord Dawson, M. D. has introduced in the House of Lords with the object of restricting the sale of contraceptives. If passed into law, it will make it illegal to sell them in any street or public place or by means of automatic machines placed in a public place; or to go to private premises for selling them except by request; to display them in or outside a shop; or to give information relating to them to any unmarried person under eighteen. The punishment ranges from a maximum of £20 fine tor a first offence, and £50 for a second offence to a £50 fine and three months imprisonment for subsequent offences.

The Constructive Birth Control Society, presided over by Dr. Marie Stopes, comments on this Bill as follows: "The time chosen is extraordinary *four years after* the Bishops at Lambeth sanctioned the use of scientific contraceptives where health demanded it, and at the very time when America, suffering beyond endurance the evils of Comstockery, is roused to intensive effort to throw it off".

Lord Dawson has been generally considered a birth-controller. Why then this attack on freedom regarding the sale of contraceptives? The Society mentioned above throws light on that: "Lord Dawson, far from being in close touch with the birth control movement as the public imagine, has kept strictly aloof from clinical work and experience, and this Bill was drawn up without reference to either of the leading Societies..... Both were kept in the dark until the last minute about the terms of this Bill,..... it was only actually printed and given to the birth control leaders a few days ago (at the end of January) and is to come up at once before the Lords early in February for the vital second reading, before we have time to muster opinion."

What prompted Lord Dawson to introduce a Bill which will prevent even doctors and nurses giving contraceptives to patients? It seems Dr. Marie Stopes induced some respectable chemists in London to stock and sell contraceptives and now comes Lord Dawson with a Bill which will produce the same results as the similar law in France, viz. the encouragement of abortion and the use of possibly harmful means in the absence of harmless ones. In France some of these means at any rate are openly sold under the pretence of preventing venereal disease, but in England, even the prevention of disease is a crime. Does Lord Dawson really wish to increase the number of abortions?

Dr. Marie Stopes' Society further says: "How ill-acquainted Lord Dawson is with essentials may be gauged by the fact that clinical work has revealed that one of the very best of all contraceptives is pure olive oil; is that to be hidden from display in grocers' shops?.....One can buy in Woolworths a "hygienic packet" of five toy balloons for 3d., several of which in each packet are practical, adequate condoms and known to be and used as such. How is Lord Dawson proposing to deal with them?.....He will reply that his Bill does not touch any of these things—he may not mean to, but worded as it is *it does!*" They end their comment by saying: "If Lord Dawson persists in furthering his Bill he will be execrated the world over in his own time and remembered by posterity as the perpetrator of a bill known as "Dawson's Folly?"

Lord Dawson has struck a blow at the sale of contraceptives in spite of the admitted fact that the principal cause of the diminution of birth-rates in Europe and the consequent reduction of poverty has been largely the free sale of these means. The automatic machine is a particularly useful idea, not only for people who are not bold enough to buy them in broad daylight, but also for people who may have forgotten to buy them. Is forgetfulness a sufficient reason for penalising them?

Then there is the clause about persons under 18. *The New Generation* remarks: "What earthly reason is there for distinguishing between persons under 18 and persons over it? Anybody can marry at 16, and puberty usually comes before that. Contraceptive information is useless to young couples unless they can get it before marriage. It is not likely that immediately after the wedding breakfast they will run off to hunt for contraceptive information. Such legislation would merely force babies on a number of young couples at a particularly unfit time."

That a man occupying the position of the King's physician should not see the inevitable consequences of the Bill he has drafted is hardly credible. Is there any mystery behind this? Has some occult influence been brought to bear on him? Is it a trick to benefit members of his profession by forcing people to go to doctors for contraceptives? To put it in legal jargon, a man must be presumed to have intended the natural consequences of his acts. I prefer to be charitable.

R. D. KARVE.

THE USUAL ANSWERS.

PERHAPS the least frequent of all the vague answers which greet the Atheist in his casual discussions on religion is the one which takes this form :—

(4) "If we just fizzle out to nothing when we die, then I cannot see the use of living."

There are at least three good reasons why this answer is less frequently met with than others. The first is because it is less vaguely worded than most, and is therefore easier to tackle on common-sense lines. Religious persons do not, as a rule, like to involve themselves in arguments from which they cannot readily find a loophole of escape. And in using terms that are not vague or ambiguous, they run a more serious risk of having to admit defeat.

The second reason is that a belief in a so-called "future life" has no necessary connexion with a belief in a "God" of any sort. Spiritualists profess to be scientific investigators of the super-natural. Yet the "revelations" of their mediums, while full of detailed descriptions of persons and conditions to be found in the "higher planes" (descriptions which bear a remarkable resemblance to things on this plane), seldom, if ever, treat us to a clear picture of any deity, whether it be Allah, Osiris, the Holy Ghost or even God Almighty himself. This is a remarkable omission, which can only be explained by the supposition that Gods of any kind are not essential to a belief in a "future life." And it is further supported by the fact that one of the most popular varieties of this belief is the one known as metempsychosis or reincarnation. The belief that the "soul" returns *to earth* either in some human or animal body is still widespread, and it requires the presence of no Gods.

The third reason is this. When the believer expresses his belief in a continuance of life after death, he always implies that this "future life" will be, at least for him, more pleasant than the present one. If he is of a vengeful nature he will allow the possibility of a future "hell" or "purgatory." But this is never seriously regarded as a probable contingency in his own case. For it is obvious that if he really thought this "future life" would constitute an eternity of torment for him personally, he would be quite ready to listen to any arguments which might prove his belief to be wrong. Of course, there are a few, a very few, who believe that they are doomed to an eternal "hell" hereafter; but such persons are well on the way to, are already in, lunatic asylums. For the sane believer "hell" has long been a myth—or else it only applies to the other fellow.

In addition to the fact that it endangers two important religious tenets, namely, the need for a God and the existence of Hell, this answer is unpopular for other reasons. If it is treated analytically, it brings to light certain qualities in the believer which do not reflect very favourably upon his character. We have already observed its vengeful implications in those who include a "future life" of an unpleasant sort in their belief. Its egoistical element is disclosed when we discover that the

words "If *we* just fizzle out" are a camouflage for the words "If *I* just fizzle out."

The validity of using the first person plural is quite simply cancelled out by the fact that there are many people who find a great deal of use in living, yet who do not believe that they go on living after they are dead. Furthermore, when it comes down to dots, we find that the kind of "future life" which the believer has in mind is of a very circumscribed nature. A "heaven" in which he alone existed in magnificent solitude would not be at all to his liking. And a "heaven" which included all, or any, of the unpleasant people and things he has had to encounter in this life, would equally fail to come up to his ideals. What he really wants and believes in is a sort of select existence in which he can retain and enjoy only those things he personally wants to retain. Apart from these, the rest of creation could go hang for all he cared. Unfortunately this is exactly what every other believer hopes for—and it is obvious that they can't all have it their own way! But then, what believer ever bothers to work out the logical consequences of his beliefs?

Incidentally, too, one might observe that the universe existed for millions of years while our believer was non-existent. And he seldom exhibits any vast concern about what happened before he was born. Why, then, should be consider it so essential for him to be concerned about all time after he is dead?

Then, again one might ask, "If your future life is going to be so great an improvement on the present, why wait? It is simple enough to commit suicide comfortably these days." But to this practical suggestion the believer has a very convenient reply. "We are taught that suicide is wicked." So although in his own mind he utterly repudiates the idea that he will go anywhere except to Heaven, he is unwilling to take the golden opportunity of getting there sooner than he need. So much so, indeed, that when his God (or whatever power he believes in) puts him in danger of dying a natural death, he rushes off for medical assistance to postpone the happy event! Just like an Atheist!

The Atheist is naturally not hoodwinked by this excuse that suicide is wicked. He realizes that it is no more than another of those religious contradictions which are intended, but which fail, to provide a loophole for illogical beliefs. No one in his normal senses wishes to commit suicide. Most people have a capacity for putting up with, or resisting, evil; and they seldom find life so intolerable as to wish to end it sooner than need be. So apart from its convenience as an excuse for the illogical belief in a "future life," there is no necessity whatever to make suicide a sin.

In addition to this, the grief exhibited by mourners who are firmly convinced that their dear ones have gone to Heaven, is another proof that the survivors have no real faith in their "life after death" theory. For if one truly loves a person who has died, then one's sorrow at a merely temporary, and comparatively brief, period of parting should be completely swallowed up in joy at the good fortune of the deceased. The fact that Christians mourn their dead with as great grief as Atheists is convincing evidence that they do not believe what they think they believe. Otherwise it can only be regarded as a sign of superlative egotism.

The statement that there is no use in living at all unless one goes on living for ever, is easily shown to be untrue on quite other grounds. For if the use, or value, of any action, emotion or event depends upon its capacity to last indefinitely, then no action, emotion or event can have any value at all in this life. Do we enjoy a hearty meal the less becuse we know beforehand that we cannot go on eating the same meal for ever? Do we refrain from going to see a good play because we know in advance that it will come to an end? Is not, indeed, our sole reason for refusing any pleasure or enjoyment based upon our knowledge that too much of a good thing inevitably palls in the long run? What rational grounds, then, are there for expecting that an everlasting life is going to prove less sickeningly monotonous than any other experience, pleasant or unpleasant, which is continued with too great frequence or at too great length?

The answer to this last question most often takes one of two similar forms. Either the believer declares that, when he dies, he does not think he will have had *his* fair share of the good things of life. Or he declares that there must be other people who will not have had *their* fair share. In these cases the "future life" is regarded as a sort of makeweight for the unpleasantnesses already experienced in this life. Be it noted that the "everlasting" nature of this "future life" is here allowed to drop into the background. But let that pass. For whichever answer is favoured, the argument remains the same. And the second form, thought it has the appearance of altruism, is in fact as much a cloak for laziness as the first.

In the first place, how can anyone show what exactly *his* fair share of joys should be? Secondly, even if he could prove that he had not had his fair share now, how can he prove that he will not have had it—and perhaps more—when he comes to die? The fact is that this hope for good things after death is nothing more than a cover for slovenly procrastination in the present. A man is either satisfied with his conditions and content to enjoy them without worry about a dim and dubious future; or else, if he is really dissatisfied he would not calmly sit down under his calamities in the fatuous hope of an early release by death. He would get to work and do something about it.

As for his pseudo-altruism and concern for other people, what is this in reality but sheer callousness and indifference? For, if everything is going to be put right for everybody in that wounderful "hereafter," then what valid reason can there be for feeling uncomfortable about the unfairness and injustices of *this* life? If, on the other hand, the hardships of others are really such a matter of concern to the believer, then he would not spend a moment in theorising or preaching about a makeweight Heaven—he would set to at once and do his utmost to mitigate them here and now.

The truth is that from whatever point of view one regards the belief in a "future life," its logical and inevitable results are the encouragement of egotism, indolence, indifference and even sadism. The whole history of the Christian religion bears witness to this. As a theory this belief is completely lacking in evidence. As a matter of practice it is not

only useless, but pernicious. As a matter of logic it is absurd. For since "death" means the "end, or cessation, of life," the phrase "life after death" is a pure contradiction in terms, which is as nonsensical and meaningless as saying that a car can travel "up a hill downwards," or that the "end of a story is at the beginning."

C. S. FRASER.
in the Freethinker.

FREETHOUGHT AND TO-DAY.

ONE of my valued correspondents, writing to congratulate me on the publication of *Bradlaugh and Ingersoll*, thought that opportunities for the display of heroism were not so great to-day as in Bradlaugh's time. I do not agree with this, although it is an opinion that is, I fancy, widely held. I would prefer to put it that the opportunities for the *same kind of heroism* are not so general to-day, but the opportunities for a rarer kind of courage, so far as Freethought is concerned, are greater to-day than ever they were. A hundred years ago Freethought was still largely fighting for the right of expression, and against an enemy that showed no hesitation in avowing the conviction that open antagonism to religious ideas should and ought to be suppressed. Men were openly threatened with severe consequences if they opposed religion, and the older reading of the blasphemy laws was still in operation. To-day the legal, and even the general, right openly to criticize religion is publicly admitted, although it may privately be denied. And the distinction between these two situations is one of which my correspondent had evidently lost sight. I do not think that there are fewer opportunities for fighting than there were in the height of the Bradlaugh struggle, it is only that to-day the fight has changed in form, and this change calls for a rarer and actually stronger type of character.

The distinction is really that between open and disguised coercion. The former creates antagonism and rouses to resistance. Threaten a man with physical violence or offer an open bribe to secure conformity, and there is a tendency to resist. But concede the right to free thought and free speech in theory, while denying it in practice, and let this denial take, not the form of openly applied force, but the force of a social boycott, or inability to gain a place in the public eye—in the press, in Parliament, or the council chamber, or the loss of promotion in one or another branch of the civil service, and for one who will submit in the first case you have twenty who will submit in the latter.

* * *

A Demoralizing Process.

There is a still further difference of consequence in two cases. There is no necessary humiliation in submission to openly applied force. There is none in a man not speaking because a gang of ruffians threatens to break his neck if he does. That situation arouses only feelings of contempt for the bullies. A soldier is not humiliated because he surrenders to a superior force, and when there is no ulterior purpose served by

his dying at his post. But the man who submits to coercion for fear of a loss of social prestige, or to gain social distinction, is in a different position. In the first set of circumstances he yields to the bully without, and his whole nature resents the necessity. In the second, he has to deal with his own sense of right and justice, and that is a very different business. It is not the bully without, but the "God" within, with whom he has to deal. And he does this by declining to recognize his own motives. He does not say, as he would in submitting to openly applied force, "I am submitting because it is hopeless to resist." He excuses his submission, rationalizes his weakness, and by justifying it acts as a defender of a system he should seek to destroy. The champions of religion have been taught by experience that it is far easier to buy the silence of opponents than it is to avert opposition by open intolerance. I do not agree with those who say that the character of Freethinkers is not what it was. The truth is rather that it requires a finer fighting type than it did a century ago. The power of social bribery requires a stronger moral fibre for resistance than does the oppression that is exercised through judge and gaoler.

* * *

Mass Opinion.

There are other obstacles to the growth of genuine Freethinking which, while they are not new in the world's history, exist in a very aggravated form today. Chief among these is one that was dealt with by Mr. Howard Whitehouse, at the Educational Associations, Conference at University College the other day. His speech dealt with the manufacture of mass opinion, and I read Mr. Whitehouse's address with the greater pleasure, since it travelled over much the same lines as an article of mine on the same topic written some time ago. Control by mass opinion is, of course, nothing new in history. For many centuries it indicated the main policy of the Christian Church. Individual thinking was discouraged, and by a dual process of eliminating the intellectually wayward, and a method of control which aimed at an absolute uniformity of opinion, the Church hoped to create a united and perpetual Christian society. Now that this has been given up as hopeless we see the same thing taken up by Italy, Russia, Germany, and some other smaller States. In addition, the course of our political development, the growth of the newspaper press, and the general tendency of education, has transferred this policy of making mass opinion from the religious to the political sphere. In politics, no matter what the party, from Communist to Conservative, the aim is to provide the electorate with a number of parrot-like cries which may be voiced whenever the particular political machine in which they believe sounds the note for their use. "The downtrodden proletariat" is as effective with one group as "For King and Country" is with another, and on the face of it each indicates about the same degree of understanding. The newspaper have for long learned the value of dosing the public with a repetition of phrases, and the development of our national educational systems, whether in elementary or in the large public schools, turns out the same mass opinion, which bears a far greater tribute to the education given than to the understanding that is developed. The last war was fought on the

strength of these parrot-technics, and in the next war whenever it comes, we shall find the same machinery working at full pressure. "National Unity" has come to mean little more than a shouting together of the same "slogans" on the same occasion.

There is, however, one new feature in the situation. Hitherto intolerance has acted with a certain shame-facedness. To-day it is bolder and claims the status of a first principle. The "State" or its synonym "the Country," has usurped the place of God and the Church. Man does not exist for the greater Glory of God, he exists for the greater glory of the State. The traitor is not merely the man who *acts*, he is the man who *thinks* contrary to orders. That is at least the temporary philosophy of Russia, it is the announced permanent philosophy of both Germany and Italy and in our own country we have the Fascist movement, which only awaits the opportunity to become as brutal and as intolerant, and as uncivilized as Fascism is in other countries. That is the worst of slogans. They are not to make people reflect, they make no appeal to intelligence, they have no room for discussion, and therefore no place for freedom of thought. They are the voice of the pack, the unthinking howl of the herd, and have no other purpose than to set the unreflective passions of a crowd working towards a given end. This is so clearly recognized in Germany that Hitler has now announced that the number of young men and women who are to be admitted to the higher education courses is to be severely restricted, even when the candidates are among his own Nazi followers. That is more than logical, it is necessary if Fascism in any of its forms is to survive. Its followers might well paraphrase Gambetta and cry "Intelligence, free, unfettered intelligence, that is the enemy."

* * *

The Outlook.

I do not think, then, that Freethought is less robust than it was. The courage demanded to-day is partly of a different kind, and so far as the required courage is different it is manifested on a higher level, because it has to resist a more insidious attack, one which fewer are able to resist. The more ostensibly liberal religion becomes, the greater the inducement for many to purchase social ease, and perhaps social distinction, by ceasing to attack the "infamous." There is, of course, an attack which comes in the old form—the attack against freedom of thought and speech in the countries I have named, and which has many advocates in this country. And there are many signs that they who really value individual intellectual independence may have, in this country, their courage put to the test in the not distant future.

But of that I have no very great fear—at least so far as Freethought is concerned. A very shrewd observer—a German, one who had left his country, not for his country's good, but for his own, said to me recently that the Nazi regime was one foredoomed to a progressive deterioration. At the outset it is conceivable that a large number of people, anxious for improvement, may seize on a barbarous thing such as Hitlerism, or some other dictatorship as offering a probable way out of their difficulties. Even the brutalities incident to this regime may be "rationalized" just as the Church rationalized the brutalities that were practiced under its rule, and in its name. But the brutalities, the persecution

involved gradually disgusts the better character, and the dictatorship is reduced to selecting a progressively lower type to carry out its decrees. A dictatorship, a tyranny, carries within it the seeds of its own dissolution. It deteriorates as rapidly as an army that is not able to replenish its manhood by contact with social life. I believe that it is this cause, partly, at least, that led to the breakdown of Church rule. It was so antagonistic to the fundamentally better feelings of men that it had to depend for maintenance upon a progressively lower type of character, while all along it was filling the ranks of its opponents with those who were morally and intellectually superior.

Finally, it may be that to the more thoughtful and the more courageous in the Freethought ranks the present situation will awaken the conviction that we have been taking our freedom too much for granted. It is neither so great nor so secure as many have imagined. Some few legal injustices have been removed, but the social injustices remain, and there are greater inducements to compromise and actual hypocrisy. It may be that a very strenuous fight lies before us, not to make a greater advance, but to retain what has already been won.

CHAPMAN COHEN.
in "The Freethinker."

Abraham Solomon

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF
THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the masses of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

The daily papers announced on April 21st that a Miss Batten was attempting a solo flight from England to Australia. For good luck, it was announced, she carried a piece of bone of a lion, a small silk Union Jack, and the badge of St. Christopher—the newly elected patron of Aviators. On April the 22nd the same papers announced that she crashed in darkness near Rome, the machine was wrecked and the poor woman received minor injuries. It is certainly an irony of fate that she crashed near Rome which, of

all places, should have afforded her the special protection of St. Christopher whom the Pope has recently elected as the patron of Aviators. Out of pure regard for the Pope, St. Christopher should have been more considerate. Perhaps it was that piece of lion's bone that upset St. Christopher. It was certainly an act of impiety on the part of Miss Batten to associate such a mascot-probably the gift of an African witch doctor, with the badge of a Christian saint blessed by the Pope. Miss Batten probably never thought of that, and her levity nearly cost her her life. People who believe in charms, mascots, and amulets ought to treat these things with the seriousness they deserve, especially when they have been blessed by a representative of God on Earth.

* * *

A wag who must have felt some bitterness in his heart gave vent to the following expression:—"In this irrational world, the champions of their own prejudices masquerading as guardians of the public good will always be with us." One suspects that an Englishman must have said this, for in his country these guardians of the public good are as numerous as tabby cats in a city. For the good of the public they interfere with everything—Sunday cinemas, lotteries, wireless broad casting, the press, education, birth-control, divorce, marriage, and even fashion.

* * *

"A Bleeding Crucifix."

"After examination, the Bishop of Asti, Italy, has publicly declared the truth of the facts, and their supernatural character in connection with an incident which occurred at Asti, between August 11 and September 27, 1933.

A plaster Crucifix hung on the walls of the Hospice of Saint Clare at Asti. A poor woman, Maria Tartaglini, who had been a suffering inmate of this institution for many years, was kneeling in prayer before the Crucifix, when she beheld the chest of the figure of Our Divine Lord heave, and the following words were addressed to her by Christ; "See, my daughter, to what a state sacrileges have reduced Me...completely renewing My Passion."

Then the side of the figure on the Cross opened, and from it flowed blood. It also flowed from the hands and feet, as well as slightly from the mouth.

Eleven witnesses—amongst whom were five priests and four nuns—were present and saw the blood from the Crucifix flow and congeal. At the desire of the Bishop of Asti, the Crucifix and the congealed blood were submitted to all the analyses of modern science, radioscopic and radiographic. The examination of the blood by spectral and chemical analyses was confided to the Institute of Legal Medicine at the University of Turin, and its scientists, concluded from all the evidence that the substance was blood, and human blood.

The unanimity of witnesses decided the Bishop to submit the matter to an ecclesiastical tribunal, which gave its decree on February 24 of the present year. Accordingly the Bishop has ordered that the miraculous Crucifix should be solemnly enthroned in the Church of St. Joseph at Asti, which was done with much solemnity on March 9."

* * *

The above recently appeared in a Bombay religious Journal. On reading this one must really say that "the ways

of God are indeed mysterious." Why such a startling miracle should happen in an out of the way place like Asti in Italy and before a poor unknown, sickly woman is difficult to say? Imagine a God complaining to a poor, unknown woman when the world is still full of queens, princesses, and noble ladies! There are millions of crucifixes in the world. They are to be found in big cities like London, Paris, Rome, New York and elsewhere. Yet they are dumb like rocks in such places and exhibit no miracle. In Asti they have not only a bleeding clay crucifix but a talking one too! Such a wonderful piece of news, attested by eleven witnesses, four of whom were nuns and five were priests, should have spread all over the world like wild fire, and millions should have rushed to Asti to witness the occurrence especially as it lasted forty six days.

* * *

The world does not appear to have been stirred by this miraculous event, and such unheard of indifference really deserves the bitter complaint of a god. One can imagine the mortification of Christ that people did not make haste to flock to Asti to behold the great marvel. Perhaps it was the extreme modesty with which the whole affair has been conducted that was responsible for this indifference. It is certainly striking that such a wonder which lasted forty six days, should have been witnessed by only eleven persons of whom five were priests and four nuns. Now that the worthy Bishop of the locality has enthroned the miraculous crucifix with much solemnity, it is to be hoped that people will soon flock there and make the church where the crucifix is to be found, famous.

It would be very impious to believe that the scientists of Legal Medicine at the University of Turin did not, themselves, draw the blood from that clay figure, did not guard themselves against imposture and did not take every step to make sure that it was not one of those pious frauds for which Italy was notorious in the past. We hope that scoffers will not say that such expedients are often resorted to to bolster up a dying creed. They may, of course, say that such tricks *pour epater les imbeciles* were frequently done in the past in the interest of Faith. We are assured by saintly priests that such is no longer the case. Anyhow, though it is well known that bleeding crucifixes were common enough in days gone by, a talking crucifix, especially one which heaves and makes a bitter complaint, is surely a new wonder that ought to convince any stiff necked unbelievers.

* * *

It is sometime asked:—"If God has spoken why is Nature silent"? If the reports we have heard are to be relied upon, it would appear that nature is not going to remain silent any longer. The Virgin Mary, who seems to have abandoned her beloved France for new pastures, is now frequently appearing to peasants in Belgium and requests them to build Churches on the sites where she appeared to them. One such place in Flanders has already become famous and threatens to be a serious competitor to Lourdes. There is surely some unrest in heaven and old planet Earth is again attracting the attention of the divine Government. Mr. Gandhi recognized this after the Bihar earthquake, and several priests think they can clearly discern the hand of God in events of recent happening. Apparitions are getting frequent and now a bleeding crucifix begins to talk. In the country of the present

writer, quite recently, a picture of the Holy Face in a Church began to wink at a few girls. The matter was soon reported. A few nuns, and a old man, and a number of school girls were quite convinced that the Holy Face was trying to communicate some signs. Unfortunately the news spread rapidly and a number of journalists, doctors, lawyers and others came to see the wonderful happenings. Nothing happened; the Holy face resolutely refused to manifest itself before such a crowd of sinners who had winked at one another when they heard the news. The ways of God are indeed mysterious.

* * * *

The last Mohorrum festival has been responsible for a good deal of bloodshed in many parts of India. Serious riots were reported from many places which show that the antagonism between Hindus and Mahommedans on religious questions in India is as keen as ever. It is really deplorable that such is the case and that no effort is made, by the so-called leaders of these communities to enlighten these people and to show them that their supposed grievances are due to pure ignorance. The ignorance of the masses in India is simply awful. It is remarkable that these people, who are generally peaceful and will put up with many things, become like maniacs under the stress of religious excitement.

Unfortunately in this country many praise these deluded people for their religious staunchness, and few have the courage to tell them that all their troubles are due to their ignorance and bigotry. Only a few days ago we heard that a well-known Mahommedan leader went to the Moplah country and praised these people for their great attachment to religion! When such things go on in India it is hopeless to expect a diminution of fanaticism among the masses.

* * *

It was reported that in Lahore during the last Mohorrum procession a number of young man belonging to the Shiah community inflicted serious injuries on themselves necessitating their removal to hospital. This, probably, occurred during the performances of the *Mottam* ceremony which consists in beating one's breast and other parts of the body until one drops senseless. This is done to mark one's extreme grief at the remembrance of the sad death of Iman Hussein who, with his party, was cut to pieces at Kerbella by Yezdiz about 1300 years ago. It is stated that in Persia many people every year beat themselves to death during this strange performance, and their act of self immolation is much admired. As is well known, the Shiahs of Persia observe the anniversary of the death of Hussein in a very tragic manner. During the ten days that the Mohorrum festival lasts they give themselves to uncontrollable grief and every one vies with each other to show the greatest sorrow. All dress in black during that period, and for days after, and men and women will howl with grief for hours until they are exhausted. To raise their feelings to the highest pitch, they must hear for ten nights from fiery preachers the harrowing details, with of course much exaggeration, of the sad death of Hussein and his followers.

This general mourning with the excesses it gives rise to is a very interesting question for psychologists, showing as it does what suggestion, imagination, and imitation can cause people to do under the influence of religious excitement and

emotion. One is inclined to believe that much of this excitement is stimulated by the great admiration of the onlookers who believe this to be a proof of great piety.

* * *

There is no doubt that the desire to imitate, to be praised and to be admired, apart from what is called a real vocational feeling, induces many young men and women to embrace a religious life. Many young men and young women in this country are attracted to the priesthood and nunhood by certain well known influences created by their environment more than by actual serious belief. Girls, here, at a certain age, are very much disposed to admire nuns. In the atmosphere in which they live they look upon the nuns as privileged beings, whose piety is much admired and whose life is so holy. The peculiar garb which the nun assumes interests them immensely and they also long to don this and win the approbation and admiration of the community. Many young men of a showy disposition imagine the life of the priest to be very attractive. For certain minds, the idea that during ceremonies they are the cynosure of the public especially of the women folk, is irresistible. To perform before the public, is the desire of their life, and they think it a great reward indeed to do that even if for that they should have to become priests. Such are the curious traits of human nature.

RATIONALISM AND RELIGION IN INDIA

Believers in religion here, it matters not what creed they belong to, are fond of asserting that their faith is of a transcendental nature, a gift from above, and that all the theories and facts of science, which are contradictory to the principles on which their faith is based, are futile against it. Such a ridiculous assertion is made by the devotees of all religions. The Jews, the Christians, the Mahomedans, the Hindus, and even the Parsis, though in a microscopic number, claim that faith is a divine gift, and that it is not the mission of Rationalism to disturb their cherished beliefs. It is not, of course, the mission of Rationalism to convert any body. No Rationalist, would feel any pleasure to see an individual, half-baked in the study of Rationalism, proclaiming at large that he is one, while, owing to defective education, he is liable to make an ass of himself at the slightest opportunity. We hold that no man can become a Rationalist unless he has the necessary intellectual equipment to become one. By intellectual equipment we certainly do not mean that only the Rationalists are intellectual people and all others are fools. We mean nothing of the kind. There are many highly intellectual people who are not Rationalists, but believe in some supernatural mysteries or other. We believe that these people's education has been generally one-sided; something has been neglected. They may have received a fine classical education, may be well versed in languages, mathematics and other branches of knowledge, may be excellently trained for the professional career they have adopted, but something has been neglected which renders them incapable of taking all into

consideration to form a lucid judgment on the scheme of things, and to draw the logical and rational conclusion that only sound thinking enables one to do.

In most cases it will be seen that such people have not received an all round scientific education, which alone could help them to have a clear idea of the many problems which must be intelligently understood before one can claim to have properly grasped the philosophy of Rationalism. Let us suppose that it is necessary to discuss the theory of the evolution of the Cosmos with a person who has not the slightest idea of Astronomy and Astrophysics. It may be a waste of time to do so, and such a person may not fall in line with the view of Rationalism that the Universe did not come into existence all of a sudden by a creative fiat. It may equally be a waste of time to discuss the question of the existence of the soul, survival after death, etc., with a person who has no knowledge of biology. As a matter of fact, there are many persons who are very competent in some departments of science only, for instance, in physics without knowing anything of biology. Such people arguing on the question of the existence of the soul very often adopt a line which no competent biologist will do. They will talk of a mysterious vital principle to account for the phenomenon of life which a biologist does not find necessary to do. They will seriously discuss the possibility of mind or consciousness surviving the dissolution of the brain which a biologist will not dare assert. And so on, one finds that a defective knowledge of a branch of science in a person may lead to a confusion of thought in a discussion with another who is thoroughly versed in it, and no agreement between the two can be reached.

If such is the case among well educated people how can anybody talk of Rationalists trying to make converts? The very idea is absured. All that Rationalism expects is that people of an inquiring turn of mind, sincere seekers after truth, may be encouraged to study things for themselves, to carefully consider both sides of the question, and to form a scientific habit of mind so that their conviction and beliefs may rest on such a solid foundation that is proof against errors and fallacies. It is only people who are temperamentally fitted to do so, people who are free from bias, prejudice and bigotry, people who are mentally active and diligent who may be expected to take an interest in Rationalism. Is the common herd capable of doing this? People who talk of their faith being above reason have not the slightest idea of what Rationalism is or what it stands for: they belong to this common herd and they have no choice but to remain where they are tethered. The pride of such people is that the majority all over the world believe in some sort of religion. They look upon this as the natural disposition of man, and think that this alone indicates that religion is indispensable to mankind. Such people are not intelligent enough to understand that the world has slumbered for thousand of years in ignorance and that it is only recently that general education has begun to spread. Take the case of Europe. For centuries only a few could read and write; the great majority was steeped in the darkest ignorance and were therefore the victims of the grossest superstitions one could imagine. Is it any wonder that in such a condition religion flourished like the bay tree? All this shows what a long start religion has had over Rationalism which could

only come into existence with the advancement of knowledge.

Even now, ignorance still rules the world. In the West, the vast majority only know the three R's and a good number is still illiterate. In Asia and Africa the vast majority is illiterate; a small number can read and write and only a few thousands can be said to be very highly educated. Yet, in spite of this, in spite of the fact that Rationalism did not exist, so to speak, two hundred years ago, it is remarkable how it has spread among people competent to understand it. To day, in the West most highly educated people are more or less Rationalists, and even those who would not accept the term to denote their belief cannot be said to be believers in the sense that their forbears were. Many, who have not altogether abandoned Christianity, no longer believe in its supernatural claims, though they stick to its ethical doctrines. The same phenomenon is seen in other religions, so that one may say without fear of contradiction that wherever one goes one sees that the more the people are learned the less they are orthodox, and the more they are ignorant the more they are religious. It is for thoughtful people to realize what is in store for religion if education is going to spread unhampered and unfettered. Education has become such a serious menace to religion that one of the greatest concerns of religious teachers is to secure the education of the young. In this they have been pretty successful so far. There is no doubt that religious schools and colleges may, for sometime to come, greatly obstruct the course of sound, real education and keep people who are educated in them under the sway of the Churches. This sort of thing, however, cannot last for ever. People cannot always be deceived. Already certain countries in Europe have recognized that to lessen the influence of priests on people it is necessary to forbid religious schools to teach the young. In France "les ecoles laiques" have mostly replaced the religious schools; in Spain it is hoped that such will be the case before long. Russia is conducting a wonderful experiment in the respect which is bound to regenerate that country. They have made great progress in education in Turkey, and in England, despite the power of the Church, steady pressure is being made to free the schools from the domination of the clergy.

Here, in India, the prospects are not so promising. The schools are mostly in the hands of the missionaries, and the Government have reason to praise them for doing what they themselves cannot do. People here rightly recognize that were it not for these missionaries, most probably they would have received no education at all, and many say that a defective education is better than no education at all It must also be said that for many here the environment and circumstances are not favourable yet for the establishment of non-religious schools. Take the case of the Christians as an instance. Most of the Roman Catholics in India are descended from people who were converted by the most bigoted fanatics of Europe—the Portuguese and Spaniards.

In a country where conservative habits of the people are deep rooted, and things move slowly, the environment created by these early Christian Missionaries has hardly been changed. It is only now that some of these people have begun to get a smattering of knowledge. The last census shows that 75% of the Roman Catholics in India are still illiterate. It is

only natural that such people should look upon Christianity as a wonderful thing, considering that, so far as they are concerned, it has certainly changed their social status and their outlook on life. This explains why priests who have been expelled from their countries in Europe hurry to India, knowing full well that they will receive a hearty welcome here. For a long time to come it is possible that they will find India a paradise on earth until the inevitable takes place—when Rationalism will begin to penetrate among these Christians and show them how they have lagged behind in the intellectual advances of mankind by their foolish delusion that their Church is built up on an impregnable rock and so forth and that only their priests can teach the truth.

As far as the Mahomedans are concerned it must be admitted that the outlook is still very gloomy. Of all communities in India they are the most backward intellectually. The only thing that seems to interest them immensly is their religion and it is a policy among their more enlightened leaders to encourage them to look upon religion as the only thing that matters in life. Rationalism is more likely to make progress among highly educated Hindus and Parsis. With all these difficulties before it, the Rationalist Association of India has been formed to invite thoughtful and sincere people to consider the great benefit that sane and right thinking can confer on a country like India. The task is worth trying though the work, as our worthy President once said, is going to be a tremendous uphill affair. Resolute and determined workers are not afraid of it.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

RATIONALISM AND THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

(X. Essence and Form.)

While moral standards are constantly in the state of flux, and sociology presents an ever-changing picture of human evolution, it is well to investigate whether behind these variable forms of individual and collective life, there runs a principle of continuity, a thread that pierces into the manifold gems of human achievment, (Sutre mani gana iva, cf. Gita, VII, 7.) That the Gita is the bedrock of Sanatana Dharma, no one who may have an honest claim to put forth on that side will deny. The claim is expressly made when Arjuna chants the praise (XI, 18)

Tvam avyaya saswata dharma gopta
Sanatana stvam purusho matome.

(Thou art the guardian of the indestructible, eternal Law, the immemorial man art thou, to my reckoning.) And where does this principle of immemorial humanity rest? Wherein lies the changeless Dharma, when we are aware of the fleeting phases of moral and social evolution? Not certainly in the strict injunction to follow up the Karmic path enjoined in the Vedas; though, the Gita does not denounce the observance of ritual, but on the other hand such observances are held to purify the intelligence. (see XVIII, 6.)

Yegna dana tapah karma na tyajyam karya mevatat
Yegno danam tapascheiva pavanami manishinam.

(Sacrifices, gifts, and austerities ought not to be left out, but, must be performed. They are the purifiers of the intelligent Pundits.)

One has a hazy suggestion about this stanza that the ritualistic offerings of sacrifice, and charity are held forth as brain-softeners or curatives to relax the overstrained brain-cells of speculative logicians engaged in the intellectual pursuit of tracing out the priority rights between the seed and the tree, between the First Cause and Its Cause. *"Pawanani manishinam"* (purify the wise pundits) reads like a significant utterance; the man of average understanding who does not trouble himself in intellectual doubt does not stand to gain much by these observances. But, that is another issue.

That the Gita treads the path of reform, nay, it even revolutionised pre-existing conceptions of duty and life, it does not benefit the most ardent Sanatanist to deny. The real service rendered by the Gita to Hindu religious life may, on the other hand be held to consist in its having focussed attention on the essentials and thorough exclusion of all tendencies to vedic formalism.

It sets its face against those who pretend to acquire merit by obedience to Vedic Word. It does not countenance Midhyachara (III, 6) the hypocrite who controls his action, but whose mind is not turned away from the objects of sense; and it sees no worth in a sacrifice linked to consideration or self-glorification. (Dambhardham, XVII, 12.) Nor may it be accused of glazing the sharp antithesis that divides the two paths of Gnana (Knowledge) and Karma (action) for it expressly refers to the dualism in III, 3, and XVIII. 3, and other places and discussing the relative merits relied on by the votaries of either mode of thought proceeds to lay down the standard. And that standard is the progressive ideal which while proceeding from the Vedic texts, travels farther from them. (Sabda Brahmati vartate, Cf. VI, 44). The reason for transcending the Vedas is not also left in doubt.

Trigunya vishaya veda nistraigunye bhava Arjuna
Nirdvandve nitya satvasthe niryoga kshema atmavan (II, 45)

(The vedas are concerned with the three qualities, all of which, Oh, Arjuna, you ought to get over. Beyond the pairs of opposites, ever seated in purity, regardless of acquisition or retention of any kind of selfish possessions, you should not care for the fruits promised in the Vedas to these Gunas, or qualities.)

Thus the other wordly pleasures of swarga (paradise) set out in the flowery speech (II, 42, Pushpitam Vacham) of those that rejoice in the letter of the Vedas are not recommended as the fit object of attainment hereafter (Yoga) nor is one expected to feel nervous over the prospect of losing the world's goods already had (Kshema).

Why, the declaration is expressly made, the challenge is plainly given that of all the rambling mandates emanating from the Vedas, one has the right (and the obligation ?) to pick and choose.

Yavanardha udapane sarvatah sampludodake
Tavan Sarveshu Vedeshu Brahmanasya vijanatah. (II, 46)

(Whether in the tank or from a vast lake, only so much water as is needed will be taken. Even so from all the Vedas, should the wise one derive the relative enlightenment or utility.)

The central teaching of the Gita in the matter of such utility of knowledge (Gnana) is the escape from the pairs of opposites, pain pleasure &c. and of action (Karma) through a severe detachment from the fruit thereof. The vehicle that enables one to reach the goal is Yoga (equipoise). Samatvam yoga uchyate: equilibrium in success and failure is called Yoga (II, 48.) This is skill in action. (Yogah karma sukausalam, II, 50.) Amid the manifeld songs, and hymns of diverse metre, and the reasonings of the Brahmasutras, that have occupied themselves with the treatment of life and knowledge, (see, XIII, 3) there is unity and continuity that the Bhagavad Gita brings out. Yoga is the watchword. All that is said in the Vedas regarding the merits attaching to sacrfices, charity and austerity the Yogi knows. And having known, he attains the supreme seat which is at the root of them all, which surpasseth them and which is different, from all of them, in that it is the essence, while the rest are merely formulary.

Yogi param sthana mupaiti chadyam
(VIII, 28.)

The superior prerogative of the Yogi is unmistakable. What cannot be attained by the knowlege of the Vedas, by Tapas, by charity, and by sacrificial ritual, he is capable of through his devotion. The reality which is a principle concealed from their view exposes in all its splendour of universal appeal before the (divya-chakshus) higher vision (XI, 53) also, 42).

There is a physical index to the recognition of the Yogi, who is able to stand equipoised between the external contacts of pleasure and pain, and who is not exalted by success nor depressed in failure, but takes equal interest in praise and blame. As the peep-hole of ancient science the description of Arjuna as Savya-Sachin opens up a vista stretching out to the borders of modern psychology. One who is capable of using the left-hand as much as the right, gives equal exercise to the right cerebral hemisphere as for the left. In most others, to whom the right arm is the main strength, brain matter is leftsided developement, the right area not being put to adequate use. Man has thus gone on arresting the harmonious and simultaneous stimulation of both the cerebral sides, with perhaps the necessary repercussions on his mental life in the way of developing the euqipoise, needed for Yoga. If ambidexterity has much to do with the maintenance of mental equilibrium, its discovery by the date when the Bhagavad-Gita must have been composed (XI, 33) would be a flattering commentary on the scientific achievements of the age in the physical side. F. W. H. Myers made a modest claim in his book "Human Personality. Vol. I, p. 85 (1903) that "there was somewhat more of dextro-cerebral capacity than in the mass of mankind" in some forms of genius like the *calculating boy*. Physiological psychology has advanced considerably during the last three decades. One should derive greater delight from thinking on Arjuna as a character of fiction that one might lift the poetry of Vyasa (whichever he may be) to the modern scientific level, than relegate the Savya-Sachin to the prose of history, and Vyasa his mere chronicler. For after all between the two, the poet is the better Yogi than the history-recorder, whatever the claimants for the historicity of Jesus might say.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

THE FRENCH VIEW OF RELIGIOUS NEUTRALITY

Miss Eleanor Reid, student at McGill University, writes in *Canadian Student*:-

There was one discovery which came as a distinct shock to me during my year in France. I had known many people who professed no religion and held Christianity in scorn. But all these had been given some religious training in their youth, whether Christian—Protestant or Catholic,—or Jewish. Since my Mission Band days I had been aware also that, "There are many thousands who have never heard His name," and who worship idols and are very uncivilized people. This idea had later been altered to conceive of these people as of a civilization and culture very different from ours, and hence of a quite different religious background.

But last year I found some new friends, people whom I came to admire as much as any I had ever known, among well-educated people of Western civilization and culture, like myself, who not only did not believe in Christianity, but had never, even in childhood, been instructed in any religious faith. No doubt I had known before that such existed; but I had never realized the fact with all the force with which it was revealed to me in France. What is more, it was these people, as opposed to the Christians (Roman Catholics) of the community, who held the same ideals as I in the fields of social justice and international peace and co-operation.

I spent the year in a provincial Girls' Normal School, as English Assistant, teaching girls aged 16 to 20, who were being trained to teach in the rural primary schools. My first surprise came at seeing no more than five or six girls of the sixty odd in the schools go out to Mass on Sunday morning; at learning that very few if any had ever read the Bible; and at other such instances which quickly showed me that only a very small proportion of the students had any of the background that either a Roman Catholic or a Protestant upbringing would have given them.

As time went on, and I took part in many of the activities of the school, followed the courses in Education given by the Directrice, and observed the play of group antagonisms in the town, I became increasingly aware of the situation illustrated by this fact which had come to my attention. It was well characterized by the educational system, which I was naturally in a very good position to observe.

The striking characteristic of the French education is its division into two distinct systems, designated by the terms primary and secondary. The secondary system is carried over from the traditional educational set-up, that is, probably, from the institutions of the Revolution and Napoleon I, the important thing being that it was never intended as education for the masses. The system of primary schools, on the other hand, is the outcome of the struggle on the part of the working and peasant classes,—"le peuple"— for education that should be free and compulsory for all, and, as a logical corollary, politically and religiously neutral.

This last provision took on colour from the situation especially prevalent in France, where practically all education

had been carried on by the Catholic Church for centuries, except for the occasional breaks caused by the revolutions of the hundred years preceding the enactment of the present education laws. Religious neutrality had to fight a bitter battle to become law, and consequently took on more and more positive elements as its proponents added to their ammunition of logic and moral support.

The history of a word will illustrate this evolution. The system established was that of the "Ecole laique" which would be translated as the non-religious or secular school. In the course of the last half-century, this word "laique" has taken on a meaning which I find it impossible to translate by any single word in English, since it now expresses something in the nature of a new religion or system of morals which has been developed by the defendants of this feature of the new educational system. So prolonged and vigorous and bitter has been the opposition that those who uphold the system have been led further and further to realize and formulate the idealism which lies behind their efforts.

And so I saw it manifested; in the Directrice, a woman of some forty years' experience in education, a fine teacher, a person of high principles and ideals, devoted heart, soul, and reason to the cause "laique"; in my friend S——, a young teacher with all the idealism of youth, founded on a conception of life which will support that idealism at a high pitch for a long time to come; in the normal students, who in their three years under the influence of such a person as the Directrice could not fail to imbibe that pressing sense of mission which is an essential part of the "morale laique."

For that is the name of what may in a sense be called the new religion, growing out of the 19th century "reformation," in France. The principles of the "morale laique" have their prescribed place in the programme of studies to be taught in the primary schools. It was really a moving experience to listen to the Directrice, whose last teaching year it was, lecture for the last time on a subject so close to her heart as this one, on which she had expended a great part of her energy during her life as a teacher. When I expressed my interest in the subject to her later, she explained to me that she had had to be very careful in speaking of this matter to the girls, for the problem was to make sufficiently clear the teacher's high responsibility, both negative and positive, in the "enseignement laique," without hurting or arousing the antagonism of the few "croyantes" in the class.

Set forth as they were in the very rational and logical style characteristic of French teaching, I think extracts from my notes on these lectures can best explain the position taken by the "laique."

On the religious neutrality of the schools.

I. The primary public school in France is neutral as to religious confession; this means,

1. It teaches no religion.

2. It does not have prayers repeated or catechism learned.

3. The school can have no religious emblem.

4. Entrance to the school is forbidden to the clergy of any religion.

5. The teacher may not hold any religious function such as chorist, bell-ringer, or churchwarden.

6. The primary public school teaches "la morale laique."

7. The school is closed one day per week—Thursday—to enable the children to receive religious education. In boarding schools the pupils receive all facilities for fulfilling their religious duties according to the wishes of their families. Pupils who are taking their first communion have leave of absence during the week of retirement which precedes the ceremony.

II. The reasons for this school neutrality.

1. France is a country in which several religions are practised, and where a very great number of people reduce religion to a few solemn acts (baptism, first communion, marriage, funeral) and expect in the ordinary course of life to keep their independence of thought with regard to the clergy. The French mind, very rational and not very mystical, tends to make of religion a question purely personal, and will not see it put into the category of social or civic duties. This is French sense of liberty of conscience and creed.

(*Reprinted from "The Indian Social Reformer."*)

[It is gratifying to see such a frank testimony of the educational system of the *ecoles laiques* of France. As is well known religious education is no longer allowed in France. The present writer has no doubt that in the long run other countries will follow the example of France in banning religious education in schools. This is the only way of preventing immature minds to be polluted by superstitions and to lessen the pernicious influence of priests among the masees. Religious publications, of course, are always trying to show that the French people are longing for the return of the priestly influence and that a decided reaction in favor of religion is visble in that country since the Great War. Nothing of the kind is the case there. The present writer recently met a number of Frenchmen and women who visited India. They assured him that the French people in general were indifferent about religion and among the educated it is hopelessly dead. "C'est idiot de penser que des gens eclaires qui ont abandonnele Christianisme comme une superstition orientale puissent y retourner" they said to the writer. People in rural districts, they say, still want religion, but with the right sort of education it is hoped that before long Christianity in France will be professed mostly by the uneducated and the poorer classes.

Ed. REASON.]

RELIGION AND REASON

What is the cause of the attachment that so many display—in public—to the term "religion?" Why, after having rejected all that really continues religion, and having professed the desire to be to be guided solely by scientific methods and conclusions, do we find the same people either trying to establish a "rational" religion, or claim to have a religion of their own? It would seem that if one is really without religion, and intelligently so, elementary honesty would lead one so to state his position that it would give rise to no misleading conclusions on the part of others.

The answer to this question involves the investigation of a very lengthy chapter in human history. It will be remembered that I defined religion as consisting in the belief in supernatural beings. This is the one thing in which all the religions of the world agree. Religions may differ in a variety of beliefs and customs, but the point of general agreement is reached in the belief in the supernatural. Gods differ in their shape, their power, even in their duration, but in these respects they differ as men differ from each other. Gods are made in the image of men and they have the character of their creators. Gods are the thought-children of the race, and their vitality depends upon the clarity and the strength of the thought-forms that give them birth. And when men cease to believe in the gods, the gods cease to exist.

* * *

Our Heredity

With most "damnable" "iteration" I have from time to time dwelt upon the fact that all offences against the gods, offences such as have come down to us in the survival of blasphemy laws, or other laws for the protection of religion, are, primarily, matters of social defence. Where, as in early society, everything is dependent upon gaining the good will of the gods, and where offending them may jeopardise the health of the tribe, or ruin the harvest, of bring about defeat in battle, there is precisely the same justification for punishing the unbeliever as there is for punishing people who so act that they are exposing individuals or communities to disaster. To sap belief in the gods, or to affront them is equal to a man scattering disease germs in Fleet Street. In such circumstances the unbeliever is a social pariah. He is marked as standing apart from his fellows on the most vital of all questions. He is as obnoxious as a pro-German was in 1915, and as unpopular as was a leper in a medieval village. Disbelief in the gods of other peoples may be expressed, doubt as to their greatness is perhaps expected, but to question the gods of your own tribe is something that "simply is not done."

At a further stage of social development, opposition to one god is made in the name of another, and deposed god may be reduced to the level of an evil spirit, or he may be abolished altogether. And for a very long time the rejection of one god continues to be made in the name of, or in the interests of, another, the Mohammedan god in favour of the Christian one, the Roman Catholic deity in favour of the Protestant God, the Presbyterian deity in favour of the Baptist deity, and so forth. But to be

without a God altogether; that is the terrible thing! To say, "I do not believe in your God," with the implication that one still has some sort of a God for presentation when required are to say, "I do not believe in your religion," again with the implication that, for public purposes at least, one still has a religion, saves one's face. But to say plainly and deliberately, "I do not believe in a God of any kind, I have no religion of any kind" to say this in the simplest possible language, and without the slightest equivocation, implies a degree of mental clarity and moral courage, of which but a minority of people are capable. It is to be able to stand alone; and how many can do that? Where all the foxes have tails, how many can bear to be without some spinal alongation? It singles one out for dishonourable mention, and as the subject of a social boycott that most men and women will risk everything to avert. Genuine independence is still something that one must pay for, and there are not many who care indulge in that extravagance.

So the Chesterfieldian unbeliever who is of the religion of those avowedly "sensible men," who do not say what their religion is, discovers that he is out to reform religion, to purify religion, to rationalize religion, in short, to do anything rather than to make the plain statement that he is without religion himself, and he thinks that the world would be better off if all men were to follow his example.

* * *

Our Rightful Aim

Now I do not believe that it is the rightful work of the disbeliever in religion to purify religion, or to make it rational if that is the proper aim, then there are scores of churches that one may join, and so help the parson to get on with his job. Besides you cannot make religion commendable to the properly educated reason. You may make religion a little less definite in its form, and for those who admire the clarity of a London fog that is something. You may make religion a little less openly troublesome, but you cannot make it fundamentally useful. You can express religious ideas a little differently, borrowing the language of science and philosophy to do so, but you cannot alter the real character of you cannot alter the real character of religious beliefs. You may even adopt the theory, now advanced by some religious anthropologists, that primitive ideas of God are in fundamental agreement with those of the "advanced" religionist. I can agree with that, only I would read it the other way round, and say that the most advanced ideas of God are in fundamental agreement with those of the savage. And although the two statements *look* identical, the religionist is too artful to have it expressed in that form.

So I say that the work of the true reformer is not to rationalize religion, but to end it. I say that his real task is not even to attempt to prove that he is fundamentally at one with his religious neighbour, but to show that he is in complete and fundamental disagreement with him. I do not think that it is a good policy or a wise policy for the Freethinker to work for a time when Christians and Freethinkers may settle down comfortably together. I believe that his real task should be to work for a time when there are noChristian to settle down with. Our work is not to make religion rational, but to make it impossible.

The best way to do this is for the Freethinker to stand on his own feet. The measure of the real respect that the Freethinker will get from the religious world, will ultimately depend upon the amount of respect he has for himself. If the other foxes *will* wear tails, there is no reason whatever why a man who is born without one, or who has lost the one he had, should acquire and ornament that adds nothing whatever to his dignity. Of course, as I have said, this involves a man's learning to stand alone. At the best it will mean that he must be content with the company of a few; but in this matter one has to decide whether one wishes to be in front or to be with the crowd. The certain thing is that one cannot be in front *with* the crowd. Above all, if we really believe in the value of truth-speaking, and in the importance of marrying language to exact thought we must see that our terminology is as free as possible from misleading connotations. There is plenty of liberal thinking about to-day; our growing need is for exact thinking; and when we have achieved this, the courage to express it without hesitation and without ambiguity.

* * *

Reason or Logic ?

A final word may be said on the use of the words "rational," and "Rationalism" in connexion with belief and disbelief. Differentiation on these lines is quite unwarrantable. The comment that you cannot argue against the use of reason without depending upon reason, and so destroy your case, is at least as old as the time of Socrates. It is idle for the "Rationalist" to say that the Roman Catholic does not believe in "Reason," because he starts from a different premiss, or reaches a different conclusion from himself. He might as legitimately accuse a man of not being subject to physiological laws because he does not believe in their existence, or that he does not exemplify them because he has an impaired constitution. The real complaint against theologians of all kinds is not that they have refused to reason, or that they do not believe in reason, or that they have not tried to create a "rational religion," but that they have played the "merry devil" with reasoning. Even in the case of Mr. Belloc, who says quite plainly that he accept what the Church teaches and trusts her more than he does his own reason, he is not forsaking "reason" and is no less a believer in it than is any Freethinker. He is giving a reason why he accepts the authority of the Church, and although his reason may be an illogical one, it cannot be called non-rational. It is just illogical.

There is, in fact no essential opposition between reason, as such, and religion. The rejection and the acceptance of religion are both based on processes of reasoning. Where disbelief in religion exists the pooper term, the only term that indicates intellectual clarity and straitforwardness, is "Freethought," which stands for the rejection of authority in all matters of opinon. The truth is that when we dismiss a statement as "unreasonable," we do not mean that the process by which the alleged unreasonable conclusion is reached is not identical in its nature with a "reasonable" one, but that it is illogical—either that the premiss from which we start is wrong, or that the conclusion does not follow from the premiss.

Reasoning is concerned with judgments and judgments are concerned with infe-

rences from given data. Here is a handful of examples:—

(a) The barometer is falling and there will be rain.

(b) Prayers have been offered to God and rain will come.

(a) Rheumatism may be cured by brine baths and a carefully chosen diet.

(b) Rheumatism may be cured by prayers offered is St. Gervase.

(a) The Pope has been given authority in matters of religious beiefs by God Almighty.

(b) No man is entitled to claim authority where religious belief is concerned.

(a) In the face of what is known of the nature of procreation a Virgin Birth is impossible.

(b) God Almighty, with whom all things are possible, may cause a Virgin to give birth to a child.

So one might continue. But will anyone indicate where the one set of propositions dispenses with reason, while the other uses it? Or can anyone show that there is less reason employed, or less dependence placed upon reason in the one case than in the other? In each case we start from a given premiss—*i. e.*, the power of a saint or the virtues of medical treatment—and we proceed to a conclusion and then state a judgment. We may have false premisses, and then our conclusions are bound to be wrong, or we may have sound premisses and proceed illogically to a false conclusion. But to say that A believes in reason, and B does not, on no other ground than that different conclusions are reached, or in the premiss with which each starts, is absurd. One might well paraphrase a well-known saying, "Oh, reason, what absurdities are committed in thy name!" Reasoning may be good or bad, but its operations cannot be denied in any case where the expression of a judgment is concerned.

So I do not complain of Roman Catholics, or of the followers of Mrs. Eddy, that they refuse to reason, or even that they refuse to trust their reason, because both these statements are fundamentally untrue. My objection to both is that their reasoning is bad, it is illogical, the premiss is not warranted by facts, or the conclusion does not follow from the premiss taken. The circulation of the blood is just as true when the blood flows freely, as it is when it has to force its way through a constricted artery; reason is none the less reason because in the one case it proceeds logically, and in the other case illogically. A man who, as we say, refuses to reason, "is only reasoning that it is unwise or dangerous to follow other courses than that of silence, or verbal accommodation."

The Freethinker who says to the Roman Catholic, "I believe in the supremacy of reason" is really saying nothing at all, unless he adds, "and my reasoning shows me that your belief is quite false." But in that case he is avowing himself to be a Freethinker, and is accusing the Roman Catholic of bad reasoning. And, once again, those who properly recognize the nature of intellectual progress will see to it that the terms we use lack as little as possible in the direction of clarity of meaning and definiteness of application.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

From the Freethinker.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Modern Knowledge and Old Beliefs, being a sequel to "The Churches and Modern Thought," by Vivian Phelips: 138 pages, Sh.1/-net. Watts & Co. Johnson's Court, Fleet, London, E. C. 4.

The author needs no introduction to those who are acquainted with his old book, which is one of the most effective contributions to rationalistic propaganda. The present volume deals with the latest Christian apologetics. Christianity has long been in conflict with modern scientific knowledge and has been trying its level best to pretend that science and religion are not incompatible. It has often been helped in this pretence by scientists with a mystic turn of mind and Christians never stop to consider the scientific value of their pronouncements. X and Y are scientists, ergo all their utterances must be true, whether they refer to their special subjects or are utterly irrelevant. Because electrons fail to behave as they are expected to, or do not allow us to guess how they will behave, Sir James Jeans pretends that "Science has no longer any unanswerable arguments to bring against our innate conviction of free-will." On the same data, Sir Arthur Eddington would have us believe that "we cannot find a particle of evidence in favour of determinism," and free will being essential to the idea of sin, on which all religions are based, these conclusions are pounced upon as proving the existence of God. The reasoning of these unscientific scientists is at least as bizarre as the behaviour of electrons. Of course these conclusions have shocked all rational thinkers. They have been criticised by Professor Levy and Bertrand Russell, while Prof. Einstein has declared that "That nonsense is not merely non sense, but objectionable nonsense."

The slightest modification of scientific theories is interpreted by Christian apologists to mean that no scientific theory is worth anything. Newton's laws are supposed to be disproved by Einstein's theory, and Darwin's theory replaced by others. These modifications often only mean, as Bertrand Russell points out, that science is becoming more and more accurate by successive approximations. For all practical purposes, Newton's laws still hold good, and Darwin's theory is still valid in its broad outline.

An important point in modern apologetics is the question of Values, with a capital V: "Intrinsic or absolute values of a different order from sensuous existences, not less real than they, and given to us as facts of knowledge" says Dean Inge. This is somewhat mysterious, but what is religion without mystery? He explains further that these Values are Goodness, Truth and Beauty. In face of the hooliganism often displayed by religious people, the religious massacres and tortures that have blackened the face of History, he has the audacity to pretend that these are the exclusive appanage of religion! This is merely abuse of the opponent to make up for want of logic. What utterly damns Christianity's claim to be a universal religion are the verses 11 and 12, Chapter iv. of Mark, quoted by the author: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That

seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." Can narrowness of mind go any further? Is not the conversion work of missionaries directly opposed to this teaching, or do they expect to do people a good turn on the sly, without letting their Master know?

The author also refers to so-called "religious experience." Bishop Barnes says: "Yet we have seen, felt, known the presence of God." There is no means of distinguishing this 'religious experience' from hallucinations and cannot therefore claim to be evidence of the existence of God. There are people in all religions who claim to have this experience, but their experience always corresponds to their own religious convictions, which is in itself sufficient to nullify their value as evidence. Flammarion, the French astronomer, used to believe in spirits, who used to give him astronomical information which always agreed with what he knew, but when a few more moons were discovered for Saturn, of which the spirits had not told him anything, he saw that the spirits were imaginary.

The evil that we see in the world has always presented a hard problem. Any body who believes in God has to admit that He is a cruel tyrant, able but unwilling to relieve suffering. Bishop Barnes says: "It is an *impasse*, the most impenetrable of all the barriers which man tries to pierce by speculative inquiry." He is unwilling to postulate two Gods or believe that God is morally inert. The older religions got rid of the difficulty by imagining a number of conflicting Gods, but if you insist on having only one, you have to be mystic enough to say that God is moral, but still permits evil for the "emergence of ethical values," which will do for a Jesuit, but not for rational people.

The last chapter of the book contains an "appeal for candour. The general public has no idea of the real number of unbelievers, because people are not willing to tell the truth even to themselves. They find it more convenient to tell themselves that they believe even when they do not," an act of faith" as they call it. Then again, there are the "silent sceptics" who prefer to keep their rationalistic views to themselves, not realising that thus they help to maintain absurd and sometimes horrible superstitions. Most people hesitate to destroy old beliefs on the ground that they have nothing to put in their place. The author proposes "systematic non-theological moral instruction" to take the place of religious instruction. He mentions the good work done by Mr. F. J. Gould in this direction and also Dr. R. P. Paranjpye's "Crux of the Indian Problem," which speaks of moral instruction. The fact is that most of us are only willing to talk rationalism, but not to do anything practical about it. Dr. Paranjpye, for instance, when he was Minister of Education, did not object to the Government grant to the Wilson College which insists on having a *compulsory Bible Class*. I suppose there were cogent reasons, as there always are for everything. But who is to do these things if a rationalist Minister cannot? So long as Rationalism remains mere talk, progress is bound to be extremely slow.

The author quotes from John Stuart Mill: "The world would be astonished if

it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments, of those most distinguised even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue, are complete sceptics in religion." For some reason or other, personal interest, fear of giving offence, of unpopularity, they refrain from giving expression to their views and so much is lost to rationalism and gained to religion for religion has an interest in claiming that those who are not against it are for it.

The great strength of Christianity, as the author says, lies in the fact that few believers read the Bible, the absurdities of which as a religious book would be the best propaganda for Rationalism. For Roman Catholics, especially, religion is personified by the priest. In this country in particular Catholics are punished if they fail to attend Church regularly and the Church is organised to persecute defaulters and few have the courage to break away from their chains. Rationalists are lacking in organisation, even for defensive purposes, much less for offence. Independent thought does not naturally lead to cohesion and religious people have an interest in standing together to defend the remains of their faith. Unless therefore rationalists reason themselves into an agressive cohesion, they have little chance of making any headway.

R. D. KARVE.

God in his manifold manifestations.

This is an unpretentions little work by Mr. E. A. Sargon, a well known Bombay lawyer. The book is remarkably well written, showing that the author is not only a Hebrew scholar but also a highly cultured man throughly conversant with modern Science and modern thought.

Armed with such knowledge, the author attempts to reconcile the Story of Creation as depicted in the Book of Genesis with modern Science. He argues his point remarkably well and almost convinces one that the writer of Genesis wrote nothing that cannot be harmonized with modern knowledge. The discussion on Matter, Life, The Soul, The Cosmos and Evolution is worth reading. With that of the Soul, especially, we are quite in agreement. The book is written on rationalistic lines and we are sure that many Rationalists will be greatly interested in it. Though many of us may not agree that Mr. Sargon has succeeded in reconciling the two versions of Genesis on Creation—The Elhovistic and the Jehovistic which are themselves not in harmony—with modern Science as there seems to be a confusion in the mind of the author about the Creation of the planet Earth with the rest of the Cosmos, few will disagree that the book is very interesting and is written by a very cultured and intelligent person.

C. L. D.

THE MENTALITY OF MAGISTRATES

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To

The Editor, "Reason"

SIR.

In a recent French novel, "Un Crime d' Amour," by Jean Aubourg, the author emphasizes the fact that in so-called justice, the mental outlook of the judge is much more important than the law or legal machinery. In the story, the real criminal escapes and an innocent man is caught.

In my recent case, the learned magistrate seemed to be rather riled because I mentioned in my statement that the outlook of magistrates is the result of heredity and environment like that of everybody else. Since my proposition applies not only to human beings, but also to animals and even the vegetable world (so far as possible), I do not see how even learned magistrates can be excluded. The one in question illustrated the illiberality of which magistrates are capable, by refusing to raise my fine by one rupee so as to make the sentence appealable. Comment is hardly necessary.

Of course magistrates have done worse things than that; for instance the Tennessee magistrate who held that the theory of evolution must not be taught because it is contrary to religion. So long as magistrates have the power of gagging not only advanced thought, but even commonly accepted truth, any attempt at educating the general public can be frustrated by magistrates who are so inclined. I think a remedy will be to have at least two magistrates for every case and see that they do not belong to the same community.

Yours etc.

R. D. KARVE.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the masses of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

Should stray dogs and rats be destroyed? This is a problem which is actually agitating the minds of Orthodox Hindus at Ahmedabad. The conceasus of opinion among Hindus there, is that nothing of the kind must be done as it is against their religious susceptibilities that any animal should be destroyed. We read in the daily papers of a recent date that "The Ahmedabad Municipality, which a few days ago threw out the proposal to remove stray dogs from the city, on grounds of religious sentiments, today passed a proposal for filing the papers about distributing rat-traps.

"D. Ramprasad at first moved that rat-traps be distributed in the city, but the question as to how the rats were to be disposed of after being caught made him withdraw the proposal, as he did not like to take the blame for destroying the rats." Eventually the Corporation decided to also file the papers about the destruction of rats !

This is an illustration how a stupid religious belief can become a dangerous practice likely to endanger the lives of many. It will be recalled that twenty-five years ago the Bombay Municipality met with the same kind of resistance about rat-killing to free the City from plague, and quite recently certain Hindus of Poona strongly objected to any measure to kill rats there, though it is now well known that Plague is spread by rats. Are the Health Authorities in India going to bow down before such crass ignorance and absurd susceptibilities? It is inconceivable that they will, for the sake of the lives of other people who do not share the erroneous beliefs of those City Fathers.

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It was reported in the papers some days ago that Mr. Young, the Chief Justice of Lahore, seriously thinks that Hindus in Law Courts should be made to take oaths on Ganges water and Mahomedans on the Koran. He is reported to have said that in the estimation of prominent Indian lawyers a large proportion of witnesses in courts in this country were prepared to swear falsely. The root of the evil, he pointed out, was the futility of the oath which meant precisely nothing to a vast majority of witnesses and suggested that the substitution of the oath on Ganges water and the Koran would effect a miraculous change.

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We have no doubt that for a vast majority of the people of India, that is to say Hindus and Mahomedans, which means some millions of people, and we may safely say for a vast majority of people all over the world, the oath as administered in the law courts has become a meaningless ceremony. We are, however, sceptical whether the substitution of Ganges water as far as Hindus are concerned, would effect the "miraculous" change Mr. Justice Young expects. The fact is that the administration of the oath is an archaic custom, based on the idea that people are so afraid of the divine wrath that they dare not tell lies after calling the deity as a witness for what they are going to say. We would suggest that swearing on the tail of a living cow may be more impressive to Hindus. Every court should keep a cow for the purpose. Many witnesses may doubt whether the water on which they are asked to swear actually comes from the Ganges, but they cannot doubt the presence of a living cow. The superstition about the sanctity of the water of the Ganges may receive a still greater encouragement if English Officials in India were to support this belief.

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While on the sanctity of the waters of holy rivers in India, it reminds us that a good number of holy men last month lost their lives from Cholera through drinking the highly polluted water of the Godavari river at Nasik. The water of the Godaveri, it would appear, does not possess the property of destroying the deadly germs of cholera, typhoid fever, and dysentery as that of Mother Ganges, the holiest of rivers in the world. (They affirm that

there is bacteriological evidence to that effect). Despite the efforts of the Nasik health authorities to dissuade these holy men from using the contaminated water of the Godaveri, they continued to do so with utter contempt for profane advice. The result was that Cholera played havoc with them. It must have been a touching sight, indeed, to see them sacrifying their lives so willingly to Mother Godaveri whom they loved so dearly. A touching example of filial affection!

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A propos of our comment last month on the bleeding and talking crucifix of Asti, in Italy, a correspondent reminds us that some years ago, when the burning question of the unity of Hindus and Musulmans was agitating India, and great efforts in that direction were being made, though without success, the idol of the great god Shiva in a temple at Nagpur was one morning seen to be weeping copiously. Unlike the talking crucifix of Asti, the great god did not utter a word, not even to any poor woman who must have been present. The miracle, however, was duly attested by a number of people who went to see it. Among them, we are told, were reliable and respectable people such as doctors, lawyers, B.Sc.'s Railway officials and others The matter as we now remember, was reported in most of the papers in India. Needless to say that the incident caused a tremendous sensation. The alleged occurrence caused a good deal of wonder until a learned pandit explained that the cause of Mahadeo's sorrow was the irreconciliable attitude of the Hindus and Musulmans over the question of Unity. One is sorry to note that even the grief of India's great God did not affect in the least the population. They are as wide apart as before. Asti, after all, is not the only place in the world where inanimate objects show miraculos phenomena.

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The question of playing music before mosques has become such a serious one in India, owing to the frequent breaches of peace it causes, that it is time the more enlightened Mahomedans should make a real effort to make the more ignorant of their co-religionists understand the stupidity of it. In their zeal to prevent what they foolishly imagine to be a great insult to their religion, these ignorant fanatics will resort to violence at the slightest provocation. These misguided people do not seem to realize that if Allah objects to music he can very well put a stop to it himself without requiring their stupid help. It does not seem, however, that God has any particular objection to music. The Christians like to serenade him on every occasion, they can and the Hindus would think it a great neglect of duty if they did not make him feel lively with drums and cymbals. Only the Mahomedans imagine that Allah is so stern and serious that the very sound of music enrages him very much. We are sorry to learn that quite recently this erroneous belief led to a serious disturbance at Bandra when some of these zealots strongly objected to some Mahomedan children playing a drum in the compound of a mosque there. In the scuffle that ensued two Mahomedans were mortally wounded and some others seriously injured.

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One is pleased to hear that the Jains are realizing the abuse of priest-craft. At a recent Conference of the community in Bombay it was resolved that Priest craft having become a great nuisance in

the community and a cause of its backward condition, measures must be taken to lessen the baneful influence of the lazy priest who batten on the ignorance of the people. We doubt whether in its present state of education and culture the Jain community can do much to free itself from the influence of Priestcraft. It is however, a good sign that some of the more enligtened members have sounded the alarm to remind the more credulous ones that Priest craft is an intolerable nuisance and the cause of the demoralization of people.

* * *

The Times of India of May 10th, in announcing that an unique festival is shortly going to take place in a ruined Church at Condita, a village in Salsette, says: "The image of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, which will be taken in procession to the Church, was taken according to old Portuguese records, from a church which is now submerged in the Vehar lake. It is a very old work, and is the subject of the usual "miracle" legends." Note the word miracle in inverted commas, which probably show, that the writer of that note is well acquainted with the stories of miracles associated with sacred objects in the Churches of Salsette. These poor benighted Salsettians are great believers in miracles, and their great pleasure in life is to hold festivals in expectation of such a happening. Education is very baldy needed in Salsette—the paradise of priests and nuns.

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A Sunday paper of the 13th May publishes an interesting picture showing some Hindus keenly watching a burly Hindu gentleman throwing something in the sea. This was H. E. General Bahadur Shamshere Singh Rana, the Nepalese Minister at the Court of St. James, London, who left for England by the mail boat on the 12th of May. It would appear that this being his first voyage, "poojah" (offering) was performed at the Pier when offerings of fruits, coins, cloth, etc. were made to the sea. We do not know who is the sea demon H. E. was anxious to propitiate. Could not have been Neptune, as we do not believe that he cared for fruits, coins, cloth, etc. They say that he was fond of fishes, beer and sea weeds.

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Prof. J. B. Haldane writes in the Daily Express (a Catholic paper): "To judge from their symptoms, many of the supposed victims of the Borgias really died of acute appendicitis, brought on by over eating, rather than from poison" This opinion has greatly delighted the well known Catholic journal "The Universe". It ironically announces that Prof. J. B. Haldane is not a Jesuit in disguise. The next to enthuse over this non-medical opinion will surely be Mr. Hilaire Belloc who believes that only Catholic history is trustworthy and the rest is clearly directed against his Holy Mother the Church. Pope Alexander VI will soon be represented as one of the greatest Catholic saints that ever lived.

THE CENTENARY OF ERNST HAECKEL
1834-1919

The Literary Guide of London reminds us that this year is the centenary of the birth of Ernst Haeckel, the great German biologist who died in 1919. Ernst Haeckel, who Sir Arthur Keith, the great English authority on the Descent of Man, in a recent publication, describes as a Colossus among zoologists, was born at Potsdam, Germany, on February 16, 1834.

He embraced the medical career and studied at the University of Wursburg under Kolliker and Virchow, and completed his studies at the University of Berlin where he took his degree of Doctor of Medicine. In the latter University, he studied under the famous Johannes Muller, a great scientist of the time. That man was destined to play a great part in the future career of Haeckel, as very early he impressed upon him the necessity of careful studies and researches to solve some problems in the field of biology which at that time were pressing on the minds of some thoughtful scientists. It was this circumstance that changed the course of Haeckel's professional activities, and made him become one of the greatest biologists the world has ever seen. Sir Arthur Keith quite rightly says, "There was no one in his time (nor has any one appeared since) who possessed his mastery of the kingdom of living things." Only those who have studied Haeckel's numerous works and are capable of appreciating the vast amount of research he did in biology are in a position to endorse Sir Arthur Keith's opinion of him. The vast knowledge of Haeckel, his penetrating insight into the science of living things, his thorough grasp of the difficult study of the evolution of living organisms, make one marvel that any man could master so much knowledge especially at a time when the data for such work were scanty. It was only a genuis who could achieve what he did, create the modern science of biology in the light of the theory of Evolution. Ernie Nordenokiold in his "History of Biology" generously acknowledges that Haeckel, along with Darwin, is among the great names who created the modern science of biology—a view that many other scientists admit.

At the time of his graduation about the year 1857, the science of biology was still in infancy. Thanks to works of Wolfe and Von Baer a little was known of embryology. Schleiden and Schwann had discovered the cell, and Virchow was applying the cell theory to the science of medicine. Kolliker was then unravelling with the microscope the marvels of tissue building, thus creating one of the branches of biology, namely, histology. Men like Ehrenberg, Bronn, Ecker, His, and a few others were then considered great authorities in the nascent science of biology. The great authority of Cuvier in zoology was dominating, and the rigid classification of Linnaeus in botany was dogmatic. Most biological problems were unsolved, and thoughtful minds like Johannes Muller and some others felt the unsatisfactory state of knowledge in that science. Haeckel, himself, who at that time was studying low marine creatures, felt as regards the Medusa that species were in a state of flux just as they were in

botany. His studies of the Radiolaria, greatly encouraged by Johannes Muller, further confirmed this in his mind and set him to think seriously. It was about that time that Darwin's epoch-making book, "the Origin of Species" (1860) become known in Germany. Haeckel read that book, and, by one of those rare insights, familiar only to special intellects, at once became convinced that Darwin had unlocked the secret that would solve the biological problems that puzzled so many. His contemporaries, on the other hand, found nothing remarkable in that book and thought it to be the wild speculations of a mad English man! At that time, the belief in the immutability of species and that all creatures were specially created held the field with the majority—laymen as well as scientists. It is true that Jean Lamarck, the famous French scientist, had already written on the transformation of species by natural laws, but his theory found little favour with the leading scientists of the time, though some were greatly impressed by it. As a matter of fact, certain thoughtful minds were puzzled by certain biological phenomena which they thought could not be reconciled with the belief of special creation and fixed species. The existence of extinct species, whose fossils are embedded in rocks, was one of those puzzles. The great Cuvier tried to solve the difficulty by explaining that catastrophic occurrences periodically annihilated them and their replacement by new ones was but natural. This theory, though accepted by many, could not convince the more thoughtful who considered it a fantastic one.

The appearance of Darwin's book caused a tremendous sensation in the scientific world of that time. In England, the home of its birth, it was received with considerable hostility, and in Germany its reception was not more friendly. In that country, men like Keferstein, Otto Volgar, Semper, Kiebel, Willian His, Eeker, Ehrenberg, Agassiz, Rutemeyer, Giebel and many other leading scientists of that time unreservedly rejected the theory of Darwin. This accounts why at the Scientific Congress of Stettin (1863), where the theory was for the first time discussed before a large body of eminent German scientists, it was received with derision. Haeckel tells us that most of the assembled scientists were red in the face with laughter when he opened the discussion on the subject. Haeckel was a very young man then and he was the only one present who took that theory seriously. He protested against the unscientific attitude of the assembled scientists in not considering the theory on its merit in a scientific spirit. On that occasion he not only defended the theory in the teeth of violent opposition, but he developped the programme which he, himself, was going to unfold for decades. After reviewing the subjects that Darwin's theory embraces, he discussed Man's place in Nature of the strength of that theory, a feat which Darwin, himself, had no courage to do then, though he was certainly convinced that man could not escape the general laws of Evolution. It is fortunate that Haeckel, at that time, had just completed his researches on the Radiolaria and Medusa. This work, which in itself is considered to be a great achievement, had prepared his mind for the reception of Darwin's illuminating theory. Had it not been so, it is possible that like most of his contemporaries he might have found nothing remarkable in it. Haeckel however, was an intellectual

giant; like a flash Darwin's theory illuminated his mind and enabled him to understand many problems that had hitherto remained obscure. It is to his eternal glory and merit that his genius enabled him, not only to grasp all the facts that the theory of evolution reveals and to construct a biogenetic law which served him as a working hypothesis (Sir Arthur Keith says that it is simply marvellous how he could do so with the scanty data at his disposal at that time), but to comprehend the far reaching influence of Darwin's theory in the study of living organisms and their origin. From the time of the Congress of Stettin, Haeckel become the most powerful exponent of Darwinism in Germany. This fact and his combative nature which made him attack vigourously the superstitions of his time, explain why he had so many enemies; but he ignored them all. For more than four decades after the Congress of Stettin, oblivious of the obloquy and outcry against him, Haeckel set himself to attain the ideal he had sketched, namely to construct a system of biology on evolutionary principles that would embrace all lives from the Monera below to Man above. To do these, to collate, arrange and systematize all facts that this system required, to build a genealogical tree that would link all creatures living and extinct that would illustrate this tree, required the most profound knowledge of botany, zoology, and geology, not to mention other allied sciences. As Professor Bolsche says:— "Only one who had done gigantic work could accomplish such a marvellous task." Five years after the Congress of Stettin he published his "General Morphology" which Professor Huxley called "One of the greatest scientific works ever published" and of which Professor R. Hertwig said "Few works have done as much towards raising the intellectual level of Zoology." His "Natural History of Creation," which became very popular, was an easier version of the above. Among the numerous works he published mention must be made of the "Systematic Phylogeny" for which the Royal Academy of Science of Turin awarded him the Bressa Prize. His "Anthropogeny" or "Evolution of Man" is now universally regarded as one of the greatest and authoritative works on man. His "Riddle of the Universe," which caused a tremendous sensation when it appeared, is a condensation of his scientific and philosophical views. This book has been translated in thirteen languages and sold by hundreds of thousands. It is no exaggeration to say that it has enlightened hundreds of thousands and shaken their beliefs in superstitions. His "Wonders of Life" is, itself, considered to be a wonder of industry and erudition.

It was Haeckel who demonstrated the existence of microcellular organisms to which he gave the name of Protists or Monera. He combatted the cell dogma which would have impeded instead of advancing the theory of evolution. To day, the science of protistology has been added to that of biology. In Embryology he not only described in a masterly and authoritative manner all the phases of development, but he established the fact that the embryo passes through all the forms of its ancestrsl origin. He formulated the theory known as phylogeny (the stem) and ontogeny (the individual) to interpret these phases; and in order to explain the modifications that the embryo undergoes he showed the influence of heredity on the one hand

and adtapation on the other on its development. He gave the name of palingenesis and cenogenesis to these phenomena. He described the gastrae and coelum stages in embryological development and predicted that living organisms corresponding to these stages will be found one day. Thirty years after, Monticelli discovered such creatures in the Red Sea. He successfully combated August Weismann on the question of acquired characters and in many other respects combatted erroneous views on biology.

Haeckel found many opponents to his revolutionary views among the other scientists who were generally hostile to the theory of evolution. This was only natural. As he was also an uncompromising foe of false religious teachings, he made many enemies in the religious world. They attacked him severely and in a most undignified and unscrupulous manner. For instance, they took advantage of the absurd objections of some of the older scientists to the manner he schematized his pictures to make believe that these scientists have accused him of "frauds and forgeries." In this manner they spared no effort to belittle him and to represent him as a discredited scientist and so forth. Things went so far that thirty six of the leading biologists of Germany and Austria were obliged to issue a manifesto in which they condemned in the sharpest manner the methods of his religious enemies. They also exonorated Haeckel and declared that what he did with his pictures was perfectly legitimate and in the interest of science.

If unscrupulous religion-ridden men tried to belittle and injure the reputation of Haeckel—a perfect waste of time on their part—the scientific world handsomely recognized the immense services be rendered to science. He held four gold medals for scientifie researches, and four doctorates (Iena, Berlin, Edinburgh, and Cambridge), eighty diplomas from so many Universities and academical-bodies. He was honoured in his country and on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, the Universities of Italy, through the Prime Minister, greeted him on the occasion as one of the greatest scientists in the world, added that they admired his undying work. Professor Bolsche said many years ago that posterity will appreciate more the genius of Haeckel than his own contemporaries. Already this prediction is being realized. It was not long ago that Professor MacBride expressed the opinion that as we learn more and more of the science of biology, we recognize that Haeckel has illuminated the theory of Evolution in a manner that has not been surpassed by any scientist. Haeckel died peacefully in 1919 at the ripe age of eighty five.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

INDIAN RATIONALISTS ON DUTY

A south-Indian State issues an order prohibitting a meeting of atheists as it is likely to wound the religious feelings of the subjects of the Durbar. Elsewhere, in British India, a rationalist meeting had to be dispersed owing to the insistence on the use of the word *Mahatma*. At another place Mr. Gandhi's car was treated to physical violence at the hands of alleged Sanatanists. This land of far stretching extremes has yet to be brought under rationalist cultivation. "It seems not unlikely that we have again entered upon a period of creed-wars" wrote Prof. Harold J. Laski, in the current Rationalist Annual in the article 'On the Social Obligation of Rationalists.' But conditions here are more imminently fraught with danger to the freedom of opinion than in the West where ignorant superstition is not as much responsible as political fanaticism for cleavages in the human family. "What is the duty of a Rationalist in an atmosphere of this kind?" he asks. And in the next breath he wards off the suggestion that Rationalism has an obligation to serve any special creed. The Rationalist 'may be Conservative or Radical, Individualist or Collectivist, Deist or Atheist. So long as his view is built upon an admission that the claims of reason are paramount; so long further, as he is prepared to submit his will and interest to the scrutiny of scientific examination, Rationalism does not demand from him any particular outlook. 'He stresses the need for eternal vigilance which is the inescapable price of freedom. "We have entered upon a time when it is urgent for all who are concerned for civilised standards of life to proclaim the faith that is in them. They cannot dare with self-respect, to remain enfolded in their private lives..... The world hugs its chains only when the defenders of freedom are silent." To religiously-minded States and to Sanatanists, to those that lift up black flags, as to those that would insist that Mr. Gandhi should always be styled Mahatma. Rationalism commends the civilised standards of life, where freedom of thought, belief and expression obtains, where reason dictates toleration to all views and discriminate choice through wise judgement.

Indian Rationalists will be missing the real spirit of Indian life were they to neglect the fact that this is the land of the idolator. Discarded idols need something to replace with. Man nowhere ceases to worship ideas. What we should guard against is the tendency to transfer such worship to the men that are responsible for them. When we begin to deify men we lose sight of the natural. Hero-worship as a subtle insidious process of supernaturalism is the worst enemy that reason has to contend against. I have worked into this idea in my recent article 'Rationalism and Indian Reconstruction' (Bharat Dharma, March, 1934, and REASON, Bombay, April, 1934.) The real evil attending on the deification of our best men lies in the fact that people lose the sense of kinship with the leaders. If great names (historicity apart) of the Buddha, Krishna and Jesus are lifted up to divine incarnation, the common mind begins to make all allowance for their reformative achievements but sinks into helpless inaction on their lines, because, it is not given to mortals to follow their track.

When we begin to garland the pictures of Ram Mohun Roy, and Gandhi, we are unconsciously helping the same process of removing these prime movers from the ranks of humanity. None feels the evil consequences of such a course as the Mahatma. He protests against all insinuations of the Avatar. He is grieved over the feet-touching-phobia, not merely on account of the scratching, but on the sound principle of the respect for the commonness of human life. While Mr. Gandhi feels the community of genius with his fellow-beings, they in all ignorance and superstition would drive him away from the rank and file amidst which it is his highest pleasure to move. We are so thoroughly steeped in superstition that not all the wisdom of the Mahatma is kindling us into the path of Buddhi.

The highest flight of genius is yet a stroke of humanity. Rationalism comprehends the supernormal personality no less than the common run of the mass level. Mystic theorising apart, the view held by psychologists like F. W. H. Myers, that spontaneous genius stands for the fuller expression of the human faculties rather than an abnormality, that in the average run of the species the varied complex possibilities remain at the lower stage of unfoldment, has much to commend itself to Rationalists, in that such a view strengthens the bond between the prophet and his following. (Cf. Human Personality by Myers, Vol. i. p. 71.) But the prophet and the seer are men of genius for their age, and not for all time, absolutely. " Life is change. Each living organism changes. Each generation differs from its predecessor. To assign a fixed norm to a changing species is to shoot point-blank at a flying bird. The actual average at any given moment is no ideal standard. Rather the furthest evolutionary stage now reached is tending, given stability in the environment, to become the average of the future." (ibid. p. 76). And when that future is reached, what had been the radiant discovery of the hour shall pass into the record of history to stand comparison with like achievements of man. It is our highest consolation that Sriram and Prophet Mahomed once shared our sorrows and pains and yet wrung out the best from the human body, not that they emanated from on high detached from earthly mould.

What seperates the great mind from the smaller ones is thus really the difference in degree of the intensity of life, rather than any diversity of its quality. As Myers put it 'the differential of genius lies in an increased control over subliminal mentation,' and 'the man of genius is for us the best type of the normal man, in so far as he effects a successful co-operation of an unusually large number of elements of his personality-reaching a stage of integration slightly in advance of our own." *An increased control over subliminal mentation* verges on the faculty of intuition, the *inner sense* of the Mahatma. We meet with arithmetical prodigies, calculating boys who give out the solution of the biggest problems in Mathematics without the aid of pen and paper, and in much shorter time than may be required for working them out in the usual way. That is a spontaneous unexplained gift of nature. While an increased control over subliminal mentation may either be spontaneous or may perhaps be acquired. Perhaps, the Buddhi Yoga of the Hindu texts eminently corresponds to Myers' psychological study. Rationalists may

be permitted to suspend judgment until 'Atman' places before them more tangible evidence than has so far been accorded. Until such time, soul, spirit, and Atman are bound to receive a merely verbal significance that they originated in the language, of a people whose experience it is given to few of us to share. Mahatma is another such word of mystic significance. As dedicated to plain-thinking, Rationalist life quails before such language.

But that is not to say that Rationalists are forbidden the use of these words. Such words as God, Soul, Spirit, and the holy one are there. They are the facts of life, of human life, and of constant psychological significance. We shall be missing the essence of Indian life, should we have the least doubt on their existence, and the likelihood of their continuance for some considerable time. It would be achieving much, should Rationalism confine them to the field of psychology, poetry and religious ecstacy. In its endeavour to so confine them there is the other danger of Rationalists itself becomming highly religious, emotional fanatic, and worse intolerant. That is a danger which every Rationalist on duty cannot guard oneself against too strongly. It is a warning to ourselves that we cannot afford to us the aesthetic latitude that is permissible to the Sanatanists, for example. We should never swing in our balanced judgment, the equipoise of intellect that ought to remain our peculiar property, the pose of Buddhi-Yoga that pertains to true Rationalism. Our character does not extend to the emotional side of experience, as much as it is given to the Religious sensitive to traverse. He may throw brick-bats at men in the name of God whose command he believes to follow in the act. On the otherhand, as the Rationalist (Madras, d. 8-12-1933) points out, 'the Mahatma is essentially religious, and hence is our inveterate opponent, but he struggles to abolish untouchability and hence is an ally. To be opposed to him will "land us in queer company-that of the Sanatanists." Even Rationalism we should begin to realise is matter for relative inculcation, and we should be poor realists if for the sake of nominal verbal or terminological objections we were obliged to let go the oppurtunities of greater service.

In the Thinkers' Library Series is included Morley's book "On Compromise," which answers our difficulty. Having a clear grasp of the nature and strength of the opposing forces, it is permissible to yield on points of minor significance, gripping fast the main substance of our principle. We should be prepared to go the whole way in the service of the Rationalist cause, and in time we hope to convince our inveterate opponents. But until such time, which may not reach in the life of any single individual, it does not mean that we stop all propaganda. The folly of refusing to act until the whole country gives up what we consider is an irrational outrage to commonsense, is quite obvious. Except in India, possibly, in no other country will such issues be made to depend on the use or otherwise of particular words. That is probably the case here perhaps because we are less businesslike or more given to idealism, if that is greater merit. But Rationalism has every right to assume that the highest evidences of supernormality are yet within the human level. The existence of the soul may ever ramain in scientific doubt. The Rationalist has no faith in anything which is not warranted by

experience, rooted in reason. Yet, Rationalism stands to lose nothing by accepting the popular nomenclature of Atman, and the Mahatman. Only, the priggishness that would prevent the Rationalist meeting in the Country on ground of terminological persistence is beyond the range of normal human rationality.

M. V. V. R. RANGACHARI.

AGNOSTICISM

Agnosticism means ths state of *not knowing*. You might as well ask me why I don't *know* about life on Mars, as to ask why I'm agnostic about life in heaven. Of the two, I'd bet on Mars. It can be seen with the naked eye.

I'm an agnostic because I don't believe everything I hear. Do you know anybody who *does* believe everything he hears? We're all agnostic about some things. What are you agnostic about? How do you draw the line between what you don't believe?

When a man wants me to believe in his religion, I don't demand much of him. I only expect him to prove what he says about his heaven and hell. That is n't much to ask. Why, if I didn't ask that I might get converted to Christianity one day, Buddhism the next, Taoism the next, Islamism the next, Judaism the next, and so on.

If the Jew, the Christian, the Mohammedan, the Taoist, the Buddhist each chooses to believe things he can't prove he shouldn't try to make me justify myself for not believing them. Always remember, when the other fellow wants to make you believe something, the onus is on him to show *why* you should.

Revealed Religion is interested in two propositions: belief in a god and belief in immortality. A belief in a god is important to them, for, without a god they could see no way to believe in immortality. My days are drawing to a close, and not once have I found anyone who can prove either one—or give any proof of either one.

It is precisely because they haven't enough proof to pile up a molehill that religionists idealize the faith that "moves mountains." If you want to believe something you can't prove, you've got to have faith. That's why they've made blind belief their cardinal virtue. I think it's one of the greatest of sins—if there are any sins.

To make people believe blindly, they've scared them with hell-fire. Then somebody got the idea of a god of love, and that proved a very appealing idea. So they've been trying ever since to reconcile their god's love with his hell-fire. I can't do it.

Euclid never threatened anybody with hell-fire for not believing that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. He did n't have to threaten. He *proved* it

When science began to show up religion's claim to all knowledge and wisdom and power, people became harder to scare. So the religionists, like good merchandisers, changed their selling tactics. They've sort of given over talking about

hell-fire. It's becoming bad pulpit-manners for a clergyman to roast his congregation before dinner. He finds it hard to keep a congregation in the city if he does. So nowadays they try to seduce you into believing, instead of scaring you into the fold. Sunday schools give movies and picnics, and the clergy try to play upon your desire to live forever in a kind of eternal picnic. Though why anybody should want that, is beyond me.

The gentle clergy! Where once they'd throw you to the flames for a single honest doubt, today they act not as executioner, but as midwife to assist you through the pains of difficult belief.

They say: "Something within you *wants* to believe in eternal life. Therefore there *must be* eternal life!"

Now what kind of nonsense is that? Do you get everything you want? Do you even get a fair share of what you want in this life? I never have, and I have never known anybody who did. So why expect pie in the sky by-and-by just because you may want it? The truth is, people find it pathetically easy to believe what they want to believe. That's why every insane asylum has four or five Napoleons.

Another religious trick to make you believe what can't be proved, is to befuddle you by pushing your mind out to the limits of human intelligence. At that point, your tormenter pretends that he knows more than you do. He's either deceiving you, or himself.

He says: "Everything must have a cause." (I guess he forgets about miracles for a moment.) "Therefore," your religionist goes on, "the very universe itself must have been started by some Great Cause, and that Great Cause is God."

That's fine. But if everything must have a cause, what caused the Great Cause? You're up against a stone wall.

It's precisely the same as the old riddle about space. What's beyond the farthest star? Space. No human being can imagine space without end, yet no human being can imagine an end to space. The question "what's beyond that—and beyond that—and that?" just keeps recurring till your brain reels.

So there you are—at the very limit of human intelligence, with two opposite things seeming to be true at the same time. And in just the same way, you can't imagine a universe that started without a cause, and you can't imagine a cause that started by itself. So you don't know where you're at, and that's exactly the position the agnostic takes.

But the other fellow builds gods and heavens and hells, theologies, laws, inquisitions, devils, dogma, and personal immortality all upon what he *doesn't know*!

And what a fine time he has, making his gods! Do gods make men, or do men make gods? Ask any religionist that, and he'll say: "Men made every god but my God, and my God made men."

Every god is accused of being man-made by everybody but his own followers—and his own followers say that every *other* god is man-made. It's like two politicians each calling the other a scoundrel, and both being right!

So far as most of the claims of revealed religion are concerned, I'm not only an agnostic; I'm an out-and-out disbeliever. I don't believe that Adam gave birth to Eve by shedding a rib. Washington may have been the Father

of his Country, but I don't think Adam was the Mother of Humanity!

Neither do I believe that little babies go to hell or to "limbo" if they die without having water sprinkled on their heads. I think the doctrine of original sin is one of the most damnable ideas ever foisted on humanity. I despise the indignity offered to women in the doctrine of the immaculate conception. I don't think it's a sin for a woman to have a baby. A little inconvenient at times, perhaps, but scarcely a sin. I've never listened to a word-picture of heaven that didn't respect the figure of Lucifer in that old myth which tell how he was kicked out of that dull, smug place. And as to hell, even the man who invented the idea wouldn't deserve to be sent there, if it existed.

I don't believe the sun ever stood still in the heavens to give the Israelites light to kill more of their enemies. And even if it did stand still, it wouldn't have lengthened the day! I can't swallow the whale that swallowed Jonah.

But, they will tell you, lots of religious people don't believe things like that today.

Well, that's a very good thing, I'm glad they don't, because it's only a few generations ago that they were burning people to death for not believing those very things, and a whole dogmatic fabric of other things equally ridiculous. I'm always glad to see improvement, even in religion.

Lots of people don't believe today that Jesus was born without a father. They say you can believe that Jesus was the Son of God and still believe that He had a human father, and without believing in the miracles, without believing that the human race got itself condemned to hell because Adam ate an apple.

I say that's unreasonable. I agree with the Fundamentalists, for once in my life. When you give up one little piece of your Bible you give it all up. So say the swallowers of Jonah, and so say I. When you stop believing in the fall of Adam, you ought to stop believing in the sacrifice of Jesus, because, according to the Christians, it was the fall of Adam that made the sacrifice of Jesus necessary. As Watts, the hymn-writer said: "In Adam's fall we sinn-ed all." Josh Billings put a lot more life into it by saying: "In Adam's sin we all j'ined in."

Trying to pick the flaws out of revealed religion is like bulling at a loose end in a woolen sweater. Before you know where you're at, you've got it all unraveled.

Yes, the Fundamentalists are right. Those liberal Christians who treat Jonah's whale like a poor relation are destroying their own religion. And that's a very good thing!

Many parts of the Christian church are trying to become intellectually respectable. They're trying to hide a lot of those old supernatural sores—the very sores they flaunted so proudly when they were begging for souls in years gone by. When I was a boy, if you believed the Bible at all you believed it through from cover to cover. Today, Christians have "reservations."

This means they're becoming agnostic about the trimmings of their religion, at least. And why shouldn't they? Think of the incredible things men have done and believed in the name of religion! That story about the Judgment Day for instance. We're all supposed to stand

here on earth to be judged, in our own original flesh, everybody who has ever lived or ever will live.

Now, in the first place the earth probably wouldn't hold us all at one time, but, even supposing it would, how about the cannibal that ate the missionary, taking into his body a lot of the cells that had made up the missionary's. Kind of an awful mess, being resurrected half missionary and half cannibal!

Not to take such an unusual example, just remember how the bodies of millions of soldiers have decomposed on thousands of battlefields, become fertilizer for the crops of hundreds of thousands of farmers, and thus passed into the food and thence into the bodies of millions of other people!

Yes, sir; Judgment Day would present quite a spectacle!

So, if men are becoming agnostic or unbelieving about things like that, I think it's a very encouraging sign. Perhaps they'll prune their tree till it dies. Voltaire and Payne and hundreds of nameless, half-despised, half-feared village atheists have done their work toward making men just a little more free.

What a fight it has been! They have battled against incredible odds—against seemingly irresistible power, staggering antiquity standing antagonistically against all freedom and especially against change. The church has tried to block every step science has ever taken. When Galileo proved that the earth, far from being the centre of the universe, was just a speck of dust dancing around a flame, Christendom was scandalized. Right then they experienced that vertigo which has grown steadily worse, generation after generation, until today revealed religion is staggering dizzily in ever-widening circles. They grabbed Galileo and made him put their earth right back where he got it. But the damage had been done. Galileo recanted, but the earth kept right on swinging.

Today many "liberal" churchmen say that there is no conflict between science and religion. Theirs is the cry of a tiring warrior who says to his young, fresh adversary: "Now, really, you and I have no quarrel."

It may be that the end of the long struggle is in sight. I don't know. But I regret not one of the blows I have struck, or taken.

CLARENCE DARROW
IN "REAL AMERICA."

MAN 500,000 YEARS FROM NOW

H. L. Shapiro. writing in Natural History, says it sometimes occurs to the anthropologists, perhaps more often than to others, to wonder what manner of men will replace the mankind he so assiduosly studies. His contemplation of the evolutionary series terminating with man naturally suggests the probability of its continuation into the future when the contemporary human type will have receded to the position of an ancestor to a still more advanced variety of man.

It is rather difficult to determine whether the rate of man's evolution has been slower or faster than that of other creatures. Certainly, in contrast with some of the lowly molluscs, such as the brachiopods for example, man has been a veritable greyhound, nor has he, compared to the horse, shown any tendency to lag. We must conclude that man's capabilities for advancement are excellent, but that evolution is a slow process requiring great stretches of time to manifest itself. If therefore my picture of the average man of 501,933 A.D. does not conform to your aesthetics, you can at least take comfort in the thought that the man of 6993 A.D. will be but, little different from what he is today, and for most of us that is far ahead to worry about.

The Distinctive Traits of Man.

The most striking changes that have occurred in the evolution of man from a fourfooted (or four-handed, if you prefer) primate to his proud state are the marked increase of the brain and the assumption of the upright posture. Upon these developments a numerous series of subsidiary changes are dependent. But these two, upright posture and highly evolved brain, more than anything else, distinguish man anatomically from his anthropoid predecessors. And of the two, I am inclined, perhaps cynically, to hold that the upright posture is the more distinctive. From that remote day in the past when our ancestral anthropoid stock left off using its forelimbs in locomotion and stood up on its own hind legs the upright posture has remained essentially the same. Although the structure of those enterprising primates had been, to some degree, prepared for such an upward step by a long arboreal tutelage, nevertheless one can readily apprehend the repercussions which that event would have on numerous skeletal traits and internal organs, and one can appreciate the pains of adjustment which would follow. For this new mode of progression made it necessary, among other rearrangements. for the foot to develop into a more firmly knit and resistant mechanism, for the pelvis to take on an increasing weight-bearing function. for the thorax to become flattened and for the internal organs to be suspended in the longitudinal axis of the body. The point is that although all sorts of accomodations, some of which are still imperfect, were slowly being made in the structure of these early bipeds, the very stimulus to these gradual alterations remained unchanged. In other words, man having achieved this step did not proceed further along that road for the simple reason that he couldn't. Once the upright posture is attained one can't go on becoming more and more upright.

The brain however underwent no such circumscribed development. It merely expanded slowly. And while the upright posture has remained fixed. the brain, on

the contrary, has continued to increase in size and complexity. For this reason the brain and its enclosing skull are areas where the most significant changes have taken place during the most strictly human history of man.

I can venture therefore, with some confidence to predict that man in 500,000 years will continue to be an upright creature, and with some hesitation that his brain will be larger. The reason for my slight hesitancy with regard to the expansion of the brain in the near future (for 500,000 years is but a few days in man's phylogenetic existence) is that there are some indications that the quality of the brain may improve without a concomitant increase in size. Moreover, Keith has shown that among the Bushmen, for example, the cranial capacity of their ancestors was much greater than is their own. Furthermore, Rhodesian man and some of Neanderthal burlies of 50,000 years ago had skulls the size of which was equal to if not greater than our own. But, in general, the tendency from Sinanthropus and Pithecanthropus to modern man has been for the brain to expand. Actually the cranial capacity of the Pithecanthropus was about 900 cubic centimetres (roughly 1,000cc., in Inanthropus), appreciably larger than the average for gorillas, 500cc., and than that for chimpanzees, 400cc., but much small than we find commonly among the Europeans, 1450 c.c. If we accept the recent estimates that Pithecanthropus lived at the end of the Pliocene or the beginning of the Pleistocene, a matter of 1,000,000 years ago, we might, by the assumption of a constant rate of increase and with the aid of simple arithmetical processes arrive at a capacity of 1725 c.c. for our future man, 500,000 years hence. But this need not call up a picture of a balloon headed individual. There are men to be met with without special comment on the streets today, whose skull capacity reaches and even exceeds this figure.

Changes in skull shape.

Professor Arthur Thompson investigated some years ago the effect on the skull of an increased capacity. He found by a simple experiment that if the base of the cranium was kept constant, the cranial vault tended to become rounder as its capacity expanded. The mechanics of his experiment have been amply supported by a number of statistical studies yielding high correlation between head form and cranial capacity. The corollary of these investigations is clear. If the capacity remains constant and the skull base decreases in length we have in effect the same result as increasing skull capacity on a fixed skull base. Actually the modern European skull base reveals a marked shortening. In the Neanderthaloid skull, known as La Chap lle aux Saints, the skull base is 123. 4mm long; in the adolescent Le Monstier specimen of the same stock it is 124. Omm; whereas in the succeeding Upper Paleolithic males it averages 104.8mm and in modern Europeans from 94 to 102mm. This reduction is convincingly paralleled by a rise in the cranial index. Moreover, there are other signs indicating the way the evolutionary wind is blowing. Recently, attention has been focused on the increasing brachycephaly or roundheadedness in various parts of Europe. Parsons has noted this phenomenon in modern England where there can be no question of a recent brachycephaly introduced by an invading population. Fischer has similarly reported for

Southern Germany. We can therefore assume that our hypothetical 'homo futurus' will have not only a larger head or brain case but a rounder one as well.

Other changes in the skull.

Pari passu, with the expansion of the skull, which I anticipate will continue into the future, there has been a refinement of the modelling of the skull. The angular and crude primitive cranium has gradually been converted into a smoother and more gracile one. I shall not go into all the ways in which this has taken place. That would require a volume. But an important change readily noticeable to the average observer has been the reduction of the prominent bony ridges over the eyes which in anthropoids and fossil men resembles a heavy bar. At present the female of the human species tends to have a brow that is more or less vertical or smooth above the eyes, whereas in the male there is a moderate swelling above the root of the nose in the region called glabella. To either side of this glabellar area vestigeal ridges of bone still persist in the modern male. It is a well marked sex difference and is clearly apparent. With the aid of our evolutionary series we notice that there has been consistent expansion of the frontal regions and a smoothing of the brow as we advance from the primates to modern man. In this respect the female has always been in advance of the male and has pointed the direction in which he has travelled. The ladies may take pleasure in contemplating that it will have taken the males 500,000 years to attain the smoothness of brow which they now possess. As for the females themselves, if a sex difference in the frontal region of the skull is to persist, they will develop infantile brows-slightly bulbous.

It was the renowned Metchnikoff, I believe, who considered the digestive organs a grossly overdeveloped system in the human economy. Certainly, many of his less accomplished successors predict the future man with a very reduced digestive apparatus, sufficient only to absorb highly concentrated food-pills with which they fancy man will content himself. Perhaps even such a vestigeal digestive tract may be dispensed with altogether if man ever becomes indifferent to food. In that sad day the essential nutriment of life might then be injected directly into the blood stream. But I cannot accept this dismal future. The delights of the table are too pleasant to be lightly eliminated in favour of the joyless and sterile consumption of food pills. I can perceive no diminution in man's appetite-if anything he eats more than primitive man and certainly I have yet to know a healthy man who shows even the faintest inclination to relinquish the sensuous and delicate enjoyment of solid foods. Therefore, I leave you your stomach and its appurtenances.

But even though our digestive system remains intact, one adjunct to it is undergoing modifications and will continue to do so. This is the dentition. No vertebrate is afflicted with such dental decay as is man. Hardly a child among us reaches puberty without some decay developing, few adolescents attain maturity without loss of teeth from caries, and a large number of adults only have teeth at all by the constant vigilance of the dentists.

Unfortunately decay or caries, is not the only evidence of the serious readjustment going on in our dentition. This is also seen in the frequency with which our teeth are mal-erupted. Twisted teeth,

impacted molars, faulty alighnments and mal-occlusions are too common to be lightly dismissed. They indicate a deep seated force at work which is generally affecting the population. Indeed so numerous are the children suffering from these mal-eruptions that there has grown into being a branch of dentistry, orthodontia, devoted expressly to the correction of these dental faults.

Dental Modifications.

But this is not the whole story of the degeneration of the human dentition. In still other ways it manifests itself. I shall mention only two more. One is the increasing suppression of the third molars or wisdom teeth. Not only is the age at which it erupts, 18 to 20, being pushed later and later in life, but in many people they are absent in whole or in part. The second is the construction of the jaw. It is obvious that the crowding of the teeth and the construction of the jaws may be associated, but not always is this the case.

Weakening Teeth

One cannot help being convinced that all this evidence is symptomatic of a fundamental process which may in time be responsible for considerable alterations to our dental equipment. I do not propose to ennuciate a dogmatic generalization to account for this situation. Controversies on the nature and cure of dental decay have flourished for generations among those interested in teeth. Decay has been attributed to hyperacidity, to endocrine dysfunction and to diet, among other factors. No doubt, the situation is a complex one and the superficial causes may be as varied as the manifestations they produce. But one cannot but be impressed by the fact that the dentition is an area of weakness. My guess is that the teeth are, to a large extent, losing their function and consequently becoming less vigourous resistant. In other words, they are readjusting themselves to the changed demands upon them. This in itself reduced them to a state of relative non-resistance which makes them especially prone to secondary attacks—endocrine dysfunction, faulty diet and hyperacidity. In their weakened state they are unable to withstand attacks that in lower forms are easily resisted. Perhaps I can make my idea clearer by comparing them to an army which, kept in constant and full use of its powers, is able to put up a good defense against its enemies. But suppose such an army were not systematically employed but took its ease in comfortable barracks and never exercised its warlike functions. Then an attack would decimate it. So the teeth have lost their resistance and so they capitulate to the onslaughts of their enemies.

Fewer and Smaller Teeth.

We may see this perhaps more clearly by examining the toughened teeth of anthropoids and early man. Of course, decay is not completely unknown even among these creatures, but it is rare. The third molars do in most cases erupt complete and sound, and the position and alignment of the teeth in their serried arches would delight the heart of an orthodontist, accustomed to the misshapen jaws of his patients. Even among present-day Eskimo, who alone among living people make full use of their teeth the same beauty of dentition is present. From the primates to modern man we perceive a progressive recession of the jaws, a decrease in the size of teeth, a loss in number, and an increase in maleruptions.

We are now in the position to predict the future condition of the teeth of our gradually emerging man. Since it is improbable that we shall return to the tough resistant food on which our predecessors thrived, the chances are that our dentitions will continue to deteriorate. Future man will have lost his third molars, many of them will also show reduced or absent lateral incisors. The jaws will be smaller and what teeth are present will be diminished in size.

This predicted diminution of the size of the jaws and the teeth goes hand in hand with a reduction in the muscle masses which control the masticatory movements of the mandible. Since the cheek bones and their lateral arches serve to enclose these muscles and to take up the pressure created in chewing it is apparent with a less vigorous mastication and a decrease in the muscles mass that the facial parts will likewise undergo a modification. "Homo futurus" will have, therefore, in addition to his other characteristics, a relatively smaller face.

I mentioned previously that the skull base has shown a marked decrease in modern man. There is a good architectural reason for this. The base of the skull is intimately associated with the face which is linked to it. In fact, it might better be said that the base of the skull is determined by the needs of the facial structure for attachment. Since it is well known that the face has gradually become reduced in length and in horizontal projection, it follows that its field of attachment on the skull base has shown a correlated reduction. Other things being equal, a shorter earnial base means a rounder head. But the decreasing length of the skull base and its facial attachment has another significance here. It calls attention to the marked recession of the face which is so definite in man's phylogeny. In the primates the jaws project like a muzzle and are labelled prognathic. But in modern Europeans the profile of the jaws has receded to a vertical line dropped from the roots of the nose, a condition known as orthognathism. From what has been prophesied already for the man of the future it is clear that this recession will be emphasized to an even greater degree.

Let us turn to another attribute of our average man of 500,000 years from now. This future being will be taller than we are. My reasons for this belief are in reality simple. It is, in the first place, well know that in many forms of evolving species there is a definite increase of size during the course of their evolution. The giant reptile forms of the Mesozoic —the dinosaurs, the brontosaurs, and their relatives—all began as small forms and gradually put on weight. One of these ponderous creatures might well have looked back to its phylogenetic youth and sung with sadness :—

"Fading is the taper waist,
Shapeless grows the shapely limb,
And although severely laced,
Spreading is the figure trim ;
Stouter than I used to be,
Still more corpulent grow I.
There will be too much of me
In the coming bye and bye
There will be too much of me
In the coming bye and bye."

Indeed this phenomenon is a common one. We see it again in the phylogeny of the horse, the camel, and in various other mammals. In the primates, too, the sequence runs from the small lemuroid

creatures to the hefty gorillas. Now, in man it has likewise been observed that the stature of early man is often near the upper limits of pygmy stature whereas we overtop them considerably. Projecting this trend into the future we must anticipate an increasingly taller and bigger man. But there is other evidence to support this prophecy. Everywhere in Europe and in America, where records have been maintained over a period of years, there has been a consistent accretion to the average stature. Investigators of this phenomenon have reported such an increase in Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, England, and the United States. It would be tedious to reproduce here all the figures which corroborate this general phenomenon, but we may illustrate in by a few examples. In the Canton St-Marie Vesubie, in the Maritime Alps, the average stature has increased from 155 5 cm. in 1792 to 165'0 cm. in 1872. In Norway an increase has been reported from 168'6 cm. in 1850 to 170'7 cm. in 1905. Perhaps the best illustration of this remarkable increase in stature, and the most convincing is the study of successive generations of Harvard students which has recently been issued by G. T. Bowles. Dealing with sons, fathers and in some cases grandfathers, all belonging to one class in society, he was thereby able to eliminate such factors as social and economic influences. Futhermore, there was no question here of difference in stock. The results unequivocally support the findings already mentioned. The present generation is about 3'55 cm. taller than their own fathers, younger sons are somewhat taller than their elder brothers and the fathers are taller than the grandfathers. Just exactly what is causing this no one knows precisely. None of the numerous reasons suggested by the fertile imagination of a number of workers seem to be completely satisfactory. A fresh opinion from Switzerland proposes that the intensity of modern life stimulates the vegetative nervous system which in its turn reacts on the increase of growth. Hooten has ingeniously suggested that modern hygeine and medicine are able to nurse to maturity the rapidly growing tall children who formerly tended to be eliminated. But whatever the true nature of this change whether nervous or medical, since I see no permanent nor complete relapse to barbarity with a consequent return to a simpler life and a destruction of medical science, I therefore predict a taller man in the future. I frankly halt at attemptine to estimate the number of his inches. As a prophecy this should please many of my patient readers, but I do not see it as an unmixed blessing. As far as I know, there is no reason why a taller man is mechanically a better one. As a matter of fact, a short man is probably more effecient in the use of the energy which his body creates than a tall one. But esthetically the tall men are preferred, at least among Europeans and Americans, and perhaps in a civilized nation Art should prevail.

We now have the majore aspects—the high lights—of the portrait of our future man. At any rate these are all I have space to expand upon. I shall now turn to a few of the details which give character and individuality to our drawing.

If any one my readers happens to be a chiropydist who has had abundant opportunity to examine minutely and professionally a large number of feet, he will bear me out that the little toe is frequently very little indeed. Sometimes this fifth toe even lacks a toe nail, or it may have

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only the merest suggestion of one like a tiny claw.–not a flat nail. Unfortunately in this respect I cannot compare the present state of affairs with the condition of the little toe in early man because his toes are not preserved for our inspection. But we can study the toes of the anthropoid feet nearest man's the gorillas's. Here we find a well developed little toe with a complete nail. From this we deduce that man's little toe has become progressively smaller and more useless.

The loss of the fifth toe.

An analysis of the mechanics of the foot reveals why this is so. In the primitive primate foot the line of leverage in walking passes through the middle toe, which symbolized its primacy over the other toes by its greater length. In the course of primate evolution the line of leverage shifted to a position midway between the big and the second toes as a result of adaptation. In man we find that the line of leverage has remained in this position or even moved over entirely to the big toe. As a result of this greater weight bearing and mechanical functioning the big toe has grown to be the largest of all the toes with a progressive decrease in size and function as one moves to the little toe. The increasing loss of function in the little toe is revealed by the fact, which was mentioned above that in a large number of people it has degenerated to a tiny digit often without a nail or only the merest vestige of one. This suggests the probability of its future disappearance. But since nature is slow I dare go only so far as to predict that the little toe of our future man will be even littler and that in many it will perhaps be simply a suggestion of a digit. This loss of toes, however, need not surprise us, for it is a phenomenon well known in the evolution of a number of common mammas, such as the horse, cow, camel, pig, etc.

We are now coming rapidly to an end of this portraiture, but I wish to complete the picture with a few words on the air of our future man. It is well known, or more precisely, it has been observed by some investigators that baldness is much more frequent among the highly civilized races of mankind than among the primitive people of nature. Can you, for example think of bald-headed Indian! I suppose some have existed, but it is a phenomenon as rare as a full-bearded Indian. Similarly you would have difficulty finding a bald-headed Polynesian or Melanesian. But among Europeans many of our young men at thirty are already well along the road to baldness. In India, too, this phenomenon is common. Although here I am on teacherous ground, I hazard the guess that with advance in civilization the incidence of baldness will increase, and that in the future of 500,000 years from now it will not only appear earlier but more extensively.

A Recapitulation.

Finally, we shall give our future man less body hair than he now possesses. Man varies widely in the among of body hair with which he is covered. But among all groups he is relatively glabrous, or hairless, who when compared with the anthropoids. Indeed, it is evident that in the course of human evolution the pelt has constantly diminished. This process of depilation has advanced farther in some races than in others. The Mongoloid people, for example, are very glabrous as are the Negroes. Only the White stocks have lagged behind in this respect Therefore, it seems but natural

to suppose that European man will continue along the line of progressive loss of body hair.

To sum up our prophecies on the future man, we may impressionistically describe him as taller than we, with a more capacious and rounder head, fronted by a more vertical and smoother brow. His face will be smaller and more recessive in profile. The teeth in his jaws will be reduced in number and will also be smaller in size. In particular the third molars, but in some cases, the lateral incisors will be absent. Caries or dental decay will continue to be a serious problem requiring constant supervision to keep in check. Some representatives of this future race will walk on four-toed feet and many will in early adulthood have become bald. The body hair will be less abundant perhaps reaching the condition of hairlessness found in Chinese and Negroes.

These, then, are some of the characteristics which I predict for the man of the future. But in addition to these differences from ourselves, there will be many similarities, so many in fact that you would have little trouble in recognizing him as a fellow-member of the same genus. But were you miraculously preserved to that far distant future, I am afraid that you would need to seek among the phylogenetic laggards and the "primitive" people for somebody exactly like the folks back home.

H. L. SHAPIRO.
(Natural History.)

THE RATIONALIST'S STANDPOINT

I have been asked in this talk to say something about the religious views included under the head of Rationalism. This is not very easy, because rationalism is not itself a religion: it is an attitude of mind towards religion and related problems. I suppose you could define it by saying that it stood for the fullest possible use of reason in these matters, as against authority or revelation, emotion or faith.

It does *not* assert that these are of no value. Of course, faith and emotion are essential. The rationalist, however, says that faith must not be blind, and that emotion by itself is a dangerous guide as well as a bad argument. Authority, too, has its place, but the rationalist proclaims that authority can never be absolute, and that it has in point of fact often been wrong. All that is rather negative. But there is a positive side to rationalism, for it believes actively in the value of human reason as the most important instrument for securing progress. The rationalist, however, is very well aware of the obstacles to reasonableness, and realises that most human beings prefer to follow their feelings or to be guided by authority. He has also learnt that reason does not mean mere logic-chopping, and that *a priori* reasoning, however tempting, is often a waste of time. For him reason means reasoning brought into the closest possible relation with the facts of experience. When facts are lacking, the true rationalist simply suspends judgment.

Historically, rationalism in one form or another has played an important part in human progress. Socrates was in his way a great rationalist, and died for his belief in reason. Rationalist tendencies were severely suppressed by the Church in mediæval times, and only began to appear again with the Renaissance and the Reformation. From then until the end of the eighteenth century, men of letters and philosophers, like Voltaire and Hume, were the chief rationalists. With the nineteenth century, however, the rise of science provided a new and firm foundation for rationalism, and the Churches had to give way over questions of fact such as the age of the earth, and over practical problems like religious tests, or secular education. Herbert Spencer, Mill, Leslie Stephen, Bradlaugh, and Holyoake are representatives of the movement.

The actual use of the word 'rationalism' in connection with a definite movement was, however, not used until 1899, when the Rationalist Press Association was founded. This body has always believed mainly in the power of the printed word. Its famous sixpenny reprints and it special series like the Thinkers Library have had a wide circulation. As a body it has always set out to combat superstition, to attack intellectual dishonesty in religious and moral affairs, and to remove arbitrary religious restrictions such as those on secular recreation on Sundays, and in its short life it has exerted a considerable effect. But I must get back to the main business of this talk, which is to put before you the general point of view of rationalism about religion.

What, then, is the rationalist's attitude to religion? Religious feeling, religious beliefs and religious organisations are facts of experience. These various aspects of religion can be studied with the aid of reason. When this is done, certain broad generalistions can be drawn. The first and most obvious is that the diversity of religious belief and practice is almost endless—from fetishism to nonconformity, from magic, fertility rites to monasticism.

In Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Parson Thwackum says: 'When I mention religion I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England.' That is a statement diametrically opposed to the views of rationalism. But though ridiculous in this exaggerated form, something of the kind is often held:—one religion (your own, of course) is true, and all others false; and are, therefore, not really religions, but mere superstitions.

The rationalist, however, prefers to think objectively. He also finds it impossible to believe in absolute or complete truth. In this he is supported by the second generalisation which we can draw about religions, namely that they change and evolve, even those which claim to be based on unalterable revelation. Thus Roman Catholicism today is quite different from what it was during the Renaissance, or during the period of the early Church. The Christian beliefs in the Devil and in Hell have markedly declined during the last few centuries.

Why Religions Change.

The rationalist next asks what is the common element in all religions, and why do religions change? Many people would say that religion meant belief in or worship of God: others that it involves

preparation for a life after death. The facts show that neither of these answers is correct. We must find something more fundamental. The right answer, I think, would be something as follows. Religion is the product of a particular kind of reaction between certain aspects of human nature and certain aspects of human environment. Very different elements of human nature may be involved—from love to fear, from exaltation to self-abasement; but they become religious only when they are combined with that particular quality of feeling which we call sacredness.

The aspects of man's environment to which man reacts in this religious way are also extremely varied. They may be the brute facts of nature—earthquake and pestilence, birth and death, sun and rain: they may concern man's relation with other individuals or with society, with the environment of ideas in which our minds swim as fish in the sea—the current notions of right and wrong, duty, sacrifice, and so on. They are always something before which the individual feels small or helpless—because he cannot control or understand them, or because, like some kinds of beauty or joy, they are beyond ordinary experience.

The human reaction we call religion shows itself in a number of main ways. First, in the way of ritual—sacrifice, as in many early religions; special forms of worship; sacred rites like holy communion. Second, in the way of morals—practical actions. Such actions may be taboos, which have no apparent sense in themselves, like Jews refusing pork or oysters, or they may concern fundamental problems of behaviour such as sex relations or patriotism. And, third, in the way of theology—the use of reasoning to produce a more or less coherent system of beliefs and intellectual principles about religion. Of course, these three aspects of religion overlap, but the distinction is a useful one.

Rationalism seems to me to be important for religion in the following way. Religion, as we have seen, always evolves an emotional reaction: but the way men react depends on the interpretation they give to this reaction. Take sun, storm or earthquake. Some primitive peoples believed these to be animated by divine spirit: most religions hold that they are controlled by a god or gods: many people today, while still capable of experiencing the essentially religious feeling of awe at their elemental power, regard them as purely natural phenomena. Plagues were once regarded as due to the wrath of God, while today we regard them as due to germs. Again, while some people interpret conscience as the voice of God acting on the personality from outside, to modern psychology it is a natural phenomenon, due to the forcible repression of certain impulses in early childhood.

Where rationalism helps is in the interpreting of religion. Its principle is that wherever a natural, comprehensible, or rational explanation can be found, this should be preferred to a supernatural, mystical, or irrational one. It does not deny mystical feeling, nor the possible value of mystical feeling: it is concerned with what you make of that valuable gift of emotion.

Four Interpretations of Religious Reactions.

The rationalist, looking at the history of religion, sees that there are four main ways in which man's religious have been interpreted. Two of

these lay emphasis on something outside man : the other two on something inside man. The four interpretations are, first in terms of magic power; second, in terms of spiritual beings ; third ; in terms of individual mysticism or a special personal way of life ; and, fouth, in terms of naturalistic scientific explanation.

The first or magic hypothesis is found in many primitive religions. It ascribes a sacred but impersonal power to specil objects, places, acts or ceremonies. The chief function of religion is then considered to be to control this magic influence by magical rites: for instance rain ceremonies, or fertility rites. The second, or God hypothesis, is found in most existing religions. It no longer puts the sacred influence *in* objects or actions, but *behind* them, in the shape of gods or spirits who are supposed to control the course of events. Sacrifice, worship, prayer, and communion rituals then become the chief functions of religion The best example of the third is pure Buddhism, but it may be combined with other interpretations, as in certain types of Christianity. It lays emphasis on salvation, and salvation from within—'the Kingdom of Heaven is within us'. In general, however, it gives a mystical and not a rational explanation.

The fourth asserts that it is man who provides the element of sacredness in religion, although certain objects and situations are more likly than others to call out the religious reaction. Sacredness does not exist apart from man, any more than colour exists in objects apart from a perceiving eye or brain.

'The Hypothesis of God'

The rationalist believes that the first two interpretations are false. Magic, in spite of the widespread belief in it which still continues, as shown by the prevalence of luck-charms and superstitions, is a pure figment of the undisciplined human mind. He also believes that gods are creations of the human mind, which has a very strong tendency to project its feeling and ideas outside itself in personified form. Scientifically speaking, God is a hypothesis about the universe and the forces of destiny and man's religious reactions to them. In science, a hypothesis often has to be given up, though it may meanwhile have served a useful purpose. The hypothesis of God was useful so long as external nature was so little under man's control that flood, pestilence, famine and the like were ever-threatening disasters, and so little understood that he was ignorant of the causes of those disasters. Today we do not seek to avert disease or famine by propitiating a mysterious power who is supposed to control them : we seek to control them ourselves, and within limits we succeed very well—certainly much better than by prayer and sacrifice. And just because we know that diseases come from material causes like germs or faulty living, we cannot ascribe their immediate control to God, and so with the advance of science God inevitably becomes more remote from human affairs. This process has continued until the hypothesis of God has lost most of its old intellectual and practical value.

The rationalist can also make certain prophecies as to the future of religion and point out certain dangers Religion is a certain type of reaction of the human spirit to human environment. But biologists distinguish between the *external* and the *internal* environment. We are exposed to the changing external environment ; but the cells of our bodies

exist in the very constant internal environment provided by our blood. With bees, again, the hive and its organised life provide an internal environment of a social type; and, similarly, the organisation of society and the framework of ideas and feelings in which we grow up constitute an internal environment for us human beings. Now the outstanding fact in human development at the present is that while we have a great deal of knowledge and control over our external environment, we have so far very little over our internal environment. Economic, legal, political, and social systems, all obviously man-made, are at the root of the present crisis. It is they which play the part of destiny today. So it is safe to prophesy that in the near future the religious impulse will concern itself more and more with this social environment. Indeed it is already doing so on a large scale. Almost every observer has commented on the religious elements in Russian Communism and the German Nazi movement. The reason these movements quarrel with established religions is that they are in a certain real sense rival religions themselves. We are witnessing the dawn of a struggle, not between science and religion, but between God-religions and social religions.

The rationalist can go further. He can draw a parallel between the early phases of social religion and those of God-religion. In early God-religions we find many crude and unpleasant features—the worship of monstrous combinations of man and beast, human sacrifice, magical beliefs, persecution, the growth of privileged castes. We also find a gradual improvement—from polytheism towards monotheism, from intolerance towards tolerance and freedom of conscience. It is evident that the early stages of social religion are also embodying many crude and unpleasant features—witness the persecutions in Germany, Italy and Russia, or the falsification of history and anthropology to provide a Nazi theology of Germanism. We may prophesy that gradually these excesses will be purged away, but that this will take a long time.

The rationalist would like to see established a Humanist religion of some kind, tolerant in attitude, world-wide in scope. He must be prepared, however, to see religion for a long time linked with nationalist and race feeling, intolerant, and apt to set up the state as a sort of god above the individual. He must be prepared to fight against these tendencies, as the Hebrew prophets fought for their more enlightened conceptions of God against the lower conception represented by so-called idolatry.

Rationalism in the past has often played a destructive part. This destruction was necessary to clear the ground. In the so-called 'conflict between science and religion' it was inevitable that the rationalist should be on the side of science. But now we can see that this conflict only concerned one aspect of science and one aspect of religion—those which dealt primarily with man's external environment. Now it is the turn of the internal environment. It seems inevitable that this will eventually lead to some form of Humanism, and the rationalist can now play a constructive part by insisting to the best of his powers that the ideal of Humanism shall not be obscurantist or merely mystical, but truly rational, and that the cruder forms of social religion shall not be allowed to develop the same disastrous irrationality as did the great religion of the past.

JULIAN HUXLEY.

(The Listener.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To,

The Editor "Reason"

Sir,

"Truth" is the bitterest, impalatable and most nauseating "Drug" in the World.

But if a dose of "Truth" is administered and digested, it will do unimaginable good to mankind.

Rationalists 'aims and objects' are to combat all beliefs, systems and customs, that cannot stand the "Test of Reason."

May I be permitted to ask in your journal the following questions?

1. What are the beliefs of Rationalists?

2. Can all Evil Unnatural Systems and Customs of our so-called Civilization stand the "Test of Reason" and be called "True Civilization?"

3. Can all systems and customs of the World's Religions, stand the "Test of Reason" and be called Adequate?

4. Is it not a part of duty of all Rationalists to combat all evil Unnatural Systems and Customs of our so-called civilization?

5. Are all worldly "Enjoyments and Pleasures" "Genuine" or "False and Unnatural?"

6. Has not mankind for ages been existing in a Fool'sParadise and wasting its fruitful hours in false strife of life's vain endeavours in making and accumulating money and worldly possessions?

7. For ages there have been and are innumerable societies and associations, (the world over) combating all Unnatural beliefs, systems and customs, that cannot stand the "Test of Reason"—

(a) Now the vital question is whether they have in the slightest degree, come near to their 'IDEAL?'

(b) Has the world moved a step further in the slightest degree in the direction of ameliorated condition, or has it remained stationary in the old place of sorrows and sufferings, of perpetual miseries, crimes, and unrest or has it drifted rapidly and unceasingly in the opposite direction? HELL! ! !

I hope in the name of Humanity and Mankind you will be good enough to publish these questions in your journal "Reason," and oblige.

Yours

An Un-Known Reformer.

Answers.

1. Rationalists believe that man by not using his reason and common sense has been the victim of the most cruel delusions imaginable. Rationalists, therefore, reject all beliefs that are irrational. They believe things that are based on facts and evidences. They believe that irrational beliefs are, in the long run, harmful and are not conducive to happiness.

2. No.

3. No.

4. These are precisely the aims and objects of Rationalism.

5. All worldly pleasures and enjoyments are not necessarily false and unnatural. To reject all pleasures and enjoyments is pure asceticism, and asceticism is a form of insanity based on the

delusion that this world is a vale of tears. Without reasonable enjoyments and pleasures this world would be a cheerless one not worth living in.

6. The pursuits of life suit different temperaments differently. To live on false hopes is certainly a disappointment and a waste of time which can only be realized by their nonfulfilment. Most people live on false hopes and are not aware of it throughout life.

To make money in a legitimate manner and to acquire worldly possessions are not necessarily a waste of time. It is on the contrary a good pastime especially if one can contribute a little to the sum of human happiness by his wealth.

7. Many societies in the world have existed and many more will continue to exist to spread beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason. The remedy is with man himself; he must strive to make an intelligent use of his reason so as to lessen the evils caused by irrationalism. Man must strive not to remain a mental slave.

(a) What Ideal?

(b) Yes, life has certainly been made more pleasant by the many scientific inventions and discoveries which have added to the amenities of life and the relief of suffering.

There were more crimes in the world, more selfishness more cruelties and barbarism when people had more faith in religion than now. It is a fallacy to believe that the world has not improved by the spread of civilization. Think what the world was 500 years ago. In a world where the struggle for existence is the natural condition of life, evil, sorrows and suffering will continue to exist despite all endeavours to ameliorate them. Religion has failed to regenerate mankind. Perhaps Rationalism by enlightening man as to the causes of these evils and how to lessen them, may be more successful.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

A Bombay evening paper writes, "Bandra is agog with an alleged 'miracle.' The cross on the paved steps to Mount Mary, which is one of the landmarks of the annual pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Mount, has toppled down. The news was spread that the cross fell down on a man who was in the habit of stealing the candles and offerings left on the cross by the devotees, and last Sunday evening when he attempted to steal the candles and offerings, the cross fell on him."

"The man is then alleged to have shouted out that he was rightly punished and invoked death on himself for his crime."

The reporter, who tells this story, relates that he visited the place to find out whether there was any truth in this. All he learnt was that some Hindus were in the habit of lighting candles and decorating the cross with flowers just as the Christians of the locality are in the habit of doing. It would appear that a young Hindu who had climbed the cross to put a garland of flowers over it nearly lost his life as the upper portion of the stone cross broke and fell upon him. The cross was an old one.

It is a pity that this prosaic journalist spoilt a good "miracle" story by the simple process of verifying the question for himself. Incidentally, this modern way of settling the question has deprived the pious folk of Bandra (a small town near Bombay) of adding another wonderful miracle to the list of many with which Salsette is rich. Nothing would have pleased these Bandra Catholics more than to see a magnificent church erected on the spot and the decayed stone cross become an object of awe and adoration with crops of miracles every year. What a glorious opportunity some of these Bandra padres have lost? The pious Hindu, who was so strangely rewarded for his religious zeal, must now be sadly wondering whether Vishnu or Shiva would have been more considerate to a Christian than Christ to a Hindu.

* * *

It is reported that in Southern India ten thousand Roman Catholics went over in a body to Protestantism owing to a serious dispute over the caste question in the Church. This incident confirms our suspicion that conversion to Christianity in India is not so much a matter of conviction as it is purely a question of social status. The convert does not care a fig to what sect he belongs so long as he becomes a Christian.

* * *

It has been frequently pointed out in these columns that Europe is rapidly reverting to mediaevalism. The latest news by the mail confirms this. It is not that people there are returning wholesale to the age of faith; far from it. The rulers in some western countries in trying to combat democracy, i. e., Socialism, are adopting measures which must lead these countries back to the Middle Ages, unless the people concerned make a strong stand against this movement which is not likely for the present at least. The bogey in those countries is Communism and Socialism, and the measures adopted to stamp these are, among other things, interference with individual liberty, persecution, death, imprisonment, torture and punishment, for holding certain beliefs. Such, at any rate, is what is taking place in Germany, Austria, Italy and Poland. For political ends, of course, the rulers of those countries would rather land their peoples in the hands of the Churches than to see their power wane.

* * *

In the Literary Guide of June 1934, Mrs. Naomi Mitchison gives a lurid picture of Catholic tyranny in Austria. The Government there is now called Christian Socialists and its chief force—the Heimwehr is entirely under the thumb of Italy and the Roman Catholic Church. It is stated that these Christian Socialists have killed, tortured and imprisoned the real Socialists. People there are compelled to become Roman

Catholics otherwise things would be too hot for them. These who have suffered most severely so far, were unbelievers. The Church of Rome is jubilant in that country and is insisting that conquered Austrian workers shall belong to it now body and soul. Anybody who wants work now on any Government or Municipal job, or with most large firms, has not only to be a member of the "Patriotic Front" but also a good Catholic and mass-goer certified by the parish priest and a member of the Catholic Trade Unions which have succeeded the real Unions. People there are so terrified that they are flocking to the churches. We shall soon be told that the Church of Rome has won a great victory over unbelief in that distracted land.

* * *

In Germany, as we all know, the persecution is of a different kind. It is not done, so far, in favour of any particular Church, but for the State. Besides Jew baiting, which is being done in the best style of Mediaeval times, the Nazis are greatly concerned with other peoples' private affairs. They actively interfere with freedom of thought and individual liberties. Most Freethought Associations in Germany have been suppressed and even books on Freethought and Science have been publicly burnt! The Vatican is trying hard to win Hitler round and before long one will not be surprised to learn that a compromise favourable to both the Pope and Hitler has been reached. Such a compromise has long ago been reached in Italy where Mussolini has handed the education of the young entirely into the hands of Catholic priests, and in many other respects the power of the Church has been consolidated in that country. After this who will deny that the best opportunity of the Church has always been during political upheavals?

* * *

In England, too, the bogey of Communism and Socialism is no less dreaded. The Sedition Bill which is now passing through Parliament is believed by many people in England to be a grave menace to the liberty of British citizens. If it is passed into Law, as probably it will, it will be a dangerous thing there to possess books that treat on subjects that the Government do not view favourably. Freethought literature may easily come under the ban if a few bishops and titled people denounce this as likely to be prejudicial to the public.

* * *

If dictators were not out to compel people to do what they (the dictators) like, religion in Central Europe would disappear faster than one thinks. Religion, there, among the educated is suffering the same fate as elsewhere but, the restraining hands of the dictators to gain the support of the Churches may retard the natural course of things. In Germany, according to Princess Marie Adelaide of Lippe, people no longer care for Christianity. Writing in the Nordische Zeitung (Berlin) she frankly avows:—"We have no need of salvation —we are heathens." Speaking of the German women, she says: "Modern German women no longer worship the idol foisted upon them by the Churches. A redeemer outside ourselves we refuse to recognize. Similarly we reject any doctrine of sin and grace as alien to German ideals. It is the duty of mothers not to allow the poison of an alien conception of a deity to contaminate their children's souls."

Princess Adelaide rightly condemns those parents who, although seceders from the Church, permit their children to receive religious instruction, for a healthy child's need of religion is infinitesimal, and she thinks that the age requires from wives and mothers "that they shall discard all absolute religious beliefs."

* * *

The following is from World Jewry, of May 4:

"Sixteen orthodox Jews belonging to the Sabbath Observance Society were arrested in Tel-Aviv (Palestine) during a street clash with motorists while they were trying to induce them not to drive on the Sabbath. Being refused bail because they would not give an undertaking that they would not repeat their action on the forthcoming Saturday, they formed a 'minyan' in their prison cell."

Tel-Aviv was established as a place of refuge for persecuted Jews. As soon as they are safe in such a place, the first thing they do is to show their own stupid religious intolerance. The Jews, indeed, have to thank themselves for the savage treatment they have received at the hands of Christians since Christianity has come into existence. They sowed the seed of intolerance and persecution, as can be read in Deuteronomy and other parts of the Bible, and they have reaped and are still reaping the full harvest of it.

* * *

Under the heading of "Soviet and Religion, the following appeared recently in the Times of India Illustrated Weekly :—Those who think that critics of the present regime in Russia have exaggerated the way in which religion in that country is derided should see an exhibition of caricatures by the International Entente Against the Third International The crude caricatures shown have been taken from various magazines published in Russia and are distinguished by an unthinkable degree of profanity. Islam is attacked in them quite as violently as Christianity. If India does not realize what Bolshevism means, it might understand from this exhibition something of the ferocity with which religious practices in India would be treated if the Bolsheviks could get their way."

This is the usual bilge against Russia by the British Imperialistic press. No intelligent Indian would fail to recognize this as a dirty propaganda against the Bolsheviks. It is mischievous as it tries to raise prejudice against the Soviet by representing that Islam as well as Christianity are attacked in a manner calculating to wound deeply the feelings of the Muslims and Christians.

Many responsible and trustworthy people in England, men and women, have recently visited Russia and they deny that the Russians behave in the manner described above. Many books are appearing also denying these wild allegations. Dr. Hecker, himself a religionist, has just published a book, *Religion and Communism*, which is a study of religion under Soviet Russia. Dr. Hecker has spent fifteen years in Russia and knows what he says. Well, he tells us that Christians there pursue their customs and ceremonies peacefully. If their adherents grow less, we must look, not to vicious suppression, but to secular education and the absence of social props. The Russian youth of eighteen, he tells us, may indulge in as much religion as he pleases. When will these imperialists cease to vilify Russia?

THE CULT OF BLOOD OFFERING

A public meeting was held in Bombay last month to protest against the horrible animal sacrifices performed at Ellora and other places in India. Animal sacrifices are still a common feature of the religious practices of certain communities in India, and if the report of a Bombay paper is correct, it would appear that even human sacrifices are still not uncommon in India. A few days ago, in effect, a local paper announced that several men had been arrested for offering human sacrifices to a goddess for the success of some commercial enterprise. This, if true, is nothing else than a modified form of Thuggism, a cult which is probably not altogether dead in India. Sometime ago, a sadhu immolated a human victim to the idol of a god in the Central Provinces, and as we are writing these lines the evening papers announced that one Sheik Hanib, a Mahomedan, who sacrificed his four-year old son, in a mosque of Bhagalpur, has been sentenced to transportation for life on a charge of murder. Writing on the horrible animal sacrifice in Southern India which has shocked the whole country, the Times of India of a recent date says:—

"The appeal sent to the Governor of Madras by the Bombay Humanitarian League calling for legislation to stop animal sacrifices will be greatly endorsed by the public. Reports have been frequent lately of horrible cruelties practised on animals preparatory to sacrificing them as propitiatory offerings to supposedly enraged deities. The slightest visitation of plague, cholera or other epidemic is sufficient to drive the terror-stricken population of some areas in Southern India to these orgies of cruelty in a misguided attempt to avert the disaster. It should be remembered, however, that the sanguinary practices are relics of primitive culture which have managed to survive to our own day. Ignorant people who believe in the efficacy of such devotional exercises are known to resist every attempt to forbid them."

While the above comment is perfectly true, it would be an error to believe that only in Southern India are such orgies held periodically, and that these practices are relics or primitive culture only, performed by people of low culture. As regards these blood orgies they are practised all over India. Only a few weeks ago, hundreds of goats and cocks were slaughtered by certain orthodox Hindus at Nasik and Ratnagiri to appease the goddess of cholera and plague. It was even boasted that the epidemic of plague, which had raged with some virulence at Ratnagiri, suddenly disappeared after the sacrifice of goats there. Hundreds of goats are daily sacrificed to the dreaded goddess Kali at the Kalighat temple on the Hughli at Calcutta. In India, it may be safely said that only the Vaishnavas and the Jains are opposed to animal sacrifices as a religious rite.

As we remarked in our last February number, the sacrifices of animals to propitiate God is practised by the devotees of religions other than Hinduism. The Mahomedans, for instance, every year slaughter million of goats and hundreds of thousand of cows and camels on Bakri-Id day under the belief that Allah is very pleased with the *Koorbani*, as they call it. It is also the religious practice of many

Mahomedans and Jews to slaughter a goat when someone is seriously ill and to distribute the meat to beggars. It is firmly believed that this act helps in the recovery of the patient!

During the last Bakri-Id festival in Bombay, Hakim Mahomed Yusaf Isphani, who officiated at the prayer meeting at the Oval, reminded the assembly that the festival was held in commemeration of the sacrifice of Abraham whom the Bible tells us was commanded by God to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, as a test of Abraham's obedience to him—This unnatural and immoral act is still extolled by Bible teachers as a wonderful example of Abraham's piety!

The Hindus and Mahomedans in sacrificing animals to God as an offering, whether as thanksgiving, propitiation or atonement, are doing what was once an universal practice. The Druids, the Scandinavians, the Mexicans, the Babylonians, the Hebrews, the Greek, the Romans, the Cannanites and other tribes in Asia Minor, the Egyptians, the Arabs, the Africans, the Australians, the Indians, in fact, all used to practise human and animal sacrifices to appease and to gain the favour of the deity. Of human sacrifice the practice was once universal; even the Hebrews did it. The Encyclopedia Britannica says: "Human sacrifices were known in ancient India and survived till late in the nineteenth century; both Greeks and Romans practised them no less than the wilder races of ancient Europe. Semites and Egyptians, Peruvians and Aztecs slew human victims; Africa, especially the West Coast, till recently saw thousands of human victims perish annually; Polynesia, Tahiti and Fiji were great centres of the rite—in fact it is not easy to name an area where it has not been known."

The Bible gives instances of human sacrifices, and Christianity, itself, is founded on the belief that the blood of an innocent human victim was absolutely necessary to soothe the anger of God on account of the sins of mankind. The story of Calvary is nothing else than that the blood of God, the Son, alone could appease the wrath of God, the Father, and that it was necessary that it should be shed for the atonement of our sins and our redemption. Every Sunday thousands of pulpits in Christendom remind the faithful of this "supreme" sacrifice, as the priests call it, without which mankind would be eternally doomed in Hell! Nothing, indeed, is more revolting than to hear cultured preachers dwelling on the shedding of innocent blood for the redemption of mankind, and their extolling the saving effect of the blood of the Lamb and the regenerating power of the precious blood of Christ and so forth.

It is only recently that some of the more advanced Christian sects have realized the gruesome effects of the many hymns which gloat over the spiritual revivification of the blood of Christ and the necessity to be baptized in it to be saved. They are trying to remove the same from the prayer book. These advanced Christians now also insist more on the moral and ethical doctrines of Christianity than on this sanguinary story of the crucifixion of Jesus as forming the essence of Christianity. They have also realized that the picture of God in the earlier parts of the Bible is repulsive, and they prefer to conceive God as a loving and merciful Father rather than as a cruel and revengeful tyrant. It is easy to trace the origin of the belief in human and animal sacrifices. It, doubtless, originated with the savages who imagined their gods to be exactly as they were, namely, cruel,

inexorable, revengeful, full of capricious desires and malevolently inclined. When offended, nothing but blood could appease such monsters, and as their wrath was believed to be manifested when any calamity overtook the people, it was only natural to offer them victims. The prevalence of the belief that God is satisfied and pleased with sacrifices, whether in the actual or symbolical form, shows that this primitive belief is still strong even among people who claim to be enlightened and cultured. People believe this without in the least reflecting that it is a gross superstition which represents their God as a capricious and cruel tyrant. It is the duty of enlightened and cultured people to teach people who practise these religious cruelties that they are relics of barbarism, revolting and demoralizing.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE INDIAN TRAGEDY: FRUITS OF SUPERSTITIONS

Religion versus Morality.

A distinguished Reviewer in the Spectator of April 6 last, in the course of an article on certain grave Indian social problems that badly and urgently needed an effective remedy said:—"An alien government is *ipso facto* incompetent to undertake social reform in intimate domestic matters." I am not one of those who believe that the British Raj has been a long continuous, unrelieved calamity, but the facts and figures which I hope to place before my readers in the course of this article will conclusively show that it is almost impossible for any impartial student of Indian affairs to come to any other conclusion. In support of my case, I propose to confine myself entirely to publications issued by the Government of India especially the last Census Report.

I am prepared to admit that personally I am no authority on the subject I am about to discuss, and that my personal authority is wholly negligible, but I do say that the authorities I am about to quote are absolutely impregnable. I will go further and say that I defy anyone with the smallest particle of imagination to read these authorities without rising from the perusal with a mind wholly steeped in gall, and with his blood wholly frozen as a result of the unspeakable horror and the magnitude of the task that lies before the Indian Social Reformer. The evils are allowed to grow largely as a result of indifference (to put it no stronger) of the government authorities, but it is only by discharging some of this gall in the face of the public, both Indian and European, that anything can be done, and must be done, before it is too late. The evils are so "grave," so "great and so corroding," (and here again I am quoting English officials), that at this hour they are eating out the vitals of the Indian peoples.

I have already proved in the columns of many Indian papers, in the columns of the Times of India, and in English papers like the Spectator and the Manchester Guardian, on numerous occasions during the last 10 years, that at no period in India's long history have the Indian people been so afflicted with stark

poverty; at no period has the vitality of the masses of the people been as low as it is at this hour; and I have proved this by copious quotations of facts and figures supplied by European Civil Servants and Health Officers, Indian and European. But I am discussing other evils today: Evils described by the Home Member of the Government of India in 1929 as "Grave and Corroding." These shocking evils have been proved to be the direct result of idiotic superstitious beliefs and appalling customs which have thrived upon foolish religious beliefs, and which have up to now baffled the efforts of enlightened Indian Social Reformers for over a century, including the efforts of the greatest reformer in any age, namely, Mahatma Gandhi.

In addition to the efforts of priests belonging to almost every community, the chief obstacle which Indian Reformers have had to contend with is Government's appalling timidity and inertia. It will be recalled that after half a century of effort on the part of Indian Reformers, the Government, at long last, were persuaded to support an important measure, and this measure was at last passed by the Legislature. This measure is known as the Sarda Act. This was supposed to prohibit the marriage of girls under 14 and of boys under 18. The Act was passed in 1929. The immediate effects, not of the Act itself, but of action not taken in connection with it are simply staggering. There is no other word for it. Six months were arranged to elapse between the date of enactment and that on which the measure was to come into force. The priests, especially, among the Hindu and Muslim communities believing (wrongly as the event proved), that the Government at last "meant business" about the evil of child marriage, and as these priests had been wont to draw enormously rich fees from marriage ceremonies, and the hugh armies of money-lenders who provided the parents with the wherewithal, resolved that at least they would "make hay while the sun shone". The methods they adopted have been variously described. In one Province, for example, while the Government did nothing but distribute a few leaflets, obscurely worded and all in English, the emissaries of the opposite "distinguished divines" of every community had managed to circulate to the remotest villages the tidings, often annouced by word of mouth to the beating of drums, that after April 1st (1930), the Government had prohibited all marriages—not, be it noted, of young girls under fourteen, but for "fourteen years", or alternatively (according to one version), that "marriage would be most inauspicious" during that period. Whatever the means, testimony supplied by Government's own officers is unanimous as to the result. All over India, at the behest of the priests, there was a veritable spate of marriages of children of all ages, from infancy upwards, so that the night in thousands of districts was made hideous with the sounds of the processions and festivities. But it is only since the Report of the 1931 Census became available in the summer of last year that the appalling extent of the havoc could be reasonably calculated. This has now conclusively shown that though the total population of India has been increased by only 10·6 per cent, *the number of acknowledged wives under 15 has increased from 8½ to 12¾ millions*, and the number of husbands under 15 from under 3¼ to over 5½ millions, *while wives under 5 years old have nearly*

quadrupled (from 218, 500 to 802,000). As to child widows, the Report showed that a remarkable decrease since 1921, (from 396,000 to 321,000) was likely to become a great increase, as a result of the fatal six months. This, indeed, had already become true of the infant widows under five years old, whose numbers had increased from 15,000 to 31,000, As the Census Report observes:—" the year that elapsed between the rush of anticipatory marriages and the taking of the Census left time for *many infants married in haste to become widows for life,*" and this is " probably significant of sorrows to come " (page 221).

But this is not all. The Census Commissioner considers, (on evidence too technical to explain here) that from a million to a million and a quarter girls under 14 years of age have been returned as unmarried, as well as a large number of boys, the reason being the parents' fear of incurring prosecution for an illegal marriage. This is given as the explanation of the anomaly that had already struck students of the Census figures just published, that in spite of the practice of polygamy throughout the length and breadth of the land amongst Hindus and Muslims, and the absence of polyandry in India, these figures showed over a *million more husbands* than wives.

From the figures, it appears that, even if we allowed for an increase in the number of child marriages proportionate to the increase of the population, the number of small children hustled into matrimony during the fatal six months was not less than three million girls and two million boys. Note that this was possible as a result of a country-wide effort on the part of religious leaders shouting far and wide that " the Sarda Act " had " placed their religion in a terrible danger."

Note further that a significant and most ominous fact also made plain by the Census Report is that this frightful increase in child marriage has been proportionately greatest among Muslims, and that their community has led the loudest outcry against the Act, although it is not even pretended that the Mahommedan religion requires or encourages premature marriage. Indeed, one frequently hears it asserted that it is a practice peculiarly Hindu, and almost confined to the Hindu community. In fact, even at the 1921 Census, the ratio of Muslim wives under 15 years old was only 4 per cent lower than among Hindus, and has now become slightly higher, the increase being greatest at least in some provinces, among wives *under ten years old.* Also there is evidence that the dreadful practice has spread to primitive tribes previously free from it.

The Sarda Act in now a " dead letter" thanks to the efforts of religious leaders in all communities. This is admitted by Government. As the Census Report of Assam candidly remarks about the belief of the opponents of the Act, who thought that the Act would be enforced. " They need not have concerned themselves, because the Act in practice is a dead letter," and " practically a dead letter," is repeated in the Reports of most of the other Indian Provinces.

What killed the Act was the opposition of the Muslim leaders and their ignorant followers. These proved themselves more fanatical opponents than even the Hindus. The official attitude soon displayed itself when opposition to the Act began to make itself manifest. It was

indicated after the first recorded prosecution under the Act. The offender, who had given his ten-year-old daughter in marriage in deliberate defiance of the Act and of the warning of his village Headman, was sentenced to one month's imprisonment–the maximum term permitted under the Act. Instantly the Punjab Government telegraphed to order the man's release. Their action was widely reported with approval in the Indian Press, though some jeered. But before that, as we learn from the Census Report, an assembly of 12,000 pious Muslims had met in the Juma Masjid, the great mosque of Delhi—centre of the Government – to witness the marriage of a boy of thirteen to a girl of nine, just exactly *four days after such marriage had become illegal.* The District Magistrate was petitioned to prosecute all concerned, but no prosecution followed for reason we can all understand (Census Report 1931.) In Madras, a pious Muslim—a munsiff—who transgressed the Act was promptly dismissed by the Collector, but was with equal promptitude reinstated with a *grave warning* by higher authority (Census Report.). The result was that all the Courts in all India followed, or seemed to have followed, the careful hints given them by usually imposing extremely light penalties. Since the passing of the Act, there have in the course of three years been only 473 prosecutions in all India, under the Act, and of these only 167 of them proved successful, and against that *over six million more child husbands and wives* exist in 1931 than in 1921.

We now come to the appalling evil itself and let us consider briefly the extent of its unspeakable horror. The best thing to do is to look at the horror as exposed in what is called "The Joshi Report." It will be recalled that in 1891 public attention having been aroused by a large number of cases in Bengal to the intense and wide spread suffering, often death, caused by premature co-habitation and immature prostitution, the "Age of Consent," as it was thereafter called, was raised for both married and unmarried girls to twelve. By "Age of Consent" was meant "a consent to sexual intercourse. There was a terrible agitation against the Act, as usual in the "name of religion." It was a case of "our religion is in danger". But the Government on that occasion took a firm stand. Sir Andrew Scable, who introduced it, asserted "*the right* and *duty of the State* to interfere for the protection of any class of its subjects where a proved necessity existed", and to these pious leaders of various communities who appealed to "Queen Victoria's Pledge" to "pay due regard to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India, the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, himself, very properly replied by saying that the Queen's Proclamation had always been understood by every reasonable man and woman and interpreted by the Government as subject to the reservation that —' in all cases where *demands preferred* in the *name of religion*, would lead to practices inconsistent with individual safety and public peace, and *condemned by every system of law and morality* in the world, *it is religion, and not morality which must give way.*" Incredible as it may seem, but it is true that no systematic or serious attempt was ever made to enforce this Act either. Thirty seven years later, the Committee appointed by Government to investigate the matter actually found and reported that the very existence of a law *prohibiting consummation* of marriage before a certain age, that is to say consummation

of marriage before the age of 12, was "practically unknown throughout the whole country." (Joshi Report, page 18). The Act had been defeated because of the agitation on the part of religious leaders in the Provinces, and consequently as the Act was not enforced, it became a "dead letter" and its very existence naturally was completely forgotten.

The result of the conflict between Religion and Morality ! and in all India Religion, or what passes as Religion, is at war with progress and morality is that three and half million young girls under 14 years of age die in each generation in India in the agonies of child birth as far only as it is known. They are massacred on the altar of marriage, all because it cannot be prohibited by law passed by the legislatures, it being found impossible to enforce such laws "the religion" of the various communities being "in danger." Shame, (Ed. Reason.)

Let me now quote a few chosen examples taken chiefly from medical and other witnesses whose position are likely to carry confidence.

(1) Sir P. C. Roy (a distinguished Indian Nationalist of the University College of Science and Technology, Calcutta, Vol VI p. 225 of Joshi Report), asked if he had known of cases where girls of 13 or 14 had become mothers and suffered for it. He replied:—"It is common knowledge. It is not so rare that I should single out a few cases. I have noticed it in horror and shame that girls should become mothers at so early an age."

Dr. G. T. Campbell, M.D. (Principal of the Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi, Joshi Report Vol: I)—"I must have personally attended more than a thousand Hindu girls for child birth at ages of 12 and three quarters to 16½..... and the awful effects of this child bearing cannot be exaggerated".

Dr. N. H. Blair, L. S. A., London, of Darjeeling (Joshi Report Vol. VI) says that the cases of serious injury to mothers are so numerous that it is impossible to make a selection, but he gives the following instances:—

(a) A girl of 12½ who suffered in labour for 12 whole days.

(b) A girl who died in labour at the age of 11 years and 10 months.

(c) A girl of 12½ who had to have her baby decapitated, and nearly died".

Mrs. Lilian Starr (Medical Mission, Peshawar—Joshi Report Vol: 1)—"In Kashmir.....many girls, aged eleven or twelve, are brought in labour to our hospital. They are often *in extremis* and quite unable to bear living children without the skilled operation of Caesarian section.....Thousands do not reach us and die in labour on the way.

Finally, let me give the remarkable evidence of two great Muslim Divines, Quazi Lahirul Huq of Dacca (Joshi Report page 68, Bengal); "He admits that girls are married at all ages, even at two and three, among the lower class of Muslims, that immediately *after puberty*, which happens at eleven or twelve, the girl is sent to the husband's house and that he is aware of girls who become mothers at 13 or 14, *but he will oppose all consent and marriage legislation as it interferes with the liberty granted by God's Law*".

The other witness—a Khan Bahadur—said that "cohabitation is very common in lower classes *before puberty and is*

considered essential by all, including the advanced section soon after puberty. He was personally aware of 4 or 5 girls who had cohabitation at ten and eleven and become mothers. *He was, however, deadly against fixing by law an age of marriage".*

It is not possible to quote any more here. The "Joshi Committee" was all Indian, except for one British woman doctor. It is known as the Joshi Committee after its Chairman, Sir Moropant Joshi, formerly Home Member of the Central Provinces. It did its work—which covered just a year—with great thoroughness, travelling all over India, interviewing 400 witnesses, and issuing nearly eight thousand questionaires. It exposes the sorest places in Indian private life., and will always remain for the historian and sociologist the chief storehouse of information on its subject.

It definitely proves that Religion, or what passes as Religion in India, is opposed to morality and all human laws. To convert the whole of India to Rationalism, and in order to combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason, it is only necesssary to start with the women and girls of India. Let them be instructed about the contents of the Joshi Report and of the manner in which millions and millions of their sisters are slaughtered in India on the altar of marriage, simply because it is—"a liberty granted by God's Law."

J. D. JENKINS.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND?

It seems desirable to lay down some observations on the controversial question of survival after death as there always has been some conflict of ideas in the minds of those that turn their attention to it. Those that have a firm belief in the spiritual effect of exclusive devotion to a *Personal God*, as capable of giving them what is generally known as "Spiritual Salvation", may have the consolation of doing their Religious duty in life by working for it mainly by Devotional Contemplation—"Bhakti"—of the Being that is believed to grant to them what they regard as the ultimate reward.

But, some do not-and cannot rationally-believe that this method of spending their days only in the thought and praise of God—even if such a being exists—could possibly secure that state of perfect peace and happiness for the Soul, which is believed to be independent of the physical body after death. This state of bliss beyond the world is taken to be the *Summum Bonum* of life in this world. Many people of purely rational thinking, cannot possibly believe that the mere praise of God, and contemplation of his attributes, be the real and right means of achieving the supposed object of realizing spiritual "Salvation" whatever its meaning may be. To many people of education and mental culture it is considered derogatory to conceive God, who is believe to be the highest and most perfect Being, as a person who is easily influenced by flattery and praise. Countless people though believe that this is the most

becoming manner of obtaining salvation. These praises and adulation are performed in different ways :—Prayers, prostration, complete and object surrender of oneself to the divine will, the repetetion in a loud voice of God's name, such as the God of the Sahasranamams, (thousaad names), writing down the name of God a million times on paper and so forth. All these exercises are believed to be most efficacious to open the gates of Heaven to them. Of the consolation of obtaining so easily the greatest of man's aspiration in this world the little said the better.

Even in the case of human beings, mere reponsiveness of a patronising kind to adulation of one's own self is considered very objectionable, and a perfect Being cannot be supposed to give what is not really deserved for the mere desiring and craving with flattery. Dispensation of rewards should be mainly dependent on merits, and one who plays the sycophant would not get from the highest and the most perfect Being rewards which can only be given to those that eminently deserve them, by force of their character and conduct of the purest type.

If there is an Omniscient Being who requires no external evidence, and who can know and feel everything within himself, he does not wait for the importunate expression of desire for the distribution of rewards, but would spontaneously dispense them to those that really deserve them for the excellence of their character and conduct. It is superfluous, under the circumstances, to ask for what you deserve, and it is wicked and presumptuous to desire what you do not deserve, and to expect the rewards for the mere categorical incantations of the postulated attributes of the great dispenser of rewards.

No one who does his Duty or Dharma need fear or praise or even think of the existence of God, who must be mainly guided by the character and conduct shown by people's actions in this world, and not by self-adulation and inert dependence on mere good graces. If there is a Creator of the world moving as a personal being with a body and a mind, he must have made some laws for the guidance of the people, and cannot be deemed to be looking after every creature in the world individually. These laws must be followed, without any thought of the great legislator. If the legislator also constituted himself the administrator of the entire world of vast creation, he, as a good judge, will give everyone his due. If, on the other hand, the laws are made to work out results automatically, without a personal supervision, as is reasonable to think in the case of such a vast world of living beings, man's rewards 'not to speak of punishments' are jerked out as if by a slot machine.

On a careful consideration of all the aspects in life, one is led to think either form the utilitarian or benevolent point of view, that the manifestation of right character and conduct consists in.

1. Feeling universal Love,
2. Doing the highest good to the largest community, not even being unmindful of one's own physiological and biological needs;
3. Perfect absence of all evil propensities, incidental to inward feelings of hatred, envy, jealousy-selfishness, arrogance, consequent on the strong desire for wealth, power, fame, and all acts of self-aggrandisement

As to the existence of a personal self-conscientious all-powerful Being, many say that though it may not be possible to convince any one of that existence, expediency requires the assumption of such existence, as a belief in it would at least, by operation of a sense of fear of punishment, avoid evil or sinful actions. This is the gist of the "Spiritual Message" conveyed by no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi in his gramaphone record. It must be realised that convention meant for expediency is not consistent with real faith. This objection is met by some religious enthusiasts with the statement that as great sages have asserted the existence as a divine revelation, it must be taken as true. This again is going into unexplorable regions, and is beyond the stage of ordinary human understanding. To postulate the existence of an omniscient and omnipotent Being to supply the practical need for a detecting and punishing authority is akin to the method followed by some anxious parents of calling for the intervention of a bob-goblin to threaten a wayward child, soon disclosing to the growing child the falsity of the threat and teaching him a lie. As children are not always children, to continue the convention of expediency is to presume that the majority in the world will ever be steeped in ignorance, with no independent power of rational thinking. The presumption is perhaps proving true as there is so much of irrational credulousness. It must be realised that what is taught to others as truth must be what is at least sincerely felt to be true, but not made to appear as true with some ulterior purpose.

The so-called religiously minded people are those that completely resign themselves to their God. They are His men, and they need only ask Him and pray for what they want, and He would give it to them like an indulgent parent. As Bertrand Russel has said, if the omnipotent God would give what is prayed for, man may well claim part of that omnipotence to serve his own purpose.

This life of entire resignation is the chief cause of the indifference and irresponsibility so woefully displayed by the majority of the almost inert section of humanity. They say that nothing happens for good or evil in this world except through the hand of God. If the hand moves under some known laws, and not by mere whim and caprice or at others' request or pleasure, men cannot have their own way. The fact that different people are affected in different ways, in spite of prayers and resignation of themselves, would necessarily lead to the inference that for the direction of the movements of God's hand, each man is responsible in his own way. The only possible reason for making such distinctions should be the varying character, conduct and environment of the persons affected, and there can be no other possible explanation. That this must be the only correct solution of the problem of the vast differences in men's destinies is amply supported by the doctrine of "Karma" laid down by the Hindu philosophy. This is most rational and just because every man must get his due. This theory of Karma also presents some difficulties, if we turn our thoughts as to its origin, if a God has created us all.

There is another theory that the outer physical garb of every man only envelops the inner divine self. It is difficult to see

in what sense this idea is understood, but it is clear that this belief gives no credit to their God, as all the objectionable conduct of human beings, in the several aspects of their relation to the world, would then be proceeding from a physical body enveloping a divine entity. Even educated men, capable of thought on rational lines do not take the least trouble to think of the absurdities involved in their ideas and beliefs, and in their daily conduct pursuant to those ideas and beliefs. Many men of sufficient intellectual calibre drift on the great raft of life, with no oars or rudder.

Whether God, as a personal entity, metes out the deserving punishments and rewards, or whether the natural Laws of Karma work out automatically, and pronounce decrees in the practical world, the chief guiding principle must necessarily be the character and conduct of the individuals, and if one cultivates his character in all the possible aspects it can manifest itself, in his relation to his fellow-beings and other creation, by a well regulated conduct, he need not feel concerned with God, as no man thinks of the Police or the Magistrate so long as he does not come within the clutches of Criminal Laws. The worldly sovereign bestows no favours on him for the mere asking, and if he specially deserves any for meritorious conduct, he will certainly get them in the ordinary course. So must also be the attitude of man with reference to a divine Being of perfection in all possible aspects.

May all reasonable men of culture think out the observations and benefit themselves in the right way is the request of

A WELL WISHER OF HUMANITY.

THE CURSE OF TIMIDITY

(From an article by Georges Mancel in "L'Idée Libre", Dec. 1933)

When we speak of social evils, we are in the habit of considering only physical and physiological ones, and more especially, alcoholism, syphilis and tuberculosis. Evidently these are not by any means small evils and it is certainly necessary to fight them energetically, and this is no easy task either, considering their prodigious development in present society, whose machinery becomes more complicated every day.

In my opinion, however, there are also social evils of a moral nature, which though their manifestations are less violent, are at least as harmful as those I have named above. I think one of the most important of these is the mental disease called *timidity*, which is pregnant with evil consequences for individuals as well as for groups. What evils does it not beget, with its deep and varied manifestations!

Timidity is, originally, the fear of doing or not doing something, it is a continual hesitation, an uncertainty, a doubt about oneself, a restraint on one's character, which prevents the affected individuals from showing courage and initiative in the conduct of their lives. The diminution of Life and all its beauties by a sort of moral suicide: this is what Timidity reserves for its votaries.

Timidity reigns to-day on the Earth, silent and supreme, crushing the brain and the heart of man in its chill and supple embrace, like a vicious serpent. The monstrous fruit of the fear felt by our cave ancestors at the violence of the forces of Nature and even at its simple periodical manifestations, Timidity, which was perhaps, at the origin of society, the strongest mental sensation ever felt by man, has been transmitted from generation to generation, to the present day.

The sublime discoveries of Science have given man enormous possibilities of investigation in all fields. Fire, air, earth, water, all the elements have been progressively captured and made subservient to the needs of humanity. But man, who has so valiantly and skilfully conquered the material world, has not made any conquests worth the name in the psychical world. In that sphere, he is still lingering in those unmoral refuges called "religions."

One must recognize the indisputable fact that religious systems have so far been the only organizations that concerned themselves with the moral needs and weaknesses of men. Modern organizations which try to do this at all, do it tactlessly and ineffectively, more often disposed to deny and if necessary to fight and ridicule religions, rather than try to understand by what subtle and mysterious means these have so readily taken possession of the human soul.

Human needs are, synthetically, of two apparently antagonistic categories: material needs and moral needs, the so-called spiritual or psychic needs. The first can be largely satisfied to-day, supposing of course that material possessions are more equitably distributed than they are at present, and there is even a superabundance (this is demonstrably false. R.D.K.)

If similar superabundance existed in the spiritual or psychic possibilities of man, we should be living in the "Golden Age". Human society would then know neither wars, nor revolutions, nor famines, because what really causes these frightful social cataclysms is the want of balance caused by the immense gap between the physical and the psychical: the one being in a tremendously advanced stage and the other creeping along in lamentable poverty. And still —and this is the divine part of human nature—man intensely wants to satisfy his spiritual needs as well. Let me explain, even at the risk of a digression.

By "spiritual needs". I do not mean a liking for the mysterious, the unknown, the unknowable, the vague and nebulous religious faith which, though it represented in past ages, an interesting and disinterested attempt towards the perfectly legitimate satisfaction of psychical needs, still only provides suffering humanity with a soothing balm instead of a potent remedy. Religions only gave us crutches. Let us throw them away and use our legs. As I have said above, we have two kinds of needs to be satisfied. Let us satisfy them both along parallel lines.

The lazy mania of taking the appearance for reality and the fear—yes, the fear—of going to the root of things have led people blindfold into castes and clans and religious and political systems. They entered these cages and then were astonished to find that they lacked liberty, the liberty to go further in order to see, experience, judge, compare, understand, and succeed in guessing at last that along with the material life, there is a spiritual and moral life, which has to be lived as intensely as the other. How does it happen that we are so belated in this

matter? How is it that we know so little in this sphere? My reply is that in this sphere, we have never employed those rigorous methods which we have in officially recognized sciences. We have simply been groping about, we have talked a lot and talked at random.

Even to-day, the man who has, voluntarily or accidentally, escaped from religious tutelage and proclaims that all religions are humbug and that the sphere of invisible things does not exist, considers himself a strong-headed man. But this is only an assertion, not a proof. It is easy to affirm or deny without proof. Here the believer and the unbeliever are on the same level, though they may not be aware of it.

I leave the believer to his Church. Most of them ask nothing better. But to the honest seeker, disabused as to gods, I say: "Let us seek together, if you don't mind. Salvation is in ourselves, not outside. Here is a starting point for our research. Happiness is not Beyond, it is here. The great and sublime mystery is not Death, it is Life."

Well, you have to give expression to Life without reserve, without limitation, in all spheres. You have been officially taught that you have five senses and you quietly accept that! Can you not imagine that observation, comparison, judgment, reasoning, imagination, intuition, logic and what not, are also senses?

Think for a moment and you will see that Imagination, that some call foolish, is one of the finest faculties of the human being, only, people hardly know how to use it. When this faculty is deranged, one becomes insane or neurasthenic, or excessively emotional or timid.

It is by the abundant resources of a powerful and disciplined imagination, that Cæsars and Napoleons impose upon the masses, and though they have the same defects and foibles as their fellow-creatures, still, by the fascination which they exert on their feeble contemporaries, are able to pass themselves off as supermen and demigods, while they are really only ambitious and unscrupulous rascals with an unlimited power of imagination.

The wonderful scientists who, from the tenacious dreams begotten by their brains, have given birth to submarines, aeroplanes, wireless telephony, television etc., have exceeded by a hundred cubits the possibilities of the restricted sphere of human intelligence, properly so called. What marvellous faculty was it that, dashing boldly into the unknown, gave them the power of divination which they have shown in their discoveries? Was it not imagination? The Faculty which can conceive in advance, without any other support than its own power, which can incessantly create something from nothing, in the invisible sphere first and then in the visible, transform, modify, destroy and create again, whence comes this faculty? From God, reply the priests. Let us pass on. God, here, is an empty word, not a sensible reply. But if I do not know whence this invisible force comes, I observe, as in the case of electricity, that it exists, and that suffices for the moment.

It remains for me to find out if, like other forces of Nature, it can be provoked at will, captured, dammed, canalised, and if it manifests itself rhythmically, according to precise laws. Let us therefore examine its manifestations and we shall recognize that it is an androgynous force, that is neither masculine nor feminine, but sometimes one and sometimes the

other, and that in order to manifest itself productively, it must, like electricity, reconcile its two essential and antagonistic qualities: the positive and the negative.

I am intentionally expatiating upon the predominant value of the imagination among the faculties which, coming from the sphere of the "imponderable", constitute what we currently call the "human soul," for, after long reflection, I am obliged to admit that our sentiments of affection or antipathy, our most rigorous reasonings, our judgments, our desires, our will and even our intelligence and intuition, in short all our pyschical being is conditioned by it and it alone, either for good or for evil. The believer who prays and derives from his prayer at least a moral benefit, and on the other hand the patient who unconsciously prolongs his disease by conserving in his mind the anxiety and doubt as to the possibility of a cure, both make use of the imagination, but in different ways.

One can use a knife to cut, scrape or fashion a thing as one likes, for a certain purpose, to the best of one's ability. With the same knife, one can hurt or kill oneself. The imagination may likewise lead to good or evil. Intelligently handled, it can make us strong-willed, calm in the face of dangeraudacious, self-confident. Ill-managed, it may make us timid, emotional, sensitive, choleric, hesitant: in a word, incapable of doing justice to our ability. Here we come to Timidity again.

By whom has the world been governed and is governed at present? Not by the timid, surely. Not by modest people, even the most intelligent of them. Not by cowards, systematically devoured by childish scruples. The world, and the goods of the world, belong to the resolute, who, by means of a well-ordered imagination, know how to extract the maximum practical result from their personal ability, however small, by getting rid of all the useless side-issues which always confuse the principal object.

The timid person is never a free agent. He is besieged by his inopportune and clumsy thoughts. If he is intelligent and just, sincere and loyal, all his ability and all his noblest qualities will be systematically ignored. Nobody will speak of them and as silence is the greatest contempt, he will be despised. The timid person has always been crucified in all ages.

And if we look at it more closely, who are the timid? It is the mob, the anonymous and amorphous crowd which lets itself be guided by a handful of "leaders"; which, with perfect abnegation born of diffidence, puts the keys of its Destiny into the hands of an audacious and intriguing minority or of a quasi-invisible oligarchy which, by satisfying the passions of the crowd rather than its needs, dominates it without its knowledge. In order to make it free and master of its own Destiny, the crowd must have a moral education exactly the opposite of what we have to-day. The problem is not perhaps as insoluble as it appears.

To begin with the child: We must give to the sensitive and malleable being, as soon as it begins to awake to life, about the age of seven years, a certain feeling of independence. The child must be allowed to manifest its tastes freely and supervised just enough to avoid errors and exaggerations. We must talk to it in moderation, but must not abstain altogether and leave it morally too much to itself. We must sometimes intervene in its interior life, correct its judgments

sometimes. But we must on no account assume in its presence the air of a judge or a bogey. The child must be encouraged by making it feel that where it fails to-day, it will certainly succeed to-morrow with a little attention.

When adult, make a companion of him. Do not make him feel every moment that he owes you a submissive respect, that he is dependent on you all the time and has no right to have absolutely independent, individual tastes.

If you have yourselves been brought up in the ancient, grotesquely rigid, and tyrannical principles, that is no reason for continuing that stupid, out-of-date tradition. The last war deprived many of the young men of to-day of the tutelage of their fathers in their tender years. The mother was naturally less severe and less authoritative towards them than the father would have been. These young men, have not after all, to my knowledge, been led astray and become abnormal or unmoral. Look at them in action. They are less hesitating, less timid than their predecessors. They have a dashing and confident air which is somewhat disconcerting at times. They are doubtless neither much better nor much worse than we. In any case, I prefer them to the older generation, which kept its real character hidden. I do not, however, mean that they should serve as exclusive models for new generations. I only observe that the liberty which they enjoyed in their prime youth has not done them any harm.

(To be continued).

R. D. KARVE.

(We would not class Napoleon I, himself, as an ambitious and unscrupulous rascal. He was not that; he was in reality, for his time, a military and political genius, much maligned by his numerous enemies. (Ed. Reason)

DISEASE AND THE GODS

How often does a medical man hear, "Thank God, he is alright now, doctor."? I should say quite often. In practically all cases, all good things are due to God, so also are all cures. But nobody blames him for the illness.

The other day, I met a gentleman suffering from high blood pressure who had just recovered from a partial stroke. He was so full of Providence for being alive; when I asked him why Providence did not completely prevent the stroke, he said it was done for his own good. One cannot argue further.

Though they are reluctant to attribute vicious motives to God, still they accept disease as a punishment from God for offences committed by someone or other. Him, they supplicate and try to appease.

This process of appeasement takes various forms. The educated and ignorant alike practise them. The only difference is in their grossness. Some months back we read of the gruesome practices in the South of India. People drew charriots by hooks fixed in their flesh. It curdled our blood as the vision conjectured was a prolonged one of agony.

Victims have been killed as sacrifices, but instantaneous death does not shock us as much by its cruelty. The ancient gods all wanted blood. Some of them were inclined to be cannibalistic as they wanted the blood of their children born to human beings or of the children of the latter. Others were satisfied with less. It has always been the sacrifice of A to save B to Z.

At the beginning of the month, we read that a huge holocaust was offered at Ellore to propitiate the goddess of small-pox. A number of animals were killed. We felt the greater need of propaganda so far as preventive medicine was concerned. Vaccination, in spite of all the anti-vaccinationists have to say against it, has been proved to be the only reliable method of protection against small-pox. But in the case of the person who believes small-pox to be a visitation of a particular goddess, vaccination must be a crime as it is stabbing the goddess in the back. The only rational method is offering her sacrifice and flattering her. The vanity of these gods outshines the proverbial vanity of woman.

Mr. Sarat Chandra Mitra in a paper read before the Bombay Anthropological Society says that "Sitala is regarded as a deity presiding over small-pox, in which form all Hindus from Brahmans to Dhonds worship her. In Eastern India, when a person is stricken with small-pox, a piece of ground near him is smeared with cow-dung and on it a fire is lit. A mali (small-pox doctor) is called who sings songs in honour of the goddess, while the patient is given sweetmeats to eat and is fanned with the twig of the neem tree which is sacred to Sitala." The Bombay roads and Chowpatty seaface tell you the remaining tale.

Doctors in Bombay will tell you that the moment the rash is seen on the body, their advice is not sought. Neem leaves are tied to the door post and all the instructions mentioned in the books of old to prevent spread of infection are carried out. In some places, on a particular day, 13th day in the case of small-pox, the patient is given a holy bath, whatever may be his condition No one shall cross over the waste water from the bath, very sensible perhaps. After the bath he is given a good meal with fine dishes. During all these days, no food cooked in the house is seasoned with oil or ghee as it is supposed to have a deleterious effect on the evolution of the case. One can perhaps excuse an ignorant coolie following all these restrictions. He knows nothing better. But to find educated people doing this certainly makes the outlook a very dejecting one.

Small-pox in the unvaccinated generally assumes a virulent form. Measles in children brings serious complications. It is true that many times a doctor is called in when the case assumes a grave aspect. Even then the doctor's treatment and instructions are modified by an old woman or old man whose only qualification is that they were born before the doctor, and have been born with a heavy quota of adhesive plaster because of which they are still stuck to old ideas.

It is in epidemic times that prayers and supplications to gods assume vast proportions. Mitra says that Bigher Mai is regarded as an attendant of Kali and is worshipped at cross roads on the outbreak of an epidemic, a pit being dug in the ground there, filled with incense and sweetmeats and set alight while the godling's praise is sung. At Patna another form of Kali worship is performed

in the shape of a procession at epidemic time in which incense is wafted from an affected village to the next, and so on, right to Calcutta.

In towns where Catholics predominate and in other Catholic communities, a procession is taken round with a statue of St. Roch who is in charge of plague in the heavenly pantheon. He is said to have worked amidst plague stricken people, and as a tribute to his practical experience he is nominated the plague saint. I am not aware that has he any influence over cholera and small-pox, though I know in some villages the same saint is taken round probably on the feeling that all the three are infectious diseases. Though anyone can study epidemiology and anticipate certain epidemics; though the prophylactic use of vaccines, sera and vaccination, along with other hygienic measures, have been the only cures that have ameliorated the lot of the people, still these very people will look up to these religious practics for protection. Temples and churches are filled; medals and cords are sold in abundance till the epidemic has spent its force. After that comes a great thanksgiving, an expression of gratitude that it has not been worse, and that God has ultimately relented. Does he really deserve any thanks at all?

If that is with epidemics, it is no better with individual cases. One morning, a Hindoo brought a child to the hospital. This was the eighth baby; all the other seven had died in their infancy from convulsions and wasting. He was recently told that these deaths were due to the anger of the local deity whom he had forgotten to propitiate. The moment this baby was born, he offered the angry goddess a sheep. He hoped that now the child would be safe, and to make it doubly sure he brought the baby to the hospital. But he had brought it too late; there was extensive pneumonia and other complications, the child died within twenty four hours. Nothing was of any avail. The poor man will in all probability again go to the same idol, prostrate before it in all humility, offer a fatter sheep and attempt to have one more child, with what future one does not know.

Once I was asked to see an infant getting convulsions. The child was unconscious and its mouth was full of mud. I was requested not to remove it as it was from the tomb of a very holy *pir* and was reputed to be invaluable for convulsions! The child was suffering from malaria and a few doses of quinine put it right. They might have attributed it to the holy mud, but all the same I was afraid of bits of the mud being aspirated and causing a lung complication.

Another child was under oxygen: it wanted it badly. For twenty four hours its condition was critical. The parents had tied a holy cloth round the oxygen tube! The child made a slow recovery. I was grateful to the liberal supply of oxygen; the parents to the holy cloth.

A patient of sixty got a stroke; one side was paralysed. When the paralysis is due to a thrombosis, there is a certain amount of recovery. The relatives of the patient wound his extremities with St. Philomena's cord and as power returned thanked the new saint for her intercession. I do not know why they did not tie one round the head of the patient permanently as a prophylactic.

For a Roman Catholic the efficacy of Holy Communion, the water that the

priest has touched while saying mass, holy water, water from sacred shrines such as that of Lourdes is unquestionable. During an illness in a Catholic house, it is a common sight to see holy pictures and medals pinned round the patient's bed and pillows, etc.

A doctor's daughter was down with a severe attack of typhoid. Every morning there was a stream of Brahmins coming to pray. The child's ears and mouth were smeared with holy "thirth" and ashes. For some days it was a "touch and go." The child recovered, and the gods received the thanks.

Another boy, the relative of a Mohamedan doctor was down with a bad attack of smallpox. He recovered. A Hindu deity at Bhuleshwar was offered the child's weight in *gur* !

Very often after a doctor has pronounced a case to be serious and perhaps with very little hopes of recovery, a priest is called in. He says prayers aloud asking all the relatives to join. At Lourdes, for instance, the stirring tone of the pilgrim's prayer is impressive. The Brahmin comes and recites mantras with rice and flowers. The Parsee priest sits outside and says prayers continuously. I am told that some of them are able to go over a thousand pages of prayers within a night. If that be true, one can only exclaim: what a prayer! One priest used to come with something written on a piece of paper, put the paper in water and ask the patient to drink the coloured water in the name of the Great Healer. Of course, it will be said that faith heals; quite true. In such cases, however the few that are cured count, and the many who die—well, they had no faith or God loved them so that he called them to him. A believer is never amiss for an explanation.

Why should the gods be excused if they do not always do the right thing. If a medical man had the means of relieving the sufferings of a party and failed to exercise them out of sheer personal motives and caprices, he would be severely blamed. Then why should the gods having these powers let a person die young, when they could let him live to enjoy life? I know the philosophy.

There is another point that I have not been able to understand. It is the role that a particular locality plays in the act of healing. The blessed Virgin may work wonders at Lourdes. Why does not the same Virgin work them in London or Lucknow? Why should the healing powers of the gods and saints be so much identified with the particular localities and objects like images, bits of cloth, glass, beads, etc.?

The position of a doctor is difficult. When disease is ascribed to divinity, when infection is the visitation of a goddess, when insanity is the possession by the devil, when the delirium of a puerperal septicaemia is the possession by the tortured soul of the last wife or husband, the hands of the doctor are certainly tied It is useless at the moment to argue and enlighten. Since prayers, amulets, medals, holy water and offerings of sheep and cattle cannot do any personal injury to the patient, it is the duty of the doctor to stay. While playing a secondary role to the priest, he will still be able to do a great deal to help the patient in his fight against disease.

One cannot forget the influence the psychic state of the patient exercises

towards recovery. A steadfast hope that he will get well is a valuable asset. Nothing offers this to the same extent as pious faith. The patient may recover; though gods and the priest may get all the credit that should not matter. The satisfaction that he has done his best and helped the patient to recover is sufficient reward.

What can one do to get rid of many of these practices. Exorcising, offering holy water to drink, taking sick incurable patients from shrine to shrine, all these are part and parcel of their faith. It is useless attempting to work against these details. He who can ardently believe in a personal benevolent god believes in the efficacy of prayer and from there to amulets, 'thirth' and priests is not a far cry. It is this belief which must be smashed.

L. C.

THE GIFT OF FREETHOUGHT

Freethought is sometimes construed as irrational thought, as thought that is, in the eyes of orthodox and ill-educated persons, contrary to established tenets and canons of logic as they conceive it to be. But a little deeper analysis of the question will show to all unprejudiced folk that it is not so, but that it is only the spontaneous expression of the human Buddhi itself to establish its own supremacy over everything else in matters intellectual; the mere word "established" will only be a fragile weapon to drive "Reason" out of the field or to scare it into submission or silence, as the tenacious camp of convention and tradition vainly imagines. No attractive or mystifying or question-begging phraseology from the sacred (?) stock-in trade of the orthodox people, coined ages back by well-meaning but crafty men of ancient wisdom, need frighten us into sealing our mouths against those who want to intimidate us by high-sounding and jaw-breaking phraseologies and technicalities and thereby impose on us ideas and maxims, doctrines and theories, which we cannot honestly believe in and adopt, looked at and studied from all possible angles and view-points. Some orthodox cranks and perverts even go the absurd length of seeing in "Freethought" a synonym for the blackest of sins (?). When a thing or an institution is said to be "established" and to be holy with a peculiar halo of its own, every sane man or woman has an inborn right to dig at its very foundations and to question the very nature and character of the basis on which such an institution stands or has so long stood, and also further to examine the nature of the circumstances that surrounded and governed the rise into being of the said institution. We have also the right, inborn within us, to study, scrutinise, and to criticise fearlessly, wherever necessary in the interests of truth and sanity, the nature of the authorship thereof. If my friend, Mr. Vision, tells me that he has just seen a giant gymnast performing wonderful acrobatic feats in mid-air with no supports whatever, I am never, in order to uphold the sanity and courage and honesty of my own intellect, to take it for granted and accept it gleefully on trust, because he

happens to be one of my bosom friends. My intellect SHOULD have its own path to travel and SHOULD refuse to be unreasonably or forcibly sidetracked into a dangerous side-line of thought and action. This side-line of thought may be dangerous, because it is unknown, strange and uninviting to me. Similarly, because the authors of a particular institution, leaving apart the question of its age, etc., may be our own ancestors or others of our own blood, we are NEVER to approve of it and we are NEVER BOUND either by any infallible moral maxim to do so, unless and until we are forced by some irresistible trend of logic to recognise it as a valuable monument to human wisdom and intellectual activity. It is, of course, far easier to tread the beaten track than to think and strike out an independent line of our own. Though easier by far, the beaten track is possibly more perilous and more disastrous in the long run, why not and how not?

When my mother tells me that I should not think of starting on a journey South on Thursdays or a journey North on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and similar vague things and threats (yes, it amounts to an indirect threat, isn't it?). I have only to exercise some patience with her and have to take it as a supersition, pure and simple, until I am convinced, if at all such conviction were possible, of its truth in practical experience. At the same time, if I chance to be a little sagacious and really intelligent, caring more for true knowledge than for cock-and-bull titbits doled out and dispensed by aunts and grand-mothers, (I say this with the utmost respect to all those are responsible for my appearance on earth as a human being) my mind will have been already set a-working on subjects similar to this and will have already gone exploring minutely all those cases of journeys that have been previously undertaken by men or women and the immediate consequences thereof, if at all those consequences can be intelligibly connected with and attributed to the "inauspicious" days on which the journeys took place. This is not to browbeat and condemn mercilessly our ancient beliefs, but it is only an anxiety to get at stability or otherwise of their aged foundations. Can this be put down and branded off-hand as a "sin", or at least as a reprehensible habit of mind?

(To be continued.)

R. NATESA AIYAR.

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WHAT THE SILENT SCEPTIC SHOULD DO:

Mr. PHELIPS APPEALS FOR CANDOUR

Modern Knowledge and old Beliefs: An Appeal for Candour: By the Author of the Churches and Modern Thought. Watts.

One of the most learned of English rationalists of the last generation once delivered himself as follows: "He who speaks in the name of reason does not ask to be believed on his own authority; he must not be called arbitrary, or subjective, for what he appeals to is the reason in others, uniting him to them, uniting all to the One." This is a very good expression of the rationalist's faith, and one to which I think Mr. Vivian Phelips, author of the book under review, would subscribe. At any rate, it is because his latest book seems to me to breathe this spirit that I find pleasure in reviewing it and in recommending it to others. Mr. Phelips thinks, as I also do, that the progress of knowledge in general, and of historical criticism in particular, has destroyed the basis of belief in the traditional dogmas of Christianity. But he is also of opinion that a great many people whose lives are no longer influenced by these beliefs for one reason or another conceal their scepticism. He devotes a special section to the Silent Sceptic, analyses his influence in society, and it is to him in particular that his appeal for candour is addressed.

The appeal is a serious and earnest one, and will no doubt meet with a considerable response. The writer's earlier book sold 50,000 copies. In view of the extraordinary difficulty of thought on philosophical and religious questions, and the manifest unfitness of the mass of mankind to form correct judgments there will always be a colourable excuse for those who argue that religions must be authoritarian, and that the mass of mankind had better take their beliefs on trust. But Mr. Phelips thinks, and I agree with him, that no matter how little capacity a man may have for independent judgment, it is far more important for him to exercise that little than to swear in blindly to the opinions of another. His book, therefore, attempts to give readers the material for forming opinions; and it is characteristic of its practical earnestness that its pages are interlarded with the names of books, their publishers and their prices, as well as with quotations from the writers from whose views he dissents.

The Theologian's Answers.

It is sometimes argued that we are all rationalists nowadays, and that obscurantism is a thing of the past. This I cannot accept. Take an example. Some time ago a prominent theologian undertook to answer in public the doubts of a

humble enquirer who wished to know how she could be assured that the Bible was in truth the word of God. The reply was two-fold. First, it was said, we know the Bible is the word of God because it says so. Take up the first chapter of the Bible and we read: "In the beginning God. . ." It is difficult to imagine an enquirer so humble as to be completely satisfied by such an answer. Nevertheless such answers do harm. They provoke either confussion or contempt for learned authority. The second argument was no better. It is difficult to decide whether it was more comic or more blasphemous. It was to the effect that just as people skilled in literary criticism could say with confidence of a particular book, "This is by Dickens," or "This is by Scott," so there were authoritative persons (no doubt those who shared the writer's particular creed, or heresy) who could say of the Bible, This is by God.

Mr. Phelips is surely not wrong in supposing that an appeal for candour is not yet out of date.

If I understand Mr. Phelip's earlier chapters aright, his view is that those who subject their religious beliefs to the test of reason must also hold that the universe is ultimately explicable in terms of the laws of physics and chemistry. This I cannot agree with. It seems to me legitimate to hold that Renan and Strauss had some important truths to enunciate while at the same time refusing to accept the physical and chemical conclusions of Newton and Dalton as good metaphysics.

PROFESSOR B. FARRINGTON.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the masses of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

The daily papers last month reported that ugly scenes were witnessed in a mosque at Karachi one morning when a section of Daudi Bohras sought to prevent the entry of fourteen members of another section who had been excommunicated by the High Priest for holding advanced views. The Police had to interfere.

The Bohra community is not a large one, but it is extremely intolerant. There is also much bigotry in it. The *dictum* of the High Priest is sacrosanct and few dare contradict him. There are a lot of religious restrictions on the Bohra. For instance, he is not allowed to trim his beard which act is considered to be a very grave offence and a mortal sin. A Bohra

who would shave his beard would be instantly excommunicated, and sure of a nice place in Hell. Before going there he would surely get his ribs broken by his more zealous brethren. His Holiness the Mulaji Saheb claims to be as infallible as His Holiness the Pope of Rome. Strange how similarly the minds of these religious heads work in the same groove! The Mulaji Saheb is in the happy situation that his followers take his words very seriously and that they will resort to the *argumentum ad baculum* with any of those co-religionists who dares express an opinion contrary to the pontifical decree. Happy community!

* * *

Fifty persons were burnt to death in a fire which broke out the other day in a temple in South India. It is said that pitiful scenes were witnessed; the moans of the dying mixing with the crackle of burning wood. The cause of the fire, it would appear, was the careless handling of fire balls which a devotee was displaying in order to propitiate an angry god in the temple. The god was evidently not pleased with that ceremony and he showed his anger in an unmistakable manner. Not long ago, a Catholic Church, also down South, was struck by lightning when a number of worshippers who were inside perished. Really God does not respect his own house, which is an outrage on humanity.

* * *

It is reported that a woman who was sleeping with her child at Kolhapur suddenly disappeared, and when a search was made, she was found floating in a tank close to a temple. This happened late at night. When discovered, she was uttering the words "Narayen, Narayen" (Another name for the second person of the Hindu Trinity). It is stated that although she was floating on the water, her dress was quite dry. Conclusion:—A miracle. It is affiarmed that she was carried bodily by a spirit and deposited in the Tank; probably a practical joke by the spirit. Some say that it was a dirty trick especially on a poor woman. The ways of spirits in India are passing strange!

* * *

According to the Madras Mail, Professor Hou Ti Shen of the Yen Ching University, Peking, who was in frequent touch with India for nearly twenty years declares that there was too much religion in India. "India", he is reported to have said, "has too much religion which hampers all her progress. While India was essentially religious, China was intensely social." The Chinese attitude, he said, towards India was not favourable for they thought that India was too pessimistic and was divided by religious antagonism and factions. Every sensible man knows that religion is the curse of India. Mahatma Gandhi must be realizing this now, though his own remedy is still more religion.

* * *

The Dean of Rochester, Dr. F. L. Underhill, must be a very optimistic person and very complacent at that. Speaking, recently before the Annual Conference of the Church of England Men's Society, he is reported to have found a lot of excuses for Christians who did not go to Church. So very unctuous he was! He thought that religion is not being oppressed or ignored but is simply crowded out. There were, he said, too many counter attractions. He was opposed to "stunts" to attract people to church. Was he hinting at the Pilgrimage

organized by the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury to the Westminister Abbey in which, it is said, the King and the Queen will take part as pilgrims? Though people did not go to Church, he was certain they were as sincere as those who did. All the same it was his opinion that public worship was an obligation as God was more in evidence in a Church than outside it. (This bishop evidently knows better than Jesus Christ who is reported to have said to the Samaritan woman at the well that it was not necessary to go to a temple to pray). Few will disagree with the good Bishop that, from the point of view of bishops and parsons, public worship was an obligation on Christians. Just imagine what would become of them if the Churches were to become more and more deserted. Like many of his profession, the Bishop of Rochester would find any other excuse for the indifference of Christians rather than to admit candidly that the cause of it is the loss of faith of the people in a discredited creed caused by Modern Thought.

* * *

Last month we published a very interesting article by Mr. J. D. Jenkins on the evil of Child-Marriage in India and the defeat of the Sarda Act due to the timidity of the Government of India in enforcing it as it should. This question is receiving attention in England. Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., has just published a book—Child-Marriage· The Indian Minotaur. (Allen and Unwin), in which she exposes this scandal and the timidity of the Government in the face of the widespread protest against the application of the Act which was passed to stamp out of the evil. She describes this evil as one of India's greatest social scandals. It is sad to think that bigotry and superstition are so powerful in India that even the Government quail before them. "Religion in danger" is a slogan that makes the heart of the bravest official tremble here. The Government will do anything to pacify the orthodox once these significant words are shouted with sufficient vehemence. The country we live in!

* * *

An Indian Christian Sadhu, (holy man), one Jeevratnam of Gudawada in Madras, recently visited Poona and during his stay at the Nana Peth Presbyterian Church attracted a large number of people belonging to different communities who had heard of his miraculous powers as a faith healer. According to a report in The Times of India, people at Poona crushed one another one morning to get the benefit of his miraculous power. The report says that he even cured those who were possessed of devils. He had only to touch the blind, the deaf and the dumb for them to go away cured and rejoicing. Hossanah! If this man goes to France he would become a serious competitor to Lourdes. At Lourdes, the Virgin is not prodigal with her gifts. One in ten thousands is said to be the average cure, and competent medical authorities aver that not a single case of properly diagnosed incurable, organic disease has ever been cured there. Of one thing we are certain: no man or woman who has had his or her eye completely destroyed has ever been cured there. So there is a limit there to the Virgin's power; but the Holy Man in Poona is reported to have cured hopeless and incurable diseases by the hundred. A miraculous man indeed and to think he is not even a Roman Catholic!

* * *

South India, the home of Dravidians, reports a recent miracle. It is the case of a stone bull covered with brass in a temple of Shiva at Travancore which has started bleeding suddenly. The papers say that the blood oozes near its tail and the prodigy is causing a great sensation there. The blood has been piously collected and sent to the Maharaja of Travancore. The latest report says that His Highness the Maharajah, the Princes and Princesses and other notables of Travancore went to pay a visit to the Temple to see the miracle for themselves. It would appear that this is not the first time that the miracle has happened; it is the fifth time. It is stated on high authorities that this fact is so well attested that the possibility of fraud or deception is out of question. Probably the temple authorities, like the Bishop of Asoti, in Italy, must have sent the blood to be tested microscopically, radioscopically, radiographically, chemically and spectroscopically, in fact, all the known methods of scientific analysis (as was done with the blood of that Clay Crucifix by the Institute of Legal Medicine at the University of Turin in Italy) to make sure that it was the blood of a real bull. They must have seen to that at Travancore.

* * *

The bull itself is a miracle. Once upon a time, it appears, it was a living bull roaming in the fields near that famous temple. A wicked man one day wounded it, and it went immediately to lie in the temple in front of the idol of the Great God Shiva, the third person of the Hindu Trinity. The God in presence of such a great faith must have been deeply touched, and he at once converted the bull into a stone one so that it may remain in his presence for ever. One does not doubt that in Heaven this most blessed bull must be enjoying the happy privileges of all great saints, namely, the beatific Presence for ever and ever, glorifes the Most High, sings His praise in bovine fashion. We must consult some high Hindu theologians to find out whether in the abode of the blessed holy bulls by, some divine privilege, are able to play the harp.

* * *

When clay crucifix begins to bleed and talk to praying women, when a stone bull begins to bleed, when earthquakes ruin a whole province in a few minutes, surely it will be admitted that these are signs and portents of awful things to come. Heaven, indeed, is worried over Mother Earth. What is in store? Mahatma Gandhi or Father Letellier must know.

* * *

La pudibonderie saxone as Max O'Reil once described, the affected bashfulness of certain Nordic nations is most comical at times. Mixed bathing has been forbidden in Holland. If male and female bathers are caught sitting down on a plot of grass, a shocked policeman will hustle them off before a magistrate. The only grass-sitting companion for a respectable man in Holland is a close blood relative. And if you are caught sitting with one of them, the law requires full documentary proof of relationship. One does not doubt the part the padre has played in this legislation.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: IS IT A DETERRENT?

It must be admitted that this is a very grave controversial question which always finds able advocates for and against, and that the arguments on both sides deserve the close attention of every serious thinker.

It may be broadly said that Scientists are, generally, against Capital Punishment while Jurists, as a rule, are in favour.

The former look upon crimes, not excepting that of murder, as a result of irrepressible impulses prompted in the individual by a disease of the mind, or at any rate, a mental defect due to hereditary legacy intensified by unfavourable environment and social conditions. These being not of his own making, the punishment meted to him when he has committed even so serious a crime as murder, should be retributive and not vindictive. The latter hold the view, that whatever may be the hereditary legacy of the individual, whatever may be his temperamental disposition, whether he is educated or illiterate, rich or poor, hails from the castle or the slum, every man has a free will and is responsible for his acts. It is up to him to restrain his impulses, whatever may be their origin In other words, the Jurists do not believe in hereditary factors and do not care how they affect a criminal.

Scientists also consider the duty of the State or Society towards the individual to be most important; and when this has been sadly neglected they wonder that Society has any right at all to be shocked or horrified at a murder, and to demand the punishment by death of the perpetrator. Many thinkers believe that Society can only claim this on the principle of "Lex Talionis" as it has done little or nothing to solve or even tackle the eugenic problem in the community, to improve the social conditions of the classes most in need of improvement, and makes no effort to educate them properly and raise their moral standard. The opponents of the death penalty also say that though it is believed to be the only deterrent to the crime of murder, yet it has in no way lessened it as can be proved by the statistics of any country. They hold, doubtless, with great force of reason, that a State which is anxious to prevent and discourage killing should not itself kill when the opportunity arises. The sanctity of human life should be sacred to the individual as well as to the State and as long as this is not recognized, it is futile to expect the crime of murder to decrease.

In order to appreciate the arguments on both sides, it may interest our readers to read the very interesting debate on the question held in New York some years ago, between Judge A. Talley, one of the ablest Judges of America, and Clarence Darrow, the wellknown American lawyer and Rationalist. The former, who has gained much experience of criminal life as a Judge of the Criminal Sessions of New York, is in favour of Capital Punishment, while Darrow, who also claims great experience in that line, is a stout opponent.

(See Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Book, No. 883).

Judge A. Talley opens the debate by affirming that the State has a right to put to death one who has violated the

law which says:—"Thou shalt not kill," and for a murder deliberate and premeditated that penalty shall be imposed. He says: "In the heart of every man is written the law: "Thou shalt not kill", Upon the statute book of every nation is written: "Thou shalt not kill", and no one offends that precept through ignorance. It is fundamental that every man knows that it is wrong and illegal to take the life of another man".

He contends that once a man has an intention to slay his mental operation is that of a premeditated and deliberate effort to kill. If that condition of mind is found to have been present when the act was committed, then the criminal must forfeit his life because he has taken upon himself to take the life of another. He asks: "Is there anything barbaric or unnatural about a sovereign State killing such a criminal?" He ridicules the idea that such a criminal should be incarcerated in a prison for life. He contends that the State does the right thing in executing criminals so convicted as a matter of protection for its citizens, in the same manner that an individual has a right to kill in self protection. He claims that the State imposes its laws with equal justice, and it is in the interest of the population that justice has a right to enforce her edicts and her mandates without question. Judge Talley believes that capital punishment is the only deterrent to the crime of murder, and without it the number of murders in America would increase fearfully. As it is, he says, America is reckoned to be the most lawless country on the face of the earth. "Do you, ladies and gentlemen", he says, "have any appreciation of the homicide or the murder figures of this country of ours, of the amazing increase beyond all calculation that is shown year after year? Do you realize that in New York, our great Empire City, there is practically a murder every day? And we are a population of some six millions here. And in Mr. Darrow's splendid city of Chicago, with a population of about three millions, there are more murders committed there annually than there are in New York. And not only are these numbers appalling, but the increase in the annual rate is the thing that should make us pause. In twenty-eight cities from which the statistics were available, in 1906 there were 609 homicides. That leaped in 1910,in these same twenty-eight of the principal cities of our country, to 1,365. And for the period running from 1917 to 1921, those figures of twenty years ago—then 609 homicides a year—reached the appalling figure of 8,946".

Judge Talley concludes his address with the question: "Is this the time to consider abolishing capital punishment when our country is disgraced by the number of murders that are committed on our shores? I say it is the time for sensible men and women to come to a realization that there is only one way to deal with the criminal and the malefactor, and that is with certainty and severity. There is no other way in which the integrity of the people of the country or the sanctity of the law may be observed. I am in favour of abolishing capital punishment when the murderers of the country abolish the necessity".

Mr. Darrow, in reply, denies the statement made by Judge Talley that every man's heart tells him it is wrong to kill. He thinks that every man's heart desires killing. "Personally", he says, "I never killed anybody that I know of. But I

have a great deal of satisfaction now and then reading obituary notices, and I used to delight with the rest of my hundred per cent patriotic friends when I saw ten or fifteen thousand Germans being killed in a day. Every body loves killing. Some of them think it is too mussy for them. Every human being that believes in capital punishment loves killing, and the only reason they believe in capital punishment is because they get a kick out of it. Nobody kills any one for love, unless they get over it temporarily or otherwise. But they kill the one they hate, and before you can get a trial to hang somebody or electrocute him, you must first hate him and then get a satisfaction over his death." Mr. Darrow declines to follow his friend into the labyrinth of statistics. He, however, makes the significant remark that in all these States where the mortality by homicide is great, they have capital punishment and always have had it. "A logical man", he says, "when he found out that the death rate increased under capital punishment, would suggest some other way of dealing with it." He suggests some reasons why the death rate by homicide was high in Central States. "The death rate in Memphis and some other southern cities is high from homicide. Why? Well, it is an afternoon pleasure to kill a Negro—that is all about it. Everybody knows it. It is certainly ironical to hear Judge Talley talk of the majesty of law, the sanctity of life, and so forth, when his countrymen think it a mere sport to lynch negroes, hang and burn them as they like. Mr. Darrow admits that the death-rate from homicide recently in the United States and all over the world has increased. Why? The same thing has happened that has happened in the world since time began. A great war always increases death rates. "We teach people to kill and the State is the one that teaches them. If a State wishes that its citizens respect human life, then the State should stop killing."

Mr. Darrow did not believe that Capital punishment is a deterrent; the statistics quoted by his opponent proves that it is not and never will be. He reminds his audience that in the past people were put to death with great barbarity for many crimes other than homicide, yet this did not reduce crimes. He cites England as a country where, till not very long ago, one hundred and sixty or seventy odd crimes were punishable by death. He says that this barbarous law in England was abolished at the instance of the people though the Judges and the Clergy strongly opposed its abolition!

Mr. Darrow strongly criticises the legal fiction of "premeditation." His friend, he observes, says, "Oh, we don't hang anybody if they kill when they are angry, it is only when they act premeditatedly." "Yes, I have been in Courts and heard Judges instruct people on this premeditated act. It is only when they act under their judgment and with due consideration. He would also say that if a man is moved by anger, but if he doesn't strike the deadly blow until such time as reason and judgment has a chance to possess him, even if it is a second—how often I have heard Judges say: 'Even if it is a second'? "What does any Judge know about premeditation? What does anybody know about it? How many people are there in this world that can premeditate on anything? I will strike out the word "pre" and say how many people are there that can meditate?"

Mr. Darrow does not believe that there was ever a premeditated murder in any sense of psychology of science. "There are planned murders—planned yes,—but back of every murder and back of every human act are sufficient causes that move the human machine beyond their control."

Mr. Darrow does not say that murderers must not be punished. The community, of course, must be protected. There are ways of doing it, but he does not think that capital punishment is justified in a civilized community.

Judge Talley in refuting the arguments of Mr. Darrow points out that Mr. Darrow has not advanced any single argument against capital punishment. He says that Mr. Darrow's objection to capital punishment is purely sentimental and he does not think that this sort of feeling ought to be in the way of justice. He re-affirms his conviction that the State kills in order that the majesty of justice may be vindicated, and that people who violate its laws must by the example of that killing, be deterred from taking life. He did not believe in the remedies advocated by Mr. Darrow, namely, education, improving the social conditions of people, and all that. Man, says Judge Talley, has a free-will which is a Divine gift and he must choose which is right and avoid which is wrong.

Mr. Darrow in reply does not add much to what he has already said. He reminds his audience that man is a creature of environment and the product of heredity, and crime must be dealt with in a scientific manner instead of the methods of the present day which are relics of the barbarism of the past.

Our readers will have noticed that the strongest point in Mr. Darrow's argument is the relevant fact that despite capital punishment in America and elsewhere, the crime of murder is increasing enormously instead of decreasing. In fact, in some countries where capital punishment has been abolished, the death-rate from homicide is much less than in countries where it is in force. This seems to prove that capital punishment is not a deterrent as many think, and strengthens the conviction that a man who kills, for whatever motive it may be, does not think of the punishment before or during the act of killing. Mr. Darrow's argument that a State which is anxious that its citizens should not kill should not itself kill, is very sound. Yet what do we see in the world? A man who has climbed into power may murder hundreds of his opponents in one night, as happened recently in Central Europe, and the world is hardly shocked by it. If a half-demented Individual rips open the abdomen of a poor wretch in a secluded locality, Society profess to be shocked and horrified and demand the severest punishment for the perpetrator! We also think that when a few old gangsters hold up a bank, shoot right and left and decamp with the money, that lawlessness is becoming very serious and exemplary punishment should be meted to the miscrants if apprehended. When a few thousands, armed to the teeth, invade another man's territory, shoot right and left and take possession of the country, we call this conquest and admire the conquerors who are generally awarded.

We think most Rationalists will agree with Mr. Darrow that murderers must, by all means, be prevented from doing harm, and Society must beprotected. Killing him may not be necessary, as he can be adequately punished in other ways, and there is no reason why we should

perpetuate the barbarism of the past. Judge Talley says that in the States a man is seldom executed for the first offence of murder. One is glad to hear this. In England, where the law is still very draconian, they do not seem to make a distinction between the different degrees of murder. There, a murderer is a murderer. and the penalty is death They execute even young people. Young men of 20 and 22 years of age have been hanged in England, and when such things do happen one cannot help shuddering at the severity of the law in a country where, till not so long ago as that, a man could be hanged, and was hanged for stealing a glass of Port Wine.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE RATIONALIST IN DIFFICULTIES

One of the usual arguments of those who advocate the exi-tence, not only of a god, but of one endowed with the qualities of kindness and goodness, is that such a conviction is bound to serve as a consolation to a large number of people when great calamities attack them and threaten their very existence. Let us examine this position a little more closely.

When difficulties make the path of life not so smooth as before, when the fun and joy of living seems entirely remote, different ways are found of consoling oneself. There is a type of people who is prone to say—"well, the ways of the Almighty are unknowable and what is my misery now may possibly be for my ultimate good. I must, therefore, resign myself to his will and suffer my pain in silence." Of course, if the sufferer is really honest in his conviction that what happens (or, in his words, what God orders) is always for the ultimate good, he may probably feel some relief from his sorrow. Whether this kind of conviction is based on any reasonable grounds is an entirely different question. For, after all, "ultimate good" is a term that will have no end. The destruction of an individual may be good for a family, that of a family for a village or even of a whole province" for the world. That the very arrangement of things by which the misery of one should mean the happiness of another, cannot be the work of a merciful god, is a point of view, which is probably beyond the comprehension of a blind believer in God's mercy. However, granting that a person has the honest conviction about the ultimate goodness of all God's actions (i. e., of all happenings in the universe), he can find a sort of consolation in every difficulty. It must, however, be admitted. that it is based on ignorance.

There is, however, also a more rationalistic way of achieving the same object. If we trace the history of the universe, or even of this little earth from geological times to the present day, the causal development of all natural phenomena will become evident. The succeeding events in the history of the world, the evolution of life, its manifestation in various forms, the appearance and disappearance of new species, the treatment meted out by one species to another, the

behaviour of human races and other small groups to each other, the effect of forces of nature and of other forms of life on human beings, all show us clearly that they form an unbroken chain of cause and effect, without any ultimate object or goal which can be deduced from the phenomena themselves. In other words, the world is not teleological but only casual in its development.

The happenings, either in the material or the animal world, can therefore be assigned values only in so far as they affect us human beings. And even then, these values will be entirely relative to the particular standpoint of the person who assigns them. The death of a soldier during the war must have been looked upon as a great calamity by the members of his family, but probably as a good thing by his enemies, who in fact must have been instrumental in bringing about that event.

To the thinking man, it is thus clear that events in space and time are happening because of causes that have taken place, and that these events in their turn become the causes of other events to follow. It is this unbroken chain, the beginning and end of which neither philosopher nor scientist has been able to unravel, which confronts us in our every-day life. Events are neither good nor bad by themselves, they can be so only in relation to a person or persons whom they affect. (The same applies to other conceptions of values. In a recent discussion on the obscenity or otherwise of a certain book a statement to the effect, that obscenity cannot attach to a thing or word, *per se*, but can only exist in the mind of the observer or reader as the case may be, was strongly objected to by a writer of the orthodox school. It is quite clear that a thing or a printed word, in the absence of any living being near about can have no conception of value attached to it.) If then nature is obviously aimless and is neither good nor bad, the best way to console oneself in difficulties is not to rely upon the imaginary ultimate mercifulness of a problematical god but to resign oneself to the inevitableness of the same and to take the help of our fellow humans in order to prevent, if possible, similar occurrences in future. I would then say to myself :—"It is a great pity that calamity has taken place ; I must try to forget it as soon as possible, get out of it, with the help of others, if necessary, and again take up my work as a useful unit in this human fraternity of mine. There is no divine help I can expect; everything that takes place is doing so without any reference to my feelings. Natural laws are neither good nor bad. They are simply there and I have got to adjust myself accordingly."—That is the rational way to face difficulties.

D. D. KARVE.

REVITALISING THE JUDICIAL OATH

At the assumption of the office of the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, His Lordship Mr. Justice J. Douglas Young made some observations towards the curtailment of Laws' delays. As perjury was the curse of administering justice in the country, and as a large proportion of witnesses in the courts swore falsely, the root of the evil is traced ' to the futility of the oath that is administered.' "It (the oath) means precisely nothing to the vast majority of the inhabitants of this country. The result is that cases are manufactured both in the civil and criminal courts, and crowds of witnesses are examined who would never be called *if forced to take an oath they fear.*" While on the one hand his Lordship recommends the elimination of oral evidence by suitable alterations in the personal laws and by insisting on registered instruments evidencing adoption, partition &c, he would enjoin on the witnesses who would still be coming into courts in lesser numbers a form of oath respected and feared. "There ought to be less perjury in India than in any country in the world. The illiterate villagers, who form the great mass of witnesses, and the less educated classes generally are the very people to whom an oath they fear is a very real thing." A large section of the Indian press hails the lucky discovery as 'deserving of the fullest consideration at the hands of the Government of India.'

It is well to mark the stages of evolution of the swearing-mind, to enable us to determine whether any suggestion as to the change in its form tends to progress or is otherwise reactionary. E. A. Westermarck holds that an oath is essentially a conditional self-imprecation, a curse by which one calls down upon oneself some evil in the event of what one says not being true. "The efficacy of the oath is originally *entirely magical* it is due to the magic power inherent in the cursing words." (The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas, ii, 118). Sir E. B. Tylor defined the oath in the Encyclopedia Britannica (11, xix, 939 b) as an "asseveration or promise made under non-human penalty or sanction." Ernest Crawley comments on this by adding that oaths can also be taken under human sanctions, and upon living persons, just as a life may be insured. (See Oath, Curse and Blessing, edited by Th. Besterman, Thinkers Library Edition, p. 41). But this overlooks the insurance office which remains a non-human agency that is expected to fulfil in the result. When the ignorant woman swears on her children, she holds out that a power beyond her will save or mar them according as her oath was truthful or otherwise.

The definition of oath in the New English Dictionary recognises the appeal to God (or to a deity or something held in reverence or regard) in witness of the truth of the statement or the binding character of the promise or undertaking. Crawley's observation that many primitive oaths have no appeal to anything 'held in reverence or regard' but are absolutely direct, there being only the personal will or wish, seems to overlook the mysterious expectancy behind such primitive mind that somehow, by means other than purely human, the oath will be fulfilled.

In the primitive mind the oath depended upon the efficacy of the magic of the spoken word, like the curse and the blessing. After the developement of the supernatural religion, it depended upon such Supernatural force for its dignity, and upon the appeal to a supernatural being for its sanction. The oath has figured conspicuously in the legal process of all races, and is still in the highest civilisations a formal guarantee of truthfullness. But as Crawley observes : the ethical significance of the oath is throughout, *personal responsibility*. "When oath gives place to solemn affirmation, the guarantee of good faith and of truth speaking is now in the moral sphere of personality ; there is no more *magic or religion.*" (ibid) The moral significance of replacing the oath by affirmation lies in that the witness is given the respect due to humanity, he is looked upon as an agent for good or evil, and is fixed with that ethical responsibility which is the touchstone of civilised life. If instead, he were to be coerced at the stake, on the rack, or by fear of some mystic consequnnce, his position is nothing superior to that of an automatic machine, to record the wishes of its employer, the trance subject to register the thoughts of the hypnotiser, rather than an independant observer giving out from his experience, fearlessly, nor having any connection with suggestion, often from interested quarters from outside. However much we may seek to improve society by such mechanical means, progress would remain in the background, nay recede further, were we to increase the process of mechanisation of the witness-box without caring for the personality that is expected to fill it. To seek to cultivate the emotion of self-respect, and personal responsibility rather than to play upon the fear of touching the Ganges Water, and the Koran ought to remain the objective of judicial reform in the country.

That emotion of self-respect and personal responsibility raises the wider problem of education, and the growth of culture among the people. An enlightened society, and truthful public opinion have in the last resort to remain the sanctions against perjury. Illiteracy and ill-directed education are at the back of the evil more than the defect in the machinery of the oath. A belief that a person who forswears himself will lose his property and children will work only so long as his ignorance lasts. Then when he percieves that others who forswore had not been visited by such supernormal punishment, his faith begins to breakaway. The danger of seeking to rest morality on fear cannot be overrated. When the trick fails, a more comprehensive one needs to be designed. Speaking of medieval Christeadom H. C. LEA said, "so little respect was felt for the simple oath that the adjuncts (in that case, sacred relics) came to be looked upon as the essential feature, and the imprecation itself to be divested of binding force without them". (Superstition and Force, p. 29, 1832, Philadelphia Edition.) Crawley cites Narada Smriti (xix, 248) for the Kshatriya's oath by his weapons or his horse. Nearly a century has elapsed since Sir W. H. Sleeman recorded in Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Officials (pub. London, 1844) 11, 116, that the most stringent oath among Hindus was that in which water of the Ganges was held in the hand. It is a commentary on Indian progress that we seem to visualise the materialisation of the spirituality of Ganges-water in the witness-box, ninety years after it was discovered;

during which period the rest of the civilised world was analysing its vapoury claims, under stringent laboratory conditions. The same official records in the same place that another form of oath was by the Hindu touching the legs of a Brahman. But, thanks to time, for priesthood is none so influential today, as oaths to be made on the priestly personal. Else the Brahmins' legs would have stood the danger of scratching.

The psychology of the oath was originally magical, passing into symbolism, as the belief in magic decayed; "when the theistic stage of religion is reached (after animism) and the god subsumes in his own person a multitude of holy lines of force, the oath is brought into connection with the God." (Crawley's Oath Curse and Blessing, Edited by Theodore Besterman p. 50). "God and his equivalents are the supreme and supernatural sanctum of the Judgments of the social organism." (Ibid p 55). The fear of magic power in the primitive animistic mind has the same value as the fear of God. Behind both is the fear of retribution. Whatever the ritual and formula of the oath, or the nature of the object with which the oath is brought into contact, *the practical sense is the conditional punishment for perjury.* (See p. 54, ibid.) "And from the earliest stages the community, in some way or other, has made real the supernatural penalty, either by shamanistic terrorising, or by prosecution for perjury." The old Hindus banished or fined the perjurer. The Hebrew, Greek and Roman Gods swore, as also the Hindu Gods whose *Shapatha* stood for the oath as also the ordeal. (Narada Smriti, I, xviii, 243, et seq.) Kings swore on accession, and the coronation-oath is the development from the medieval Christian theory that emphasised and brought the monarch into responsible contact with the Church. Crawley remarks that by far the most usual medium in the higher religions is to touch, hold, or kiss the sacred books of the faith. The Hindu on the Sanskrit Harivamsha (Ramayana ?), the Muhammadan on the Koran, the Jew on the Hebrew Bible, and the Christian on the New Testament, the Sikh on the Granth, and the Iranian on the Avesta.

But the reaction against the oath is not a novel one. The Essenes argued that those who could not be believed without swearing were self-condemned. (Josephus, Bellum Judaioum, II, viii, 6). Christ taught "Swear not at all," Mathew v. 31) which Christendom later seeks to explain away. The Anabaptists and the Quakers refuse to take oath. The sense of human dignity dawns upon the race when it argues that it should not require any formalism to bring home to the mind the obligation to remain truthful. Crawley's objection to the Quaker argument (p. 59) as neglecting the power of ceremony, which is practically the imperious gesture of the social body, presumes the perversity of human nature requiring to be awakened to the sense of duty on odd occasions, while if let alone in its normal course, as flowing into the sea of falsehood and perjury. That is beginning at the wrong end, as if society were obliged each time to quail in its shoes, and plaintively to remind its members that they are placed in a warning-post so that they may not reveal their real selves.

If Ganges-Water and the Koran are expected to effect 'miraculous changes' none would be loth to support the experiment. But human nature is more static, and the force of gravity is greater than will justify the hope of the advent of any

such miracles, so long as our intellectual levels are not raised. And the road to rise to these levels is not leading in the way of the Ganges or Mecca, stressing further in the distance between the poles apart. It is the spread of a rational harmonic system of education that would tend to impress on the witness the social obligation to tell the truth. As for the existence of anything in the Hindu and Mahammedan religions which prevents such oaths being taken, the Laws of Manu (viii 113, 256) prescribe that the Brahmin do swear by truth, or by his own good deeds. (Also Narada Smriti, xviii, 239). That is a cultural level which is by means unenviable. But as in the case of the Christian injunction never to swear, it is too late in the day either to seek support or look for the vote in religious texts alone. We have to read them in the setting of time and circumstance. The Indian Oaths Act (1873) had been on the statute book for over six decades, during which long time, Hindus and Muhammadans were permitted to make an affirmation (S. 6) except in the rare cases when special oaths were resorted to by the parties under the procedure contained in SS 8 to 10. Ganges water, Ramayana, Koran, putting out light in the temple, are some of the forms which these challenges to human dignity assume. The recent decision of the Privy Council (53 M.L.J. p. 1 P.C.) illustrates the working of the Act. The plaintiff who undertook to accept the denial by the defendant before the deity Lakshmi Narshinghji refused to abide by that act of the defendant. on the ground that for want of invocation the deity was not actually present in the dibba (box) when the defendant gave evidence. Their Lordships repelled the plaintiff's contention holding that the form of the oath was immaterial, and that it has been the wisdom of all nations to administer such oaths *as are agreeable to the nation of the person taking*. In the case of special oath under S. 8, their Lordships hold that neither an invocation, nor oath nor even affirmation is an essential part, that an ordinary oath or affirmation under S 5, need not be added on to the special oath, and that special ritual envisaged in S. 8 is a complete substitute for S. 5, and that the ritual is at least as solemn for the deponent, as an ordinary oath or affirmation to an ordinary witness. Apart from the religious ring in the case, it suggests the subtleties of legal quibbling that might possibly enter into the apparent holy of holies. When Ganges water comes into use one is left wondering whether its specific gravity will have to be standardised. For, after all our regard for religion, we cannot be expected to lose interest in other matters so soon. Rather, we expect that holy objects may sooner lose their hold on us than the desire for culture of dignity.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

WHAT HAS CHRISTIANITY TO SAY TO THE AGNOSTIC?

I propose in this address to deal in a two-fold manner with our subject. I propose in the first place to examine the main points in favour of Agnosticism which have been put forward in a recent number of "Reason", the Journal of the Rationalist Association of India.....the June, 1934, issue. The article in question is by Clarence Darrow and is reprinted from "Real America". Having shown the kind of answer that would be given to these points from the Christian position, I shall then in the second place endeavour to indicate the positive position of Christianity with regard to knowledge of God and of things that we speak of as super-natural and divine.

Let me preface what I have to say by declaring that though I think he is mistaken I have every respect for the sincere Agnostic, with his determination to face reality however hard or forbidding it may appear, with his determination not to seek shelter under the cover of any illusion, however comfortable. Living in a world that slopes away on all sides into mystery, man's deep desire is to be assured that the mystery veils a Reality which is congenial to the human spirit, a Reality which may be expressed by such a phrase as the Holy and Loving God. The human heart instinctively wishes that the words of the Poet might be true: "And from the silence comes a human voice, Saying Oh Heart I made, a heart beats here." But Agnosticism says to us, Stop; there is no such answer. There is nothing but final mystery. There is no answer to man's wistful cry. The prayer seeks an answer that it will never get; the heart seeks a resting place that it will never find. When you push your inquiry far enough, says the Agnostic, you come to an impenetrable darkness. When you have asked your last question, the answer must be: We do not know. The Agnostic may admit the possibility of the existence of God, the possibility of realms beyond this bourne of time and space, but what he says about it is that there is no revelation, no certainty, no real knowledge of these things. Set down strangely on this planet, coming we know not whence, going we know not whether, we are surrounded on all sides by blank mystery, and of God and the things divine of which religion speaks we know and can know nothing at all. Our task now is to see what Christianity has to say to this agnostic attitude of mind.

I. Let us turn then first of all to examine the arguments with which Mr. Clarence Darrow advocated agnosticism in the Journal of the Indian Rationalist Association. I shall deal with the main points by means of a short quotation and a short comment.

(1) "*Agnosticism means the state of not knowing. You might as well ask me why I don't know about life on Mars, as to ask me why I'm agnostic about life in heaven. Of the two, I'd bet on Mars. It can be seen with the naked eye.*"

The principle in this passage seems to be that seeing is believing. But if you do not believe anything except what you can see, what verifies itself immediately to your senses, you will restrict yourself to a very narrow range of things. If you were to trust only to your eyes you certainly would never believe that the earth is round. You believe it is round because

those who are capable of judging in such matters have reported it to be round, and because you feel confident that if you personally entered into the experiences and evidences upon which their judgement is bases, you would be satisfied as to its roundness. Why may not the same sort of attitude be adopted towards the men of genius in the religious realm? They are persons who claim to have experience of God, to have known the presence of a Divine life which gave new significance to all life's problems. Such claims of course have to be carefully scrutinised. But it is surely unscientific to exclude the possibility of a contact with Reality through religion, on the ground that truth must verify itself to your senses.

(2) "*If the Jew, the Christian, the Mohammedan, the Taoist, the Buddhist each chooses to believe things he can't prove, he shouldn't try to make me justify myself for not believing them.*"

There is here, I think, a fundamental misunderstanding. Religion is not a *choosing* to believe things. Religion is the recognition of a fact.....namely, the fact of the human being's relation to a super-natural environment. Different religions express this fact differently, but these differences do not show that the so-called fact is merely illusion nor that agnosticism is the only reasonable attitude. There may be different theories of gravitation, but that would not prove that the conception of gravitation is destitute of real foundation, nor that we should be content to be agnostics regarding it.

(3) "*If you want to believe something you can't prove, you've got to have faith. That's why the religionists have made blind faith their cardinal virtue.*"

But faith is not in its true form irrational. It is rather the out-post of reason, or the "reach that exceeds our grasp." We "move about in worlds not realised." Who are you and who am I who are here this evening talking about these high matters? It is an extraordinary affair, this human life self-conscious, rational, capable of so much, and yet so insecure, surrounded with dangers, beset with problems, and so transient, faced with death. It is so amazing a thing this human life that we have, that there must be some significance behind it all. Christianity says that the meaning has been revealed in Christ as relation to a Divine and Infinite Love; and that this being the true life of ourselves, we recognise the revelation as revelation. We know God as one who has revealed Himself. God can never be known as a thing, as an object. In knowing Him so, He would cease to be God. It is a knowing that is of the personal kind, spirit speaking to spirit. "The swift fire leaps, and instantly they understand." From the nature of the case you cannot get direct, syllogistic proof of the existence of God and of the higher environment to which man is related. But there is the reach if not the grasp of faith, and there are a great many corroborative facts within the sphere of our ordinary life. If a person makes a sincere study of the life and teachings of Jesus, he will hear God's word to him, and there will be fruits of personal and moral and spiritual consequences that will confirm that word as indeed the word of God and of Truth. Fishes come and go in the water but they breathe and therefore live by air. Mankind may be related to the super-natural environment in an analogous way. The task and ideal of religion may be to bring mankind into the right relation to his

supernatural environment. "The Supernatural means the world which manifests more than natural values, the world which has values which stir the sense of the holy and demand to be esteemed as sacred.....Part of what we experience is natural, in the sense that its values are comparative and to be judged as they serve our needs; and part of it is supernatural, in the sense that its values are absolute, to which our needs must submit .....The supreme task has been to discover the true supernatural, and that means to exercise the true sense of the holy and have the right judgment of the sacred. "(Oman: The Natural and the supernatural: pp. 71–72)". Faith then is not to be called "blind faith", as if it were in opposition to reason. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, as St. Paul says. It is the apprehension of the supernatural environment in which our lives are set. Reason is right in demanding proof, but it is wrong if, in the moral and spiritual realm, it demands the same kind of proof as you can apply only to measureable and weighable material things.

(4) "*To make people believe, blindly, the're scared them with hell-fire. Then somebody got the idea of a god of love, and that proved a very appealing idea. So they're been trying ever since to reconcile their god's love with his hell-fire.*',

I confess myself agnostic regarding heaven and hell as material actualities of time and space, but not regarding the facts of which they are symbols. For in our spiritual environment it is quite clear there are facts and possibilities of sin and evil, of remorse and degradation and despair, and of recovery and redemption from these personal disasters. Man needs a Divine forgiveness that can overcome the withering blight of sin and of a guilty conscience. It is an essential aspect of the super-naturalism of Christ that he conveys this emancipation to human spirits.

(5) "*Euclid never threatened anybody with hell-fire for not believing that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. He didn't have to threaten. He proved it.*"

But Euclid was not dealing with the world of moral and spiritual consequences. If you tell a boy that along a certain line of experience he will find strength and peace and happiness, and that along another line of experience he will find weakness and disharmony and misery, your procedure may be interpreted as a threat, for threatening consequences will be implied in any proof you can present. But how else are you to proceed?

(6) "*When science began to show up religion's claim to all knowledge and wisdom and power, people became harder to scare. So the religionists, like good merchandisers, changed their selling tactics. They've sort of given over talking about hell-fire.....Nowadays they try to seduce you into believing, instead of scaring you into the fold. Sunday schools give movies and picnics, and the clergy try to play on your desire to live for ever in a kind of eternal picnic.*"

But this sort of argument does not at all prove that the world of religion is illusion or that it is something about which we can know nothing. Schoolmasters not so long ago used to try to teach arithmetic to boys with the help of the cane; now they try to teach them by

more sympathetic methods. But that does not prove that the object of arithmetical study is an illusion nor that it is unattainable. You can of course say, if you desire to put it in that way, that the teacher used to threaten the boy and that he now seduces him, or you can just say that educotional methods have improved I do not defend the hell-fire method any more than I defend the corporal punishment method. But I do maintain that reference to old and discredited ways of seeking to bring the supernatural environment to the notice of people does not in any way prove that the environment beyond the natural is not a reality nor that it is impossible to apprehend it at all.

(7) "*They say: 'Something within you wants to believe in eternal life. Therefore there must be eternal life!' Now what kind of nonsense is this? Do you get everything you want?..... I never have, and I have never known anyone who did. So why expect pie in the sky by-and-by just because you want it?*"

The matter is unfairly represented when it is particularised in this way. It is rather that there is within man's nature something which is more than physical or animal nature. There is within him something which relates him a spiritual environment. Of course you don't get everything you want; but your wants reveal your nature. Your want for food shows the relation between your body and nourishment. Your want for beauty, for music, for goodness, for love reveal faculties and possibilities in your being. There is surely something significant in the Divine unrest which is in man but which is not in the animal creation. There slumber in man's being deep, creative wants for adventure, for attainment, for fulfilment. for perfection. "God has made us for Himself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Him." The chrysalis and the butterfly would be a much better analogy for the significance of man's spiritual wants and aspirations than this one of "pie in the sky by-and-by."

(8) "*The truth is people find it pathetically easy to believe what they want to believe.*

Do they? What of the proverb: Too good to be true?

(9) "*Another religious trick to make you believe what can't be proved, is to befuddle you by pushing your mind out to the limits of human intelligence. At that point your tormentor pretends that he knows more than you do. He's either deceiving you or himself. He says: Everything must have a cause.....therefore the very universe itself must have been started by some Great First Cause, and that Great Cause is God! But if everything must have a cause what caused the Great Cause?.....Its precisely the same as the old riddle about space..... The question 'what's beyond that.....and beyond that.....and that?' just keeps recurring till your brain reels.....So you don't know where you're at, and that's exactly the position the agnostic takes.*"

It is true that our finite knowledge leads up on every side to mystery. But religion is not an intellectual knowledge of the way to solve the problems of philosophy. Religious knowledge is the apprehension of our non-natural, super-natural environments. Truth in religion is essentially right relation to the super-natural environment. The whole point of religion is that there is another side to Reality than that of the material, spacial, measureable, scientific.....namely, the realm in

which the values of personality-(-goodness truth and beauty) subsist.

(10) " *But the other fellow builds gods and heavens and hells, theologies, law, inquisitions, devils, dogma and personal immortality all upon what he doesn't know!* "

It would be more correct to say that these things are or were the endeavour to express the meaning of that supernatural environment with which man finds himself in touch. They are the symbols of an ineffable fact to which a unique type of existence is related; the symbols of that more than natural realm of spiritual reality with which our existence as human, personal beings connects us. It is true that in the history of man's effort to express the ineffable spiritual reality in which he feels himself to exist, we find these hells and devils and other distortions. But that is not because man has simply been building empty fancies on the dark basis of his mere ignorance. Rather it is like the crude efforts to explain nature, in the days before scientific facts had been accumulated and properly analysed. We do not condemn medical science because it arose out of the dim quagmire of the witch-doctor. We do not say that the object of medical science is just such stuff as dreams are made on, because of eccentrivities or follies that may have marked the history of the science. No, we say that there is an object of medical science and that a true medical science will deal properly and adequately with that object. So with religion. Its object is no mere fabrication of man's day-dreams or night-mares. Its object is God, the subject not the object, the creator not the created; and that supernatural world of absolute values where the holy and the sacred have their dwelling. That world of the supernatural is part of man's whole environment. Truth in religion means putting man into true relation with that environment. Such a religion would satisfy man's moral nature would not be negated by his scientific knowledge, and would have the most desirable fruits in the individual and in the social life of man.

What has religion done for the world? Has it been a blessing or a curse? Such questions are often asked today. The right answer, I think, is that religion has been the great source of progress in the world, because its idea of the holy has enabled the individual to stand against his environment. Only the absolute imperative that comes with the sense of the holy can empower the individual to oppose the pressure of social custom or the clutch of ancient habit. It is religion with its sense of the holy that sets man on the path of freedom from his environing world. It is Jesus with his determination of the holy of the will of perfect love who has given the true freedom. To live in Christ means essentially letting the spiritual or supernatural world manifest its true quality and thereby letting its powers and potencies come into operation which is not only consciously received, but which is consciously directed by the divinely perfect purpose which is indicated by the phrase, the Kingdom of God.

[We are obliged to our contributor for sending us this article. This exchange of views, in a friendly spirit, is very welcome as it affords a means of appreciating the other side of the question. " *Du choc des idees en jaillit la lumiere* " says a French proverb. We shall comment on our contributor's refutation in our next issue. ED. " REASON."]

THE ETERNAL UNANSWERABLE "WHY"?
Or
A PLEA FOR RATIONAL THINKING

Philosophers and metaphysicians, savants and sages, religionists and theosophists and others of that ilk and enquiring flair have all, from early times laboured hard at the solution of certain problems that the spectacle of the universe about them has invariably given rise to and is still presenting to the progressive mind of man. The search for complete knowledge and control of forces and things that constitute the universe in so many shapes and forms has imposed a hard task on those who have sought for them to a certain extent within the limits of their various spans of life. The thirst for knowledge of things and men never ceases with the pioneers; it engenders a further thirst for the next conquest and acquisition; as soon as the next conquest is made and consolidated, a fresh effort is made at the next possible extension and soon. Thus is the truth-seeker's efforts at discovering more and more facts and collecting experiences from all conceivable contacts with the forces of nature and their operations get extended to wider and wider ranges, where he can meditate and satiate himself, according to his education, conviction and belief. This is how truth is born into the world out of the unceasing labour of the philosopher and the scientist. And the common run of mankind knows as much about these patient toils as we, of the educated class, know about the man in the moon. A very big gulf is yawning between, and the bridging of this gulf is ever being attempted and never successfully achieved to a seeker's complete satisfaction. I would, if permitted, define "seeker" as one who refuses to accept as final any theory that may have been propounded for the time being to get over a particular difficulty blocking the path to further advance in the matter of investigation and research.

To illustrate—when I was a young student studying physics in the Matric class, my science teacher taught me the truth about the constitution of matter and lectured me pompously on the atomic structure of it and the molecules that are built out of the atoms. Nothing was either taught or shewn to me then about the existence and behaviour of what are now called "electrons" and "protons" and so forth, and I see that the great scientist Sir Oliver Lodge has opened up a new vista of tremendous possibilities for truth-hunters to explore and ransack. I expect that the sum-total of the effects of Oliver's new theories and doctrines anent the ultimate nature and composition of what we generally call, for want of a better term, "matter" on the scientific imagination of thinkers will quite possibly be of such a nature as to revolutionise and upset many of the current theories and doctrines, starting an entirely new and refreshing game for the high-brows of science and philosophy to indulge in as long as possible without losing themselves and their pet theories prematurely.

(The discovery of electrons and protons has in no way upset the atomic theory. It has only extended it. Chemists still work quite successfully on the atomic theory.

Ed. Reason.)

So the writer's world differs, and differs vastly from the world that Sir Oliver has projected forth from his magic brain. He is consequently capable of seeing (with his inner eye) and enjoying things that are denied to me and that can be revealed only to those who forge ahead, battering down every successive "why" before coming up against the dead wall screening the unknown. Every "why" must somewhere have a "because", although that "because" may not be within easy reach or any reach at all. This obstinate "why" is ever after the "cause" that brings out the "why", which is no other than the effect or phenomenon that confronts us all at every turn in our journey through life. A first-rate philosopher's work is no more than a very elaborate and fine-spun tissue or fabric of so many "why's" and "because's" right through. In other words, so many shrewd queries and answers regarding the phenomena that strike the human sense at all times. This eternal "why" that rises almost instinctively in the breast of every thinking man, I mean deeply thinking man, is a sure promise of future intellectual development and always tends to ensure its sanity and solidarity, and above all honesty, which last characterstic is, unhappily, very rare amongst certain orthodox cranks and die-hards. The tendency to question and to formulate proper queries is ever there in the miad of man in far more cases than we are allowed to know; but it gets suppressed or repressed under the baneful influence of empty conventions and emptier outward profession of faith, inspiration and intuition and so forth. The mind of a born philosopher may be likened to a storm-tossed ship that is seeking for a restful heaven amidst the tempestuous tumults and noises of roaring tides that seem bent upon overwhelming and engulfing all that come their way. The affairs and movements and activities of our work-a-day world are similar to the turbulent ocean and its indignant waves, amidst which a philosopher is to keep himself intact and serene he cannot pursue his evasive "why" and receding "because" and arrive at any achievement of comparative peace and repose of intellect. I say "comparative" advisedly, because the conquest of absolute peace and repose in a world that is still imperfect and that seems to be getting less and less so under the shaping influence of evolution is an impossibility and may be only a pious wish for all time. After all, there is not much difference between a philosopher and an ordinary man in the street, save for the fact that the former has only advanced a few steps in his line of investigation and enquiry into the ultimate truth of things and has the results (knowledge) of his labours in an ORGANISED form, readily available and accessible without much fumbling and groping, whereas the latter has that knowledge resulting from various spells of experience of actual life as lived by humanity in its daily cycles in a disconnected and incoherrert condition embedded here and there in his brain cells, as the psychologist says. Science is said rightly to be organised common sense; and in a like manner philosophy may be said to be the distilled essense of all available knowledge that mankiad has been able to seize upon and appropriate to its manifold uses. One gentleman

versed in Hindu "sacred" lore and literature had occasion to stay with me for a day or two in my house a few years back, and he had a mission of teaching the truths of "Bhagvad Gita" to those of the public who may care to listen to and drink in what he had to say about the sublime truths concealed in the said "Gita". A chosen few of the English-educated and philosophically-inclined among us were one day treated by him to a solemn discourse on "Creation" and "Re-incarnations" as functions of God. The Almighty Governor of the Universe. I had undertaken to organise some meetings for the "Pandit" (as a learned man is called in India) and get up also a sort of subscription list in aid of the holy mission he had had at heart. He went on spinning the thread of sacrosanct discourse finer and finer till I feared much it would snap suddenly somewhere hopelessly. Knowing that the thread would snap very soon, probably leaving most of us, in an uncomfortable and bewildered state of mind, the learned "Pandit" wheeled round to some other allied theme with an air of having made and carried his vital points on the subject he touched upon first. The lecture had then to come to an abrupt termination and questions were invited from the audience as to any doubts they may have had in the explanations and expositions of divine truths given by the lecturer. A few questions were hurled by a friend of mine at the aged but courageous "Pandit" and the latter tactfully faced them and answered them in a way that somewhat pleased the questioner and silenced him for the time being. But I, having an inconvenient tendency to fire a volley of equally inconvenient questions one after another at those persons who count upon their numerous dogmas and positive assertions for success against timid opponents, wished to try the 'pandit' and see how far the bubble of his reputed learning could withstand any intelligent attempt at pricking it. The word "creation" caught my fancy and I wanted to learn something about the orthodox view of this great problem, having read and understood a little about the way the universe has been brought into being by evolutionary forces still at work at the back of the kaleidoscope of cosmic and development. I therefore straightway demanded to know from him what he actually meant by 'creation'. He explained that, similar to the building of a house by an architect assisted by his masons, carpenters and others, the universe we see now in such form and manifestation has been moulded and chiselled with all the necessary features about it and shot forth into space by the Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient Being we call "GOD". My mind revolted at once against this view the "birth" of the universe when there had been no man or 'pandit' to make any reliable observations and record them faithfully. I hid carefully my feelings at the time and showed a somewhat satisfied front in order to egg him on to further tooth some morsels of divine philosophy. He next explained, encouraged by my silent approval and mute applause as it appeared to him, the division and classification of plants and animals and men into so many separate air-tight compartments and their various mental, physical and other equipments according to future requirements (here is "Omniscience"). The 'pandit' did not care, nor did he seem to have taken any intelligent note of the classifications attempted and fixed by great modern philosopher-

scientists like Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley and others of that gigantic group. Being unable to contain and restrain myself any longer, I asked him point-blank what his god had been doing before he produced the universe just as a woman brings forth a child from inside her body. I immediately followed this up with yet another "What did his god create the universe out of?" The 'pandit' endeavoured to explain away by replying that god made the universe and its contents out of his own body, just as a spider spins and weaves its circular web from out of the substance in its own body. This irresistibly led to the further question as to the crying or burning need or necessity to produce a universe so self-sacrificingly at such a tremendous expense of divine matter or substance. Could this have been any divine freak or diabolical prank to fashion and create and project into limitless space a universe in embryo perhaps out of something that can only be described, in the limitations of our language and vocabulary, as an unimaginable and terrific "VOID"? Though this sort of cogent speculation is not of any immediate and practical interest to us in the art of daily living, this is how a steady, sustained and systematic discussion of philosophical themes carries one onward and pitchforks him in some very inconvenient corner ultimately. This is how even the best of the best informed men in scientific and philosophic lore get hedged in on all sides by a series of stubborn "why's", one behind the other, and how they ingloriously find themselves stick up in a hopeless mire of abysmal ignorance of things and ultimate verities, an ignorance that is at once the measure of what they have already conquered in the realm of truth and of what is yet to be chased and won in time to come, if the chasing and winning are still possible and permissible under their sorry limitations which seem to tie them up mercilessly in a very uncomfortable knot.

It is well to beware of those mystics and other divines who profess, in season and out of season, to have had a direct communion and converse with their gods and to have won from them certain precious secrets for a cool and calculated distribution amongst all those who may have been groping in the dark in search of them (those secrets, the hidden keys to eternal or unlimited happiness) according to divine orders that are said to accompany such very very rare gifts from THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS, THE ABSOLUTE AND SELF-LUMINOUS ONE who gets reduced and cut down, for obscure reasons, to a numberless inferior shapes and forms according to a certain set of laws we know not much of. These types of priests, pandits, mystics and recluses and anchorites are not always to be credited with through and transparent veracity and honesty. Most of their stories are to be discounted and discredited largely as the unconscious effervescence of some pent-up feelings which may or may not have been properly grounded on any unimpeachable ratiocinations.

I do not easily believe in them, these mystic and mysterious men of vision or vanity, and have always to take their incomprehensible statements with a very large grain of salt in order to put myself on my guard and avoid being fooled. Sometimes, it turns out that the profession of these men of "spiritual might" does never tally and coincide with their daily practice; they are not ashamed to declare one thing from the house-tops

and to observe in their own daily practical lives another thing that is diametrically opposed to their house-top sermon. Often they take shelter in their supposed superhuman achievements which are said to be some inexplicable secrets of indescribable bliss withheld from the possession of ninety-nine per cent of the human race, but strangely and darkly vouchsafed to their handful of select souls. Again, there is something, I find, in their mode of living, some shabby and miserable and undeserved suffering which cannot be reconciled with the reality of their godly attainments, if any there actually were. I have seen many of such god-intoxicated people suffering almost all the disabilities and weaknesses and groaning under a load of ordinary human inclinations and vagaries that are generally found in the lives of men labelled "ordinary." "Extraordinary" folk having and exhibiting in practice most, if not all, of the failings of "ordinary" people, how does this sound, how does it get a applauded by most of the public as something to be adored?

This is one of the symptoms of a diseased lay mind, a symptom that dies hard. Tradition and convention cut a special groove of their own uninstructed and docile mind, and the groove unhappily tends tenaciously to persist, and in some cases to widen and deepen itself in spite of attempts at wiping it off through rational teachings rightly imparted. Habit, as in other things, becomes second nature and acquires an incredibly tremendous power that seems almost irresistible and threatens the formation of any sane ideas in the mass mind. The mass mind, it is a very curious psychological fact, is always swayed by the mystic power of a priest or pundit. This weakness of the average lay mind, which sees a world of pleasure, comfort and ease in following the dictates of another supposedly superior man, gets unfortunately exploited to the utmost, and all earthly advantage is taken of this common failing in the mass mind to launch out movements of thought and to create new creeds. Large bodies of people become unconsciously swallowed up in this huge vortex and the problem of an unending series of "why's" and "wherefore's" never occurs to them. The philosophy of reason is anathema to them; they dislike it.

(To be continued.)

R. NATESA AIYAR.

FREETHOUGHT IN RUSSIA

The new Russian regime abolished to some extent religious ceremonies introducing in the masses a new education and a new scope of life. All religions passed to the same level of equality, and religious *education* is not given to the young until 18. This is, I think, the only manner to avoid mental atrophy caused by religious preaching largely given to children in almost every country in the world. And the authorities seem to give less importance to it without knowing that it is an obstacle to the intellectual advancement of a country.

The priestcraft has had for the first time in the world history a wonderful

lesson from the Soviet Government. They have been robbed of all temporal powers and their religious action is confined to a very limited group of persons. Freethinking is unanimously supported for it freed the proletariat from the old Christian creeds which were the main causes of their social oppression. It lifted them to a situation of clear understanding, to a situation which gives them work and food and indicates them the path the men must follow to receive his reward in this world and not in the next. This reward is a "red" house, a little farm and a quota of chickens. Russians do not believe in Mothers of Mercy who will shelter them in the life to come. Though there subsist some churches in Russia they are kept as models of fine works of architecture which may cause no harm to the Nation. Christianity is no longer the predominant religion of the State as in other countries where it is used as a political weapon. Freethought is "an important part of every curriculum from grade school up." Religion is attacked fiercely in all its forms, but not stupidily. The newspaper and the theatre, the poster and the radio, are the means by which anti-religious propoganda is carried. But above all is education, for it can mould the character of the young as to make them active and intelligent men ready to serve the Nation.

The Russian Government, contrary to others, is spreading among the masses anti-religious feelings by means of education which is obligatory and is given free to all. Education, as the Russians think, can liberate one from all religious bigotries. The Communist Party make it a law to be an atheist before entering its ranks for it is already known that it is impossible to hold any responsible office in any political party when one is pressed by religious beliefs and dogmas. To quote Mr. Walter Lippmann: "The anti-religious attitude of the State is important because it attacks not freedom of belief (which is permitted) but in fact belief itself." (See *Fortune*, March 1932.)

If freethought were to be maintained in other countries with the same tolerant disposition as in Russia, our campaign would have gone through with greater success. But unfortunately religious ignorance and intolerance still prevail in most countries. Though our advance in crushing religious ideas is very slow compared with the mighty task we have to carry out, we must not be discouraged of our future success if we simply turn to be more earnest diffenders of the opinions we hold. We must deplore the nations that do not follow the example of Soviet Russia as far as religion is concerned.

What I have written are *facts* and it rests with the others to support is or not. I hope, however, that all the nations will, by and by, convince themselves of their great mistake not to allow freethought to be the first and foremost principle of education.

R. S. FONTES.

[While we agree that it is the duty of a State not to allow the minds of the young to be early polluted by religious teaching, we, by no means, believe it is right to persecute any body for his belief or opinion not even in the interest of Free thought. We most not be intolerant ourselves.—ED. REASON.]



REASON

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THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the masses of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

All the speakers at the Rationalist Press Association dinner held at the Trocadero Restaurant, London, in May last, made references to the serious menace to liberty, not only of individuals, but also the liberty of thought in Europe. Lord Snell of Plumstead, C.B.E., the Chairman, in urging the Association to be still more active and vigilant said:—"New forces of reaction are raising their heads in different parts of the world. We are now faced with revolutions from the Right rather than from the Left; revolutions which mean, if they are successful, the suppression of much that this Association has stood for.

It is our duty, therefore, to continue to assert and to glorify the dignity of reason and of clear thinking, and to supply steady minds for the needs of the troubled world."

Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe, who was once the editor of the *Statesman* in Calcutta said:- "As I look over this company I see the faces of many who were present at the Annual Dinner exactly twenty years ago, ...that occasion was marked by a brilliant address from Prof. Gilbert Murray on Revolt against Reason. The revolt against reason in those days was something that gave most of us a good deal of concern. We saw evidences of a manifold rebellion against the spirit of toleration and discussion in which the elders among us had been brought up. We saw, as we then thought, a tide of unreason in England; a recovery of superstition in religon and morals of irrationality in artistic expression and in public life. But as we throw our minds back we should all agree that the then evidences of a movement against reason were the merest trickle compared with the rising ocean of menace which is the overwhelming fact of our world to-day."

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Mr. Louis Golding, the famous novelist, Mr. J. P. Gilmour and Dr. C. E. M. Joad spoke in the same strain. The last named in a very remarkable speech said: "You have heard from previous speakers of the danger to liberty to day. I do not think that they have exaggerated that danger one iota." He particularly referred to the forces of reaction which are gathering strength in England to day. "They are in effect," he says, "trying to pass a Sedition Bill into law which if it comes into force, and if, further, the Bill proves, as it well may, a straw to show which way the wind is blowing——a wind which may one day blow a reactionary Government into power——then not only will our Press, Our Rationalist Press, be suppressed, but the careers of Our Chairman and men like him, men who have stood for liberty and democracy and have proved their work because of liberty and democracy, will be ruled out of court and made impossible in our society."

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Do liberal minded people seriously realize that here, in India also, the forces of reaction against individual liberty, liberty of thought and opinion may be one day set to work in earnest? The attempt to prosecute us in January last was indeed a move in that direction. Had the Government succeeded in having us convicted on that ridiculous charge, our Association would have, by this time, ceased to exist. It was these forces of reaction which urged the Government to prevent us from expressing honest opinion on irrational customs and beliefs here. As it is now, no one in India can freely criticize certain religious practices and the character of certain founders of religion. Immediately this is known, hundreds of fanatics will organize meetings of protest and denunciation and will urge the Government to suppress this or that and to punish this or that one.

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In Canada and the Irish Free State where Roman Catholicism reigns supreme, people who dare criticize the religion and even its priests are punished. No book which criticizes that religion is allowed to enter those countries. In

land, as in Tennessee in America, many scientific books are now barred from the country. In Italy, no one dare express an opinion to which a Roman Catholic priest may take an exception, and the law there compels every one to send his children to Roman Catholic schools for education. In Germany, any one who contradicts Hitler may do so at the risk of his life. In Austria, as we pointed out some time ago, Roman Catholicism is triumphant. In Spain they made the mistake of allowing women to vote with the result that the priests soon won them round to make things unpleasant for the Republic. Even in France the priests are trying hard to get a footing again. There is no doubt that there is a serious set back in the world and no one knows what may happen until civilization takes its forward course again

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One of the reasons why the forces of reaction in Europe are now so powerful and triumphant is that the masses in such countries as Germany, Belgium, Austria, Italy, France and even England are an illiterate and ignorant lot. Millions of people who form the multitude there received little or no education during the war and the years that followed it. Children between the ages of ten and fifteen during that time found their education seriously interfered with, and they grew up practically without any. A French Journal calls them "Les Goggos" and attributes all the troubles in Europe to them. They are, in effect, at the mercy of crafty leaders, priests, autocrats, dictators and tyrants. Small wonder that medievalism is again prevailing in Europe and that the Churches are triumphant.

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It was announced recently that the Pope is sending Cardinal Pacelli to Buenos Aires to stem the "hysterical cults" of the Madonna in Latin American countries. Two Italian convents have recently been suppressed owing to these morbid devotions. Several Spanish books dealing with similar devotions have been placed on the *Index Expurgatorius.*

Things must be bad indeed in the Church of Rome for the Pope to be compelled to take these drastic measure. This is the second time that the present Pope has found it necessary to interfere in these matters.

But why take such measures in the Latin American countries alone? While it is true that the Portuguese and the Spaniards and their descendants are incurably superstitious, the Pope, if he is in earnest, should stop those hysterical cults in more places than in Latin American countries. His own Italy, for instance. Not only the cult of the Madonna, but those of the Little Flower of Jesus, The Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lourdes, St Rita, St. Philomena, and many other male and female saints have become a feature of the Church of Rome. Zealous priests and nuns are everywhere encouraging these devotions in a manner unknown before. The Pope is perhaps unaware that here, in India, our emotional and sentimental Indians are even more hysterical over these cults than the descendants of the Portuguese and Spaniards in South America. These cults, indeed, appeal strongly to the temperament the hereditary instincts of the Indian converts to Catholicism.

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Mariolatry, by which name the idolatrous worship of the Virgin is known,

began early in the Catholic Church. The worship of Diana in Rome, that of Artemis in Greece and Isis with the infant Horus in Egypt proved a stumbling block to the new Church in those countries. Mariolatry started in Egypt where the cult of Isis was too strong for Christianity. It did not take the Church long to recognize that it would be a wise and good policy to adopt the cult of Isis under the name of Mary. It is no doubt true that every where Catholicism had to adopt the prevailing pagan customs and beliefs before it could be firmly established. Even Christmas is a pagan festival. The cult of Mary is Catholicism itself.

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A Young Mahomedan Rationalist, a member of our Association, brought us a tract: "Does God Exist" issued by the Jamiat Shubhan—Al—Muslimeen, Bombay, with the request that we should comment on it. After perusing it, we do not think that it is worth while doing so. It is written by an ignoramus who advances some grotesque views as proofs to the existence of God. One is always glad to discuss this question with serious and competent people whose views are worth considering, but not the lucubration of any silly individual who fancies himself competent enough to deal with a subject that learned men find difficult to tackle. The tract should prove very interesting to Pydownee Mussulmans for whom, indeed, it is intended.

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The Revd. "Dick" Sheppard, unlike many professional Churchmen, does not believe that many side attractions have captured Youth and prevented it from attending the Church. He thinks that Youth has become disgusted with Christianity on account of fanatics. He believes that these fanatics have done a good deal of harm to Christianity. Once a brain has been gangrened by fanaticisms" says the Revd. "Dick" Sheppard, "there is no cure, but the greater tragedy still lies in the fact than even if that brain is calling from the side of the Angels the response will be negligible and its quality poor." There is a large number of people old and young who always flock to hear a notorious fanatic preacher speak here. According to the Revd. Shepperd though the quantity is large the quality of such people who follow this preacher must be poor. We have always thought so. But this is India and not Europe, the Youth of which the Revd. Dick Shepperd is probably referring to.

All the same, the Revd. "Dick" Sheppard must be very confident and optimistic to believe that his own skill in addressing this modern Skeptic Youth should be successful in capturing it. He believes he will soon succeed in making a real revival of Christianity. Why a revival of Christianity? A thing that is living and strong, as we are always told Christianity is, does not require any revival. It is a dying creed that requires revival.

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It is stated that recently Sir Samual Brighouse, the Lancashire Coroner, severely denounced Christian Science practitioners when summing up at an inquest at Southport. It would appear that one Honnor, a staunch believer in Christian Science, refused to permit a well qualified surgeon being called to attend him after he had met with a

serious accident in which he fractured a limb. He called instead a Miss Anna Street Marsh, a Christian Science practitioner, who prayed for his recovery without any treatment till he was dead. The Coroner said. "It makes me sad and depressed to think that many of my fellow creatures are so demented and so silly or foolish as to think if you are suffering from a broken leg some one can pray to God and cure it." Why feel sad over it; there are millions of such demented people in the world? Otherwise how could so many charlatans thrive? The Bible is wholly responsible for this belief.

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Why blame the Christian Scientists only. Are not all believers in stupid miracles equally demented? What about those hopelessly incurable people who persist in going to holy shrines with the hope of being miraculously cured? The more they are disappointed, the more they are made to believe that stronger faith and perseverance will at last move heaven. Any failure is attributed to the unworthy state of the applicant, himself and not to the deafness of heaven. Take the case of Lourdes. Though Emile Zola wrote his "Lourdes" in the form of a novel, it is nonetheless true that he gives a faithful description of what he saw at that famous place of pilgrimage in 1894. While the scene there would disgust any sane person, there are thousands who are greatly edified when they witness all the extraordinary devotions that take place there and the sight of hundreds of miserable wretches who imagine that the impossible is going to happen in their favour simply because they have faith in some imaginary deity. We hear a good deal of the power of the mind over the body which is no doubt true. All the reasonable doubts about cures at holy shrines would cease if an undoubted miracle could really happen at those places, for instance, if an amputated leg could be restored or a destroyed eye made sound again. We are, of course, confident that such an impossible thing will never occur at any shrine however holy it may be. Believers never think of this.

COMMENT ON A CHRISTIAN'S ANSWER TO DARROW.

In our last issue we published an article:—"What has Christianity to say to the Agnostic?" which we believe, was the subject of a lecture delivered in July last by the Revd James Kellock M. A. B. D., at a Y, M. C. A. Hall in Bombay, and sent to us for publication. The lecture was an attempt to refute Mr. Clarence Darrow's article: "Agnosticism" published in "Reason" in June last. We gladly published the same to give an idea of the line of argument used by a certain type of Christian in justification of their beliefs when the same are questioned by Freethinkers.

Those of our readers who are already familiar with such Christian viewpoint must have noticed that it is mostly made by certain Christians who claim to be advanced, liberal and sympathetic towards those who cannot accept the teaching of Christianity. As they differ from the old type (especially the Fundamentalist and the Roman Catholic) in

that they are not bound to accept literally what is written in the Bible, they can hardly claim to speak in the name of Christianity as does our contributor. As a matter of fact, they accept in that book what suits them and reject what to them, appears absurd and improbable. Our contributor, for instance, has no hesitation in rejecting the popular, albeit the orthodox belief about Heaven and Hell and confesses that in this respect he is, himself, an Agnostic! Yet, it does not seem to strike him that Christ was positive on the question of Hell, and according to him it was a place of torment, full of fire, in which the damned, especially unbelievers, would suffer ever lastingly. The justification of our contributor to remain a Christian appears to be based on the following considerations:—1. Though not tied down by dogmas, he is confident that the Christian mysticism is the correct attitude to assume in this life which, according to him, is full of mystery and illusion.

2. That there is a "Reality" at the back of things which he believes to be a Loving and Holy God, and it is the purpose of human existence to search for that "Reality" and be in communion with it.

3. That, though there may be no evidence apprehended by our senses, and no demonstrable proof of its existence, certain individuals, especially religious people, experience within themselves this communion which they assert to be real.

4. That without this communion one cannot be happy and life becomes meaningless.

5. That it is unscientific to question the value of this "religious experience," and unbelievers must adopt a reverential attitude before this claim.

6. That the knowledge of that "Reality," otherwise known as a Loving and Holy God, has been also revealed to man by Jesus Christ who was himself that "Reality."

7. That there is a supernatural world which is part of man's whole environment.

8. That the object of religion is to put man in relation to that environment. In doing this, it is affirmed, religion is of the utmost spiritual value and it satisfies man's moral nature.

9. That the religious instinct is inborn in man, and the existence of many religions is a proof that it is a natural yearning in man to be in communion with that "Reality," which reigns in the Supernatural world.

10. That religion has been the great source of progress in the world; that it has set man free and we owe all our happiness to it.

When an Agnostic like Mr. Clarence Darrow, who, one presumes, has given careful attention to all these preposterous claims, challenges all these as *a priori* assumptions which the progress of knowledge has rendered untenable, a believer, like our contributor, whisks round and defies reason and evidence in the name of intuition, inner-light, spiritual perception or experience, illative sense, logic of heart and other transcendental entities, and assures the uninformed that knowledge has not lifted the veil of mystery which he alleges surrounds us everywhere. Once a person takes this attitude, it is a waste of time to argue

with him. However, let us see how our contributor refutes the Agnostic's contention that all this is pure illusion and imagination.

It will be seen that all his arguments which probably he imagines are very crushing, are based on the *a priori* assumption that there is a "Reality" which must be searched for; that there is a supernatural world; that there is a religious instinct in man and there are spiritual verities which must be understood as taught by religion.

When the Agnostic asserts that we know nothing of a supernatural world, that our experience shows everything to be perfectly natural, and that deeper knowledge proves that the same naturalness prevails all over the Universe, the believer in the supernatural insists that *there is* mystery and illusion all over. He asserts that more things exist than we are aware of, and though he admits many of them may remain beyond our ken forever, they are, however, clearly apprehended by the spiritual minded. Well, we are frankly not interested in mysteries and illusions; we do not feel unhappy and uncomfortable on account of them. There are enough of realities in this world to interest us, and we can safely leave mysteries to mystics and visionaries. Our contributor is very scornful about those who assert that one must not believe anything that cannot be seen or proved. He wonders why we believe that th Earth is round, since to our senses it appears flat. Why, he asks, do we trust the assurance of competent authorities on the subject? He naively thinks that in the same manner we ought to trust certain religious teachers who claim that they know all about the supernatural world and are even in communion with that Reality, otherwise known as a Loving and Holy God.

Our contributor is certainly not ingenious in drawing such an analogy. We know that it is a favourite argument of the Jesuit when he lectures to a class of semi-educated people. It however, hardly does credit to a learned lecturer. Now, the fact is that we can reasonably believe anything that reliable authorities teach us provided it is believable, possible and probable for, if needs be, it can be verified to one's satisfaction. Can any one verify the statement of any person, however sincere, who claims to be in communion with God? When a person tells us that he feels bilious, we can accept this as perfectly possible and probable. When he tells us that an inner light enables him to perceive the spiritual, we are permitted to suspect that something must be wrong with his temperament. Believers, like our contributor, are very scornful about, what they call, the limitation of human knowledge. They are always alluding to things which, they allege, are beyond our grasp, but which Faith alone can make us apprehend. They are fond of assuring us, with all the gravity they can command, that "we move about in worlds not realized." This, indeed, is the stock in trade of the African witch doctor when he desires to impress his community with the awe of the unknown. Our contributor, too, was very, very solemn about these alleged mysteries and dangers when he assured his Y. M. C. A. audience that only Faith can save and reassure us. Not all kind of faiths: but faith in its true form which alone is not irrational. (Every religionist believes that his own particular faith is the true one). Faith, he says, "is the out-post of reason, or the 'reach that

exceeds our grasp.'" "We 'move about in worlds not realized.'" "Who are you and who am I" he exclaimed, "who are here this evening talking about these high matters?" "It is an extraordinary affair, this human life self-consciousness, rational, capable of so much, and yet so insecure, surrounded with dangers, beset with problems, and so transient face with death. It is so amazing a thing this human life we have, that there must be some significance behind it all."

These words, of course, must have sounded awfully impressive in a Y. M. C. A. Hall. It must have made the flesh of the timid, simple minded folk present there creep that evening to be told that we are surrounded with dangers which only religion can make us avoid. Yes; they must have been terribly impressive those words. "These must be some significance behind it all." That's the probability said to have been made into a certainty by Christian revelations, which inspires all these beliefs. It was born of the egotism of man—the conceit in him that his life is too precious to be annihilated in the end like the rest of creation. No; he cannot for a moment admit that all will end with death. He yearns to live eternally, if not in this world, in another. The dread of death, of the unknown, has created all his terrors. It originated with our savage ancestors and is always stronger where knowledge is absent. We have wrested a good many of Nature's secrets which use to terrify our ancestors. Their comfort was the witch doctor—the ancestors of the priest and the parson—whom they believed was in familiar touch with the spirits who caused all the trouble. We, who no longer stand in terror before such phenomena like eclipses, comets, earthquakes, thunder and lightning, are no longer in need of priests and parsons to intercede Heaven to protect from these phenomena. Is there any wonder that these priests and parsons must be forever cursing modern knowledge for the neglect they now experience, and be sadly asking:— *Ou' sont les neiges d'antan?* What else can they do but to warn credulous folk that dangers and mysteries still beset their path, and that they would perish, or would feel miserable if priests to and parsons do not comfort them?

It is what the religionist believes to be mysterious—the unknowable, the fear of death, and the riddle of existence which inspire his awe and creates his "religion." It was the Earl of Beaconsfield, we believe, who once said that where our knowledge ends our religion begins. A truer word was never spoken. There is no doubt many gaps in our knowledge, and it is only natural that priests and parsons should live in them. These gaps are their natural habitation, and their dread of science is that it dislodges them from these.

Our contributor, therefore, like all true religionists, wonders that any thoughtful and logical person should reject all these childish beliefs in the supernatural as illusory. He points to the existence of many creeds as a proof that religion is not illusory. When religion is based on such illusory beliefs it matters not whether it is that of the Christian, the Jew, the Parsee, the Hindu the Mahomedan or the Bhuddhist. All of them can be traced to the same fundamental error, namely:— the attempt to explain the phenomena of cause and effect and the belief that they are caused by mysterious agencies which must be propitiated.

Our contributor talks very glibly about faith being a transcendental gift. He is, of course, speaking of the Christian faith, and that, too, of the particular brand of Christianity to which he belongs. He would, probably, consider the faith of a Hindu in Vishnu or Shiva, or that of a Mahomedan in Mahomed as a prophet of God to be purely erroneous. All his grand talk on the subject is pure mystical jargon—a wealth of word-spinning and nothing more.

To imagine that a Loving and Holy God exists, and that he takes special care of the Christians may be a comforting belief for any one who cares to believe this. (In reality the Christian, whatever he may say to the contrary, is afraid of his God. In his heart of hearts he believes him to be a sky tyrant who is ever ready to consign him to Hell or otherwise punish him for the slightest transgression.) To obviate this, he is obliged to flatter and praise him; call him holy and just; loving and forgiving: a father and a protector. To believe that a loving and good god exists, one must blink at the solid fact that this world is full of evil and cruelty, not of the creation of man. Nature acts blindly and capriciously. It is red in tooth and claw because it is the natural condition of existence. Nature cares not for the individual. If the righteous transgresses its laws, even through sheer ignorance, it will punish him exactly as it would the wicked. Nature has operated in the same manner for thousands million of years before man appeared on the scene. It is evident that Nature does not operate for the benefit of man, as the religionist foolishly believes. Religionists always shirk the question whether an Omnipotent and Omniscient God is also the author of evil. All their quibbling to the contrary cannot satisfy reason on this point.

Our contributor has a lot to say about the advantages of religions. He would have us believe that the existence of so many religions is a sure proof that the religious instinct is inborn in man. To begin with, this is not a fact, Man learns about his religion as he would learn any other thing. It is always drummed into him from early childhood. To talk about Jesus Christ having given us a revelation about the spiritual world, God, and the rest is only begging the question. Religion is not the guardian of morality, though it professes to teach it. Man has come by his moral sense through hard experience and the laws of necessity. No God ever gave a moral code to man.

Our contributor finally, in a fire work display, assures us that religion has been a source of progress in the world; that it has set man free and has enabled him to stand against his environment! Is it possible for any well-informed person to make such an audacious claim for religion? What religion one may ask him, has been a great source of progress in the world? Is it the Christian religion? Our contributor, surely, cannot be so ignorant as not to know that the Christian religion has been a great bar to progress, to civilization, to the welfare of mankind from its very inception. Following faithfully the teaching of its Founder that this world was of no consequence, (Christ taught that the Kingdom of God was at hand and that this world was going to be ended soon) the Church despised profane knowledge, and strenously opposed it. It plunged Europe into darkness and superstition which lasted for centuries. The civilization of Greece

and Rome disappeared under its sway. Christianity opposed bitterly all the Sciences ; to name but a few :—Chemistry, Astronomy, Geology, Biology, Geography, Medicine, Economics and Usury. It spread ignorance, intolerance, bigotry, misery far and wide. It suppressd all thoughts that contradicted its teaching; persecuted savagely and compelled belief. It introduced the infamous Inquisition which lasted five centuries. It waged ruthlessly the most bloody wars known in history and caused confusion and discord among nations. Can our contributor deny this? How, then, can such an institution be called a great source of progress in the world ? Were it not for Science that has enlightened and civilized us we should surely be still in the jungle of religion and under the sway of ignorant priests like the Roman Catholics are now. Our contributor was assuredly quite safe when he talked all this balderdash before a Y. M. C. A. audience. Who was there to contradict him? It, however, requires a good deal of boldness on his part to try and argue these things with Freethinkers.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE SCOPE OF RATIONALISM.

A cursory survey of the History of Rationalism shows that it has been, from the beginning of the movement, directed against Theism, based on Revelation, or divine instinct in man. There has been no satisfactory account given in any Scriptures of the West or the East, as to the reliability of the medium through which God has revealed Himself and His religious doctrines to Mankind in any age. The writers of the religious texts said to have been revealed, exercised their imagination to the extent possible, and laid down several absurd theories and tenets, which, for several centuries, were taken as true in the respective localities, by the ignorant and illiterate people, and innumerable superstitious habits and customs thus came into vogue. Gradually, as some people advanced in education and in powers of reasoning, doubts began to be entertained as to the truth and utility of the teachings recorded in the Scriptures, and their subsequent interpolations, teeming with contradictions and absurdities. The faith in the people, in general, grew very strong because of the observance of the rituals enjoined on them, for hundreds of generations, with the result that they were all rooted to the very fibre of their mental constitution ; and they could not tolerate any opposition. Rational thinkers found it very dangerous to interfere with the trend of beliefs and thoughts, prevailing among the people.

In England, Herbert of Cherbury (1581-1648) tried to shake the foundation of irrational faith in the people, and laid down that reason must form, in itself, the capacity for all truths, religious and moral, and no Revelation, so-called, should be accepted unless it harmonises with rational knowledge. Johann Solemn Sembler (1725-91) applied Spiritual teachings to the measure of virtue and happiness produced. Teller, Eberhard, and Stembart (1734-1809) reduced Christianity to popularisation of utilita-

rian morals. Wolff distinguishd between 'contingent truths of fact' and 'necessary truths of reason,' and taught that real philosophical knowledge consisted in transforming all contingent elements into rational ones. Kant said that Religion is only a form of morality, but clouded the effect of the observation by the remark that the efficiency of the pure concept of understanding is confined to space and time, and to the form of presentation, and that mere Reason did not suffice for the cognition of an absolute Being (God and Soul), which involves transcendental ideas. (Critique of Reason)

The Rationalists have been struggling hard for centuries with several conflicts of ideas among the leading men, and they have not been able to make a headway. Hartpole Lecky's History of Rationalism (1865) may serve to throw much light on the thorny path of Rationalism. It may not, however, be of much use to give a summary of the past history when the object of the rationalist is to lay out a clear-cut road for the future.

The main aspects to be carefully dealt with by the rationalists on the theistic side are :—

1. The truth of Revelation by a Supreme Being-the Creator-for the guidance of those who were brought into existence by Him.
2. The divine instinct said to have been implanted in man, in the form of what is known as the 'Spiritual Soul,' which is said to be part of that great Being.

It may not be out of place here to state that the scope of rationalism need not be confined to orthodox Theism, but may well be extended to all other aspects concerning man's welfare in the world on the Social, Moral, Economic and physiological sides of life, such as—marriage, dress, fashions, formalities, food, social manners &c., which come in conflict with strict utilitarian and rational principles. I may hope to dwell on each of them, later on, separately.

As to the first aspect, referring to the existence of a Supreme Being, who has revealed himself as the Creator of the Universe, if the observations of Kant as to the insufficiency of human reason to take cognisance of an absolute Being, because of the transcendental nature of the cognition, are universally accepted, much trouble is saved. and the rationalist may have rest and peace of mind on that question. But their mental ebullition may not subside so easily. There is an outrush of thoughts in their active minds, and they ask what these transcendental ideas are like, what led to the positivity of the assertion as to the existence of a being who cannot be comprehended by the human mind, how that Being could himself have come into existence when there was none to give him life, size and shape; wherefrom he derived such vast powers of creating such an immense universe, and a host of other questions which the theists would find it very inconvenient to answer, otherwise than by resorting to the theory of transcendentalism. Observing the hesitant attitude of the theist, the rationalist boldly gives out that there is no such supreme being who could have created by an incomprehensible process, this physical world on which we live, move, and have our being. But the matter does not end there. The Universe stares us in the face, and forces

itself on our physical vision. Where it came from if none has created it, and how there could be a result without a cause, are the next pertinent questions the theist vehemently puts. The rationalists say that it is there, that it has always been there, and that it had no beginning. The answer rouses the rational feelings of the theist, and at once comes the question whether it could be reasonably supposed that any thing came into existence of itself without a cause or a Creator, and that by rationalists with practical experience of the class of people who mainly rely upon the knowledge they derive from the world. Their only possible answer is that, as it is not possible to account for the origin of the world by any rational means, and as it has been in existence from time immemorial, the only supposition must be that it had no beginning. The Theists likewise answer that, as anything that is in existence must have been created, and that, as nothing could be known as to who brought it into existence, we reasonably presume an unknown creator, and call him God. It is now quite clear that the positive assertion as to the existence of a Supreme Being is as much a matter of convention to the Theists, as the perpetual existence of the Universe without a beginning is to the Rationalists. Revelation and divine instincts follow directly from the God of the theists, and if God himself is a conventional being, these may also be taken as conventions, if the rationalists choose to do so.

Now, the question arises as to who is in a better position the theist or the rationalist even from a rational point of view. So long as neither of them can deal with hard facts as to the origin of the universe, and both rely only upon a convention, they must keep their reasoning faculties aside on this particular question, and assume a reconciliatory attitude, even on the existence of God as the Creator and Guide of the World.

It does not seem possible to eradicate the notions with regard to the Creation and the Creator, as the convictions are deep rooted, having been hereditarily transmitted, from generation to generation, for thousands of years. It serves no useful purpose for the rationalists to concentrate their attention on this vexed question, as their primary object, as is generally understood, is the amelioration of the condition of mankind in matters affecting their well-being in all aspect of worldly life. The opinion of the majority, as to the origin of the universe, and of the existence of a Creator, may be taken by the rationalists as the result of sentiment, so long as it is rendered harmless in its effect on the sphere of social activities in worldly life. They would be serving a great purpose if, by their constant efforts, they can secure the greatest good of the largest community, as their chief object is only humanitarian. Even according to the Theists, virtue or sin which has the supposed result of securing Heaven or Hell, relates only to the deeds in the world, and whatever may be the beliefs with regard to the ultimate rewards or punishments so long as they depend upon what men do in this world, if the character and conduct are rectified and reformed, the world will reach the zenith of perfection even in the distant future, and that is all that rationalists need care for, in their anxiety to improve Humanity. It is a fact admitted by all intelligent and unprejudiced theists that all religeous tenets and doctrines are

meant only for the moral elevation of the people, and the alleged divine origin of their teachings, even it is not believed in, may well be taken as tending to assign a sanctified authority to the manifestation of the moral principles in the conduct of the people. There are some religious texts so interpreted. The higher Hindu philosophy does not speak of a personal God, and admits Evolution.

In the Bhagvat Gita the three fundamental ideas of the perfect ideal of Godhood are:—1 The Truth, 2 Goodness, (Holiness) 3. Beauty, (Light). The assertion that God dwells in every Soul is said to be the most vital one, and if Godhood consists in the three fundamental ideas stated above, all that is required of man to attain perfection is the development of Truth, Goodness and Intellectual Light. For the rationalist's satisfaction the soul may well be interpreted as the mind—the all-important factor exerting its influence on human conduct proportionately to the extent of its development and the Rationalist may not give it the activities attributed to the soul, independent of the mind. Mere thoughts or notions do not affect the practical side of the world, so long as they are harmless in their ultimate effect on the career of man. Many of the other lessons in Bhagvat Gita do not come in conflict with the principles of a rationalist. Some of them may profitably be referred to here.

"God is Love", "Where Love is there God is." These are the highest indications of humanitarian principles. "Dharma should be practised as a positive virtue." By Dharma is meant only the right conduct, and the rationalist has no objection to it. "Wealth and enjoyment (Happiness) are the rewards meted out *in this world* to those that practise Dharma." This is quite consistent with what the rationalist should promise to the man of right conduct. "Moksha" is the reward in the other world." The rationalist may not trouble himself with what the word 'Moksha' signifies, and ignore the statement as he does not know anything about it "The root cause of all worldly and Spiritual enjoyment is Dharma. "Only the human values of worldly essences may be taken and the spiritual ones ignored, reserving them without rejecting, so that if by his conduct of the right type he happens to realise they also, he may feel highly thankful for the unexpected reward. "Goodness makes God our nearest Friend." As the rationalist does not want to make God a personal entity, he may well take the word as the power in Nature that tends to make the good man happy. The word of three letters (God) matters not, as it is meant only to convey ideas. In the higher philosophical books of Hindu religion God is represented as formless, feelingless, and unaffected by human deeds. Madame Blavatsky does not object to the Budhistic theory that the universal Spirit (God) is not a thing, not a concrete or a visible being to which any name expressive of an object of physical perception can be given. She says in 'Isis Unveiled' Vol. I, that it matters not if God is not regarded as a personal conscious being, though her own belief, of course, is that He is. The rationalist can have no objection to a reference to a universal power, enjoying, as he does, the, vital essence of Sun's rays, and benefited as he is by Electricity and Magnetism, which are powers sufficiently magnificient for his appreciation. Claiming to be a strict rationalist myself, I cannot possibly brush aside-and I think it irrational

to do so the several personal experience which unmistakably show that there are some powerful influences at work, which the simple reasoning faculty of man cannot account for. I hope, later on, to present them to the readers of this journal, circumstances permitting.

On a very careful process of thinking, it appears clear that no one, of a practical turn of mind, need bother himself as to whether there is a *God in person*, supervising the living beings on the Earth below, or there is a power in Nature, within or without the body of the living creatures, that automatically exerts influence, for good or evil on the beings occupying the Globe. The moral and social aspects, in the widest sense, may well be developed on the highest benevolent and utilitarain principles, and the rationalist may have still the satisfaction of doing his duty, without unnecessarily interfering with the inner ineradicable beliefs, notions and habits, causing mental conflict and uneasiness, so long as those inner beliefs and ideas do not have the result of affecting human conduct with reference to worldly happiness and contentment, consistently with the rational principles generally accepted as tending to improve the condition of man.

Any rationalist may fairly ask whether it is possible or practicable to do anything in the direction suggested, so long as men do not proceed on rational lines. This is the crux of the question. The answer depends on the nature of the beliefs, ideas and habits. Beliefs generate ideas, and ideas, when put into practice create habits. Beliefs being mostly instinctive, without any rational basis, even well-educated people find themselves incapable of eradicating them, as they feel they are part and parcel of their own nature. In several instances they are not by themselves harmful, except for the fact that they are not-compatible with reasoning faculties possessed by man. Thoughtful men often scrutinise the ideas in the light of rational criticism, find them shaky, and yet most of them cling to the ideas for want of power of mental resistance. There are others who change their ideas theoretically, and yet cannot alter their habits, which have become their second nature. But when the harmful nature of the consequences of the habits are repeatedly pressed on them they gradually realise the bad consequences, and make a genuine attempt to correct them to the extent possible. Persistent efforts do have some beneficial results. Men, educated and uneducated are of different kinds. Some have not even the habit of thinking, and do not find the need to leave the beaten track. There are others who can think and do find the need for a change. and are yet unable to take the initiative. Most of the intelligent section of the educated people are of this type. Very few of even the educated have the courage of conviction. Sense of public opinion is very keen, and with it they move. To try to change public opinion is a Herculian task, which is possible only by a persistent work of propaganda. It is the general conversion of public opinion that can bring about any reform. Atheists at heart are staunch theists in public, for fear of public censure. A man of power and influence, whose nods and smiles move the people easily, can bring about a change, so long as Self and its satisfaction are the prevailing motives with hopes of realisation. However,

attempts should be made in all directions. The easier process seems to be to begin at home with the moderately educated female section of the population. Whatever may be the usual habits they follow without thought, they have no fixed beliefs and ideas, among the modern section of them. The orthodox Brahman families, with regular rituals and ceremonies, may, in many cases, be unapproachable, but the educated unorthodox ladies do appreciate reason and can get over sentiment very easily. The kind of Rationalist Journals like "The Reason" do not reach them. The usefulness of such journals is only limited to those that have a rational trend of thought, and others try only to make the journal the target of ridicule and laughter. The patrons of the rationalist movement must be prepared to create interest among the neutrals by a liberal distribution of the copies of the journal, and the more important thing to be done is to create local interest bypublishing the journals in important Mofussil centres *in Vernaculars*, so that the articles may directly appeal to the imagination of the readers. It is all a labour of love, depending, to a large extent, on the weight of the moving purse. Philanthropy must persist in the long run.

May these observations attract the attention of the sympathetic section of the wealthier Classes is the earnest prayer and hope of

A WELL-WISHER OF HUMANITY.

[Many thorough going Rationalists may not altogether agree with the suggestions of our contributor. They may not, for for instance, agree that the existence of the Universe might have been due to the operator of a First Cause which escapes our understanding through its transcendentalism. No Rationalist trained in clear and logical reasoning will argue with a Theist in the manner described by our contributor. He will certainly not stop so easily at a supposed First Cause who being itself an existence must have had a Creator. If the First Cause had no Creator why not the Universe the origin of which no man knows? If the First Cause had no beginning why not the Universe also? Once admit the existence of a First Cause, whether it is considered as a being or an incomprehensible power or energy, all kind of superstitions can be built on this and the too generous Rationalist, who would concede such a point for the sake of its pragmatic value, will soon be disillusioned. The whole of the Theistic argument indeed is based on the belief of a First Cause, call it by whatever name one likes.

ED. REASON.]

IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE OF SURVIVAL AND OF AN UNSEEN WORLD ?

The question before us is this: Is there a hereafter? Is there an unseen world? Any evidence of that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns? (Hamlet). It is this which "puzzles the will"—as Shakespeare puts it.

The first point to note about this question of a hereafter—of an unseen world—is the universality of belief. From the dawn of history, indeed ever since man became a conscious being on this planet, this belief may be said to exist. It exists in all lands, in all ages. The most primitive of mankind believes it as also the most highly cultured of the human race, and all men seem to subscribe to this universal belief in an unseen world. Those who flatly deny its existence seem even at the present day to be in a microscopical minority. For example, we find the great Naturalist who tumbled upon the supreme revelation associated with the name of Charles Darwin, no other than Arthur Russel Wallace, (the fact of Evolution chanced upon both of these men simultaneously), gives expression to this belief in his "Pure Darwinism", as follows :—

> "We find that Darwinism theory even when carried out to the extreme logical conclusion not only does not oppose, but lends a decided support to a belief in the spiritual nature of man. It shows us how man's body may have been developed from that of a lower animal form under the law of natural selection, but it also teaches us that we possess intellectual and moral faculties which could not have been so developed, but must have had another origin : and for this origin we can only find an adequate cause in the unseen Universe of Spirit."

A view such as this coming from Wallace is entitled to every respect and the view cannot be disposed of by a mere gesture. Rationalists must examine the evidence of survival if any such evidence exists. A mere statement of a belief in an "Unseen Universe of Spirit" is, however, not enough ; it carries no conviction whatsoever. "Let us have the evidence if it exists." That is the case of the Rationalist, and it is the only sensible rational and scientific attitude to take. At the same time, it is equally absurd and unscientific to refuse a discussion of the "evidence" so called, if any is adduced in support of this belief. Charles Darwin disagreed entirely with his life-long friend Wallace and could not see any evidence of survival and of a Creator or of a Supreme Being at work. He could not agree that the universe was in any way "the effect or expression of a Mind."

In the "Life of Darwin" by his son, we are told of some words spoken by him on this subject in the last year of his life to his friend, the then Duke of Argyll. The latter had said with reference to some of Darwin's remarkable scientific work on the Fertilization of Orchids, and cognate observations of Nature, that it was "impossible to look at these without seeing that they were the effect or expression of mind". Darwin looked at the Duke very hard, and said: "Well that often comes over me with overwhelming force, but at other times (and he shook his massive head vaguely) it seems to go away."

Herbert Spencer in his "Reflections" at the age of 73 with which he concluded his autobiography expressed his *unbelief* in a hereafter and in an "unseen Universe of the Spirit" and kindred questions. But at the same time he gave expression to these remarkable words:—

"Among men of science there are those who curiously examining the Spectre of Nebulae, calculating the masses and motions of double stars never pause to contemplete under other than physical aspects the immeasurable vast facts they record. But in both cultured and uncultured there occur lucid intervals.....By those who know much more than by those who know little, is there felt the *need* of explanation."

That is the core of the matter, the whole Riddle of the Universe, the stupendously vast phenomenon that passes before us. The inconcievable magnitude of the Galactic System, for example, demands an "explanation," as to its origin. The Sidereal Universe looks like one vast living cinematograph film. The "Riddle" will probably never be satisfactorily solved or explained, *because science is not in any way concerned with ultimate origins*. That is the province of Philosophy. The question of the existence of an "Unseen World" is not primarily the province of the Physicist or of the Mathematician, but that of the Philosopher.

It is wholly impossible, indeed unreasonable, to expect a cultured Rationalist to discuss calmly and philosophically the gigantic absurdities of our theologians—even learned theologians of even the present 20th century. For example, I have before me as I write Dr. Peterson Smyth's (charming in many respects) "Life of Christ". In his opening chapter, I find this perfectly astounding statement (Dr. Smyth is a F.R.S., D.D., D. Litt, D.C.L. and D.Sc., etc.,) Note the gigantic absurdity. He says:—

"We believe that far beyond the stars and the planets is the Unseen World, the World of God and His Holy Angels."

Now, what can this possibly mean? "Beyond the stars and planets"? For consider what this means. Let us reduce it to prosaic language and analyse this absurd statement. Let us consider, and if possible, grasp the distance of the nearest stars and the furthest from this planet upon which we live,

The hopeless absurdity of Dr. Smyth's foolish remote world can be at once comprehended. My readers probably know that a "Light year" is the distance a ray of light travels in one year. Light travels at the rate of 1,86,000 miles a second, so multiply 1,86,000 by the number of seconds in one year. This gives you the number of miles a ray of light covers in 365 days.

I would ask my readers to imagine for a moment that they were listening to a concert, say, in the Albert Hall, London, and that they were sitting, say, on the front seats before the stage. On the stage there would be a wireless apparatus. Now light travels with the same speed as wireless signals because both are waves of electric disturbance. Incidentally, this speed is just about a million times that of sound. The enormous disparity in the sounds and of electric waves is vividly brought out in the ordinary process of broadcasting. When a speaker broadcasts from London, his voice takes actu-

ally longer to travel 3 feet from his mouth to the microphone, as a *sound wave*, than it does to travel a further 560 miles, to say, Berlin or Milan, as an electric wave. Wireless listeners in Australia hear the music of this Albert Hall Concert sooner than an ordinary listener sitting on the front benches in the Concert Hall, who obviously realizes *sound alone*. It is heard in India or Australia in about a 1/15 of a second after it is played. Yet light or wireless waves travelling with the same speed as light takes exactly 4.27 years to reach the nearest star, so that the inhabitants of say Proxima Centauri would be over four-and-a quarter years late in a hearing a terrestial concert at the Albert Hall! Now, take the case of the inhabitants of stars so distant that the Albert Hall music *would not yet have reached* had it started on its long journey before the Norman Conquest of England, before the Pyramids were built, even before man appeared on Earth 3,00,000 years ago. I have before me, as I write, a photograph plate (by the Mount Wilson Observatory) which shows some of the stars in the furthest depth of space—the most remote objects accessible at present to observation—a cluster of 162 nebulae in Pegasus mostly at distances of 100 million light years or more. Each cluster contains enough material to make a "Star City" of thousands of millions of stars! A new 200 inch telescope about to be completed will reveal stars it is calculated about 250 million light years away. There are other systems of stars over 900, 1000 to a million light years distant from the Earth. (This long digression in astronomical marvels is necessary to give an idea of space and the insignificance of our Earth in it just to show the absurdity of Dr. Smyth's belief in the abode of Spirits beyond the stars!)

Just imagine that according to Dr. Smyth the Unseen World, the World of God and his Angels is still "*beyond all this*". The astronomical magnitude of this absurdity which I have clearly demonstrated cannot, however, be realized by any person who has no idea of what Astronomy teaches. Astronomy is the best science to dispel those stupid beliefs about heaven being the abode of God, the unseen world. This explains why all that has been written for 2,000 years—the question of the unseen world, may be said to be so much nonsense. If people who wrote all these absurdities knew a little of Astronomy, they would have realized what rot they were talking about. Ignorance of that science made people wonder at the work of a supposed Creator. Cicero, for instance, declared 2,000 years ago: "What can be so plain and evident when we behold the heavens and contemplate the celestial bodies as the existence of some Supreme divine intelligence by which we are ignored"? Of scientific evidence of the assumed unseen world there is not an iota; it is all a matter of personal belief. Scientists will only be justified in considering the question seriously when instances are forthcoming that there is something in the claim that a hereafter exists which cannot be ignored. For the present no such evidence is in sight.

I am for an open mind on the question and believe that science must not turn a deaf ear to the claims of responsible and eminent people who assert that there is enough of evidence to merit complete investigation of the subject.

J. D. JENKINS.

[We publish this article, not because we are convinced that there is anything in the claim that an unseen World of Spirits exists, and that it deserves the serious attention of scientists, but to point out how absurd that claim is. Our contributor, himself, ridicules this when he shows the immensity of the Universe and the insignificance of our Planet in it. Is that Unseen World beyond the stars as people unacquainted with Astronomy are inclined to believe? A knowledge of Astronomy is the best thing to dispel this superstition.

Wallace shared the popular belief about spirits when he imagined that the mind of man could not be a natural development with the evolution of his brain. A deep knowledge of the evolution of mind right from the lower animals to primitive man, and from the latter to the modern Nordic men, would have probably convinced him that there was no necessity to postulate a mysterious origin for the mind of man. The universality of a belief does not necessarily prove it to be true.

It is all very well to talk of "spirit," "disembodied spirit," "soul" and all that. What is soul or spirit? How can such a thing which is believed to be unorganized exist? The human mind cannot conceive of such an existence though we glibly speak as if it does. Some people say that our soul is a parcel of the Infinite Mind to which it returns at death; other believe that consciousness may survive the bodiiy death; religionsists believe that it is an entity that escapes at death and leads a separate existence in an Unseen World. A little clear thinking will show how difficult it is to satisfy oneself as to what the soul is. The belief in the existence of the soul is clearly a religious one without proof or evidence. (Ed. REASON.]

THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK.

Amid the economic distraction, class-war and limitless military competition of our time, it should not have been possible to snatch a moment of idle curiosity. The achievements of Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin fill the news horizon, and each succeeding day leaves the world more breathless and humble than its predecessor. We realise that war is not the only boiling-point that should agitate life on the planet. There are indeed a hundred other ways in which the rise in temperature may manifest itself, when freedom of individual life and expression is affected. The release of fumes designed to scorch all opposition, like the hot equatorial wind that burns up the bird and plant life in its march, is an avowed political instrument employed towards attaining unity and larger peace. It is the unity got at by the physical removal of the opponent, and the peace beside his grave.

The confusion in modern political and economic science is none restricted to those branches of practical knowledge. Scientific theory in departments where the peculiar interests of temporal life are least expected to enter, in Mathematics, and Physics for instance, seems at this time of the day to suffer from the same kind of misty confusion that clouds the darkened sky. Elsewhere, in spite ofthe

extended service that science is rendering in its application to the wireless, the aeroplane, and the hundred-and-one inventions recently being perfected, certain sections of its exponents would yet appear to uphold the faith in an 'historic' idealism. The hope to reinstate the Mind keeps their science alive, and religion that has everything to gain by the vacillations of materialist science helps to render their thoughts the more popular. This kind of mutual service between the godly and the human is noway a strange experience. The hoary Bhagavad Gita sings:

Deva bhavayatanena te deva bhavayantu vah.

Parasparam bhavayantah sreyah paramavapsyadha. (III, 11)

(You nourish the gods, and may the gods nourish you. Thus nourishing one another you will reap the greatest benefit.)

To the clergyman it is solace that at least there is the Mathematician ruling the universe, and that scientific laws break once at least in relation to eletronic behaviour. Any breach in the material order of natural phenomena finds room for the divine Throne, and even a cold Calculator, devoid of the human virtues of mercy, justice, and compassion will do to disarm disbelief in a designing personality. Prof. Eddington and Sir James Jeans are more orthodox than they are aware of.

The distance between religion and magic is not long. The London Magic Circle is only at a stone's throw. Throw naturalism overboard, and you board the steamer of the miracle-mind. Successful deception induces belief, and there are no fences against any form of belief. We may keep in deposit vast amounts in order to investigate into the truth and validity of the claim, but when there is the will to believe, the fact that a bank intervenes is no guarantee that the performer does not get all the money. As Earnest Wood pointed out, the idea of the Rope-Trick is a very old one, known from before the time of the great Shankara Acharya, who adverted to the process of creating a mass-illusion. The classic illustration of mistaking the rope for a serpent (Rajju Sarpa Bhranti) is utilised to impress the importance of knowledge or Gnana, to dispel Avidya, (ignorance) which induced the illusion (Vivarta) of difference, or seperateness from the Brahman. The rope is the basis, the similarity in appearance between the rope and the snake in insufficient light is the means whereby the illusion is induced, and a deeper and more intimate knowledge, the Tatva-Gnana (a real understanding of the essence) yeilds the explanation. Penetrating vision alone helps to reveal the rope behind the reptile-obsession.

Nor may this obsession be confined to individual experience. Entire communities may thus be brought under control. In India, the rope has its sanctity typified, perhaps, by the sacred thread. Schemes of suggestion abound in the history of the race. Religious devotion is often enhanced by stories of miracles performed by the founders. The common mind is slow to percieve the indignity and affront to humanity involved in making the reverence due to the redeemers dependant upon their capacity to achieve magical results. And yet, the tendency to associate the magician and the miracle-worker with the names of

thinkers, sociologists and philosophers of all ages and climes, is the perpetual reminder to us that religious efficacy has its roots deep down in human ignorance, in our insufficiency to stand a particular situation.

I had, very recently, been amid a throng that witnessed a curious performance which was claimed to have been the result of Yogic levitation. In a protected enclosed space the body of a boy induced into hypnotic trance-sleep was exposed lying on a plank of the length and width just enough to hold him; the body was at a height of about a yard from the ground. The dark curtain behind, and the dim lights were, of course, there. The audience were shown the test by passing hoops that seemed to traverse the space all round the body hanging in mid air. The performer and his assistant handled two large circular hoops which were employed to pass around the boy that lay unconscious on the plank. But one had one's own misgivings. Was it necessary to call in Yogic powers to give such a simple performance, in an enclosed. protected cabin, under dim lights, and in front of the dark curtain? If the hoops were of a size, whose diameter was a little over one half of the length of the plank on which the boy lay, the wires that supported the weight at its centre will easily escape detection, while the passes of the hoops will cover entire space around. They may not transgress the centre on the topside of the levitated body. But the illusion is made up by the circle that began to move from the direction of the head towards that of the feet which the hoop was easily made to pass as its size was decidedly larger than half the length of the boy. And on the second day of the same performance there was little room for doubt. While the assistant was making the usual passes of the hoop round the body to show us that it was totally unsupported by physical lengths, the sleeping boy and the plank on which he rested were seem swinging along, in the direction of his head and feet. It was clear that two wires were lending support at very short distances from the centre of the plank on either side, and the rest was merely delicate, skilful balancing. For, if the wires were to support the body at either extreme, say near the head, and the feet, the hoops can hardly pass over the space on the topside of the plank. Hence, the need for bringing together the two wires as nearly as possible towards the centre, consistent with the placing of the body and the plank in a well-balance a position. When the hoop touched one of these wires, the sleeping boy swung helplessly to and fro. This is an instance where the rope (or the wire) caused an illusion of supernatural psychic powers in a performer who was able to conceal its presence. In the theatre of life there be many such wire-works, pulling and pushing our faiths, this way and that, even as the trance-boy swung.

Yes, the coiled rope ascends. It stands even as a rod on end. The magic-boy goes up to the top. The elder magician sends the sword. Blood is seen on it. So many sights too uncouth to mention are seen. Where do these lead? Indian Yogis will point to the sky. But is it anything remote from the dark internal centre of the earth? The rope whose ascent we saw, the boy that climbed, the sword that went up, and the blood that oozed, they all come down, dropping to the earth. Its gravity is the hugest

miracle. What man performs is trickery, a deftness of the limb aided by the subtlety of the brain, designed to decieve the less clever. Nature gave us the longest rope, but shall man hang his sense therewith? Why, today, magic, religion, philosophy, and even science in part hang on the Yoga of the Indian Rope Trick. Will the sacred thread of the East be caught up in the idealist illusion reborn at present in the West?

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

CHRISTIANITY AND WOMAN.

I dealt last week, in a general way, with Mrs. Northcroft's (Editor of the Coming Ministry) comments on my paragraph concerning the question of the position of women as taught by Christianity. I had said, in a paragraph in a previous issue, that the Methodist Conference in rejecting the proposal that women should enter the Methodist ministry, was acting in accordance with Christian tradition, and that it was part of a Christian teaching that all the evils in the world began with a woman. Mrs. Northcroft retorted that the statement might be true of the old Semitic view, that it was not true of the modern aspect of Christianity, and that there were certain broad principles laid down by Jesus Christ that made for the equality of the sexes. I do not know what these broad principls are, and therefore cannot deal with them; but the question of the influence of the Christian Church on the position of woman is a matter of historic proof or disproof, and it is on the question of fact, rather than that of theory that I am now concerned.

In its secular aspect Christianity appears in history as an heir of the Roman and—in a degree further removed—Greek civilizations. It was not an indigenous product that had to outgrow certain stages of primitive thinking. It inherited the products of an advanced civilization which had already sloughed off many primitive beliefs and practices. Roman law and Greek culture were solid facts, and their beneficial influence have endured to our own day. But the advances made under Roman rule dwindled away under Christian influence, and woman became a mere chattel of the man, without social rights once she was married, and with very few rights before marriage. The laws concerning slavery became harsher in character and emancipation became more difficult. Freedom of thought and speech died out; civilization as a whole deteriorated, and no one but a monk would have found Christian Europe in the tenth century preferable to the pagan world of the third. And it is idle to put this deterioration down to the invasion of the barbarians. Pagan Rome had encountered barbarians in many parts of the world. But Pagan Rome civilized them, Christian Rome confirmed them in their barbarism and deepened their superstition.

Woman in the Bible.

The causes of the transformation were various; I am now concerned with one factor only, but this is the most powerful and the most permeative, and I intend dealing with one aspect, that in relation to the position of women. The Christians were very peculiary "The people of a

book", and in that book, the Bible, upon which they professed to base their faith, the subordination of woman to man is everywhere decreed or implied. In the old Bible woman is made as a kind of afterthought, and when made becomes the cause of man's downfall. She takes no part in any public religious service, and the old Jewish law prohibited women, along with slaves giving evidence in a court of law. When Shakespeare makes Petruchio say

> She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
> My household stuff, my field, my barn,

My horse, my ox, my anything. he was giving the biblical view of a married woman; and unmarried she was as much the chattel of the father as of the husband when married. Stephen in his Commentaries on the Laws of England, points out that the Roman law supposed a woman never to go astray without the seduction and art of men. Biblical and Canon law places the blame on woman. The New Testament follows the line laid down in the Old. Jesus shows no departure from Jewish custom and law with regards to women. He knows them only as servants or attendants, and in their inevitable functions of wife and mother. But there is no glimpse anywhere in the New Testament of women being a citizen, or an independent member of society. Paul's doctrine is:—

> For a man.....is the image and glory of God; but the women is the glory of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.

Women are "commanded to be under obedience" for man is the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the Church, and she is to remain silent in the Church. She begins existence as an afterthought and continues as a subordinate.

What Mrs. Northcroft speaks of as the old Semitic influence should, then, properly be called Biblical influence and the minor positions that women actually did occcupy in some of the early Christian communities were properly described by Hooker as borrowed from the Heathen.

In my Woman and Christianity, I have given a separate chapter to tracing the origin of the segregation of women and the creation of special rules for their contact with men to the primitive superstition concerning her semi-supernatural influence. It was not based upon any conception of her inferiority—that belongs to a later and more sophistical period, but to a belief in difference. The peculiarity of the Christian influence is that while—along with other things—it revived in full force this primitive superstitious view of woman, Christianity gave it an ethical basis. The savage would have said, as he still says, that promiscuous contact with woman involves certain supernatural penalties, here. The Christian, prevented from indulging in this belief in its primitive simplicity, held that the possible and probable penalty which contact with women brought on man was damnation hereafter. Man could not do without her, but intercourse with her, sexual or otherwise, had to be accompanied with due precautions. Thus Paul's only justification for marriage was that it was "better to marry than to burn." That great preacher, St. Chrysostom described woman as "a necessary evil, a desirable calamity, a deadly fascination, a painted ill;" St. Clement

said, "Above all, it seems desirable that we turn away from the sight of women." Principal Donaldson rightly describes the influence that early Christianity exerted on the position of women by saying that if we define man as a male human being and woman as a female human being, Christianity took "male" out of the definition of the man, and "human" out of the definition of woman, and so left man as a human being and woman as a female being. Professor Becker in his Christianity and Islam, also says that the low view of women in Mohammedan countries is due to the fact that it reached Islam in Christian dress, and with the authority of Christian hostility to marriage. I do not know what were the "broad principals" governing the relations of the sexes to which Mrs. Northcroft refers, but it is evident that if they were on the side of liberality they were either ignored by the early Christians, or they had never heard of them.

Woman Under Church Rule.

The teaching laid down in both the Old and the New Testaments, and the practices of the early Church led to more restrictive rules and regulations as the power of Christianity increased. Not only was a married woman prevented holding property, but the right of equal inheritance between brothers and sisters also went, the Church holding that the male was the "worthiest of blood." This was a distinction which that staunch old Conservative and rationalizer of feudal privileges, Blackstone, admitted was quite unknown to Roman law. Blackstone also laid it down that, according to law, "The very being or legal existence of a woman is suspended during marriage." The whole influence of Canon Law was against the equality of the sexes, and its aim appeared to be the complete destruction of every vestige of the freedom and dignity which the Roman law gave to women.

That Modern Aspect.

So long as the power of the Christian Churches remained unimpaired woman was doomed to a position of legal and religious subordination. All the leaders of the established churches were agreed upon this. Luther held that woman's functions were to bear children and attend on man. Calvin followed the same line, Knox thundered against the Monstrous Regiment of Women, and decided that "By the order of nature, by the malediction and curse pronounced against woman, by the mouth of St. Paul, the interpreter of God's sentence, woman was shut out of all authority". In America the Puritans carried the same conception into the new world, and in the struggle for the equality of the sexes in America, as in this country, the chief opposition came from Christians. The Methodist view in America as late as 1880 was officially expressed in the following deliverance:—

> Woman is under a curse which subjects her to man..... The Bible is addressed to man and not to woman; man comes to God through Jesus, and woman comes to Jesus through man; every privilege the wife enjoys she receives through her husband, for God has declared that woman shall nor rule man, but be subject to him.

I said last week that the outcome of the resolution before the Methodist Conference was similar to other resolutions that had been before that gathering

during the past forty years. Although writing away from home, I found my dates to be very exact, for it was in 1804 that a resolution to admit women as delegates to the Conference was brought forward. That resolution was rejected. A year later, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes proposed that women delegates, provided " a district Synod judges that her election will serve the interests of the work of God," be admitted to the Conference. This also was rejected. And now, in 1934, the Conference has rejected the proposal for women to enter the ministry. When they are admitted their admission will doubtless be proclaimed as a triumph of Christian principles.

Other Churches have been equally as Christian in their behaviour. In 1916 there was a National Mission of Health and Repentance established" " under the auspices of the Established Church." The women wished to lend a hand. There was no objection to that. But they also wanted to preach, and that was a quite different matter. A compromise was arranged that they should preach to women and girls only but they were not to preach from the pulpit, the lectern, or the chapel steps. These places were taboo to women just as a man might touch the body of the risen Jesus but a woman might not. But even to that compromise there were strenuous objections, for a page of the *Times* was covered with the signatures of staunch male and female Christians who objected to women preachers as being unchristian. A further public protest was issued by the clergy of the diocese of London stating:—

> We believe that to grant permission to women to preach in our churches is contrary to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and contrary to the mind and general practice of the whole Catholic Church. Still more, we believe that such permission will be an encouragement to those women who publicly claim their right to be appointed to the priesthood and episcopacy of the Church, which claim is heretical.

That last sentence is worth nothing:—"Which claim is heretical." Of course it is. The claim of Mrs. Northcroft, editor of a Christian paper, and fully believing herself to be a Christian, is yet heretical; more than heretical, it is distinctly anti-Christian. For when all is said and done in the way of excusing and apologizing, the damning facts that remain are that it was under Christian rule that the freedom which the Roman law gave to women was completely destroyed, and it was not until the Christian Churches were weakened, until non-Christian belief became a common feature in society that the demand to equality was conceded by many, although still bitterly opposed by the male Christian of the Churches. What, then, are we to make of the "broad principles" laid down by Jesus? What are they? Where were they expressed? When in Christian times were they put into operation? The satire of the whole situation is that the most powerful of the Christian Churches are still bitterly hostile to the principle of the equality of the sexes. Mrs. Northcroft has to look for her strongest supporters among Free-thinkers, and she finds her greatest enemies in the ranks of those who follow the teaching of Christianity.

CHAPMAN COHEN

in "The Freethinker".

THE CURSE OF TIMIDITY.

(*Continued from p. 19 of July, 1934.*)

If the child has received, on account of wrong education, the imprint of moral debility which has made him timid, he (or she) will suffer lifelong from this disease and will also bring up timid children, simply by contagion. What kind of men, real men, will that give us in future, which we wish sincerely to be better?

The automatons will live, like their fathers, on illusions, dreams, fears, and will of course continue carefully the tradition which maintains that people are incapable of conducting their lives, that they have not enough common sense, intelligence and patience to lead to happiness and peace on the earth.

This tradition, so slyly maintained among the masses, gives us the sickening spectacle of "authorities" of all kinds. In religion, in proud opposition to free examination and criticism of theologies and dogmas, we have "the argument of authority." In politics, again, we have "constituted authorities." I am not forgetting "scientific authorities" either. Then there is the 'authority' of parents. And what an authority! If the father is a drunkard, or even a poor devil of a timid working man who, in revenge for continuous submission to his superiors, is grossly tyrannical towards his wife and children!

All these "authorities" lead naturally to the execrable authoritarianism which we run against every day, to which we have to submit in order to live, and which destroys, little by little, if we are not on our guard, the integrity and value of our personality.

The personality of the individual violated even to its innermost recesses (the suppressions that Freud speaks of) this is permitted by timidity. After personalities, collectivities, whole races are violated, oppressed, led like sheep in a fair to the great slaughter-house! And, discouraged, not daring to revolt, miserable humanity does not dare to move and leaves despots in peace.

The evil of which I have just enumerated the multiple aspects, is not, however, without remedy. The cure of timidity is above all a proof of psychology, observation, patience and quiet tenacity.

In the sphere of psychology and observation, let us go back to the origin of timidity. The child is timid because, knowing nothing of life, it is in a perpetual state of alertness and observation before anything it sees or hears. It does not reason, it submits. Its personal life is made up of impressions, more or less sharp, more or less clear or confused. In short, the child feels or expects, much more than it judges, compares or reasons. It is above all impressionable and it is this impressionability which will be the starting point of all his present or future mental states.

Fortunately, all children do not retain this ultra-sensitiveness to an adult age. Those who do have very often before their eyes the bad example of parents continually fighting and threatening each other. The child, frequently terrorised by these violent scenes, remains extremely impressionable and is readily affected by authoritative words. Later on, when he becomes an adult and has to face the inexorable realities of life, this beginner will lack decision, sagacity, insight. If he is not gifted with intelligence and a healthy ambition, he will become one of the resigned millions who are human beings only in name. He will

vegetate, physically and morally. This s the lot of the multitude. on whom the suggestion of the press, the theatre, and religious and other displays will act with disconcerting ease.

If on the other hand. an adult is intelligent and timid, moral suffering will be his share every moment of his life. and this will either make him a silent cynic or a rebel, a sour critic who always fancies himself misunderstood, one of those semilunatics, calm in appearace, whom one meets every day in cities.

What is the cure for this disease of timidity? Let us take a timid man at the age of 30, when, normally, his personality should have reached its full expansion. What does he lack above all? He lacks mental serenity, and nothing else. When serenity inhabits his soul, all his apprehensions, anxieties, uncertainties will disappear, and as a consequence, his unhealthy pride and confused interior revolt will disappear too. Controlling himself better, his judgment will be more lucid.

But how is he to get this serenity? Some prescribe extremely complicated physical and mental processes, which are apt to dishearten even people who are very anxious to make an attempt to cure themselves. In my opinion, the remedy is simple, so simple as to appear commonplace. All religions possess it without knowing it, but what they do is incomplete, because it is drowned in useless, mysterious rubbish.

Religions prescribe prayer, by which the believer momentarily gets rid of his moral anguish, his soul finds a support on which to lean, but it is only momentary. It is a crutch, but a man ought to be able to stand on his legs. His salvation is within himself, not without. The believer thinks he is appealing to superior forces from whom he asks help and protection, and divine peace descends into him. But it is not divine calm, but he himself who calms his erring imagination with confidence.

If we consider that it is the imagination of the timid man that has become hypersensitive and inordinately swollen, we see at once that it is this faculty that has to be treated in order to procure mental serenity. Two means only have to be used for this purpose. The intelligence and the suggestibility of the person have to be used to effect the cure.

Appealing to his intelligence, let us show him by some examples that most of the catastrophes feared by him do not occur—that people are not at all so much concerned about him as he thinks, that the pride due to his timidity is very ill-founded, that he is able to do many more things than he thinks, that he will get rid of his awkwardness and be considered much more agreeable—if he is only more natural and attaches a little less importance to people's opinions about himself.

As for suggestibility, it is the powerful force of imagination alone which has to do its share. Generally uncontroiled, it plays its part very badly. Let the timid person control his imagination, and make it go in a favourable direction. In the past, it has intervened intensely in his fits of anger, in hatred, pride, vanity and grotesque personal satisfaction. The same imagination, properly directed, can work wonders in giving serenity, confidence, audacity, by a marvellous psychic transformation.

I tell all timid people to imagine every day, without any idea of effort or fight,

but with a simple and quiet conviction: "I have confidence in myself, I have more and more moral tranquility. I feel very well. I can do this or that without fatigue." Here we are of course in the sphere of auto-suggestion, of which some people deny the value without ever having tried it in the least. It is true that in this method, one must not imagine the impossible, but all that is possible. What is evidently possible is to substitute a benevolent thought for every evil thought, or a sense of serenity and confidence for any sense of apprehension or anxiety. Evidently it is impossible to acquire a fortune or fame and attract public attention without an effort. What auto-suggestion can produce are miracles like the much-advertised ones of places of pilgrimage like Lourdes. No religious miracle has ever restored legs to a cripple, nor made a bald man's hair grow. But paralytics have recovered and internal lesions healed. Miracle? No. Auto-suggestion provoked by an elaborate stage-effect, which is perfectly useless.

Thus I hope that every one can understand—that, the mind having its own machanism like the body, it is easy to direct this mechanism judiciously with a view to procure a mental state which will enable the individual to use his ability for the complete development of his personality.

The human mind is partly conscious and partly unconscious. It is both when it compares and makes a choice or a decision. It is unconscious when one hears a piece of music without attention and registers it mechanically, so that one may hum it involuntarily later on; also when forgotten memories come up again and force themselves on your attention. To make a habit of everything that can procure us mental or physical happiness, is evidently possible for the Unconscious, since it often does the contrary, and we carelessly allow this

Lt.-Col. Maillard says (in substance) in his book on auto-suggestion: "The Unconscious is the vital principle of our body, which, from the first to the last breath, forms an integral part of the individual and ensures its formation, development and conservation within limits imposed by nature. It is the Unconscious which presides over all the automatic functions of our body, heals the wound made by the surgeon, or mobilises defensive forces against an invasion of microbes. Only, it is very far from doing its business perfectly and its negligence leads to numerous evils. Impressionable, credulous, docile and therefore eminently suggestible, the Unconscious does not reason. It accepts and assimilates all ideas and images that may be presented to or imposed upon it and proceeds to model the human being under the influence of these ideas. Consequently, it cannot always be guided by suggestion alone. In fact it is well-known that will-power has no effect on our vegetative organs, i. e. on the Unconscious which regulates them.

The Unconscious registers and classifies, often without our knowledge, all the impressions we receive in the course of our lives and these are added to our mental inheritance derived from our ancestors. Suggestibility and imagination are its two principal faculties and its fundamental role is to regulate our vegetative life. It has also, however, a much more general function. The Unconscious, being the imaginative part of part of our mind, presides finally over the accomplishment of all our acts by the

impulses which it opposes to the deliberations of our reason, even against our will when there is a conflict between our will and the imagination. Our most important faculty is thus not our Reason, which comes from the Conscious, but Imagination, which comes from Unconscious."

This author shows all the importance of a well-directed imagination. Let the timid understand that if they are weak, it is their imagination that has gone wrong. Let him therefore alter the orientation of his imagination by the constant practice of auto-suggestion and lead it in the direction of serenity, confidence and moderate optimism, and he will find that he can do everything that he has to do with much less effort.

I do not advise the timid to make tenacious, or violent efforts or exert their will-power to the utmost. I would rather advise them to remain calm under all kinds of circumstances; and this is not acquired by an effort of will, but only by an inner feeling of confidence in auto-suggestion, practise it quietly. Do not employ imperative formulas, Say "I can", but not "I *will*", because the latter implies the idea of something to be conquered, a false idea of fight. Too often we fight with air. Too often, like generous Don Quixotes, we tilt at windmills which encumber our distorted imagination.

"Struggle for Life" is a false conceptife. Life does not really imply a struggle, it implies understanding and nothing more. Is it any use to rush at an obstacle and break your head? When the captain of a ship sees a storm coming, he does not go straight at it full sail, but seeks to avoid it by getting round it. So in life, take care not to try to conquer the storm and remember that serenity, strategy and confidence have always led passion, pride and ambition by the nose. Napoleon, Joffre, Castelnau, Sarrail have led numberless crowds of poor devils on the field of battle and it was the nameless crowd that suffered but these names were remembered. Understand this and act accordingly.

R. D. KARVE.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF
THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the masses of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

Quite recently, a large number of Mahomedans in South India met in angry protest against certain remarks—alleged to be very offensive—made in a book written in Tamil by a Jesuit Father on the Prophet Mahomet. It was reported that at that meeting one man was killed and several wounded. and the angry Mussulmans passed a resolution demanding that the said book be proscribed and the author of it punished.

We believe a compromise was reached when the author of the book in question undertook to expunge the remarks objected to and remove the copies already in circulation.

One hears a little too often in these days of such angry protests and even outrages, by over-sensitive Mahomedans whenever any remark, which they deem to be uncomplimentary on the prophet is made by anybody. The pity of it is that such scenes are not made by the illiterate class, but also by people of certain social standing. One can well understand them getting angry over malicious, insulting and scurrilous remarks about their prophet, but when it is only a question of honest opinion based on facts and couched in becoming and dignified language, the intolerence and sensitiveness of these Mahomedans become positively a danger and a nuisance.

* * *

When, however, they resort to violence and take the law into their own hands, as they unfortunately often do, their attitude becomes extremely serious and should be sternly put down. It was reported not long ago, that while a Hindu upcountry, accused of having made some offensive remarks on Prophet Mahomet, was moving about in a public place, a Mahomedan suddenly pounced on him and fatally stabbed him. It will be recalled that some years ago, a Hindu bookseller was similarly dealt with by a fanatic in Calcutta.

A few days back, the papers gave an account of another case of this nature, this time in Sind, in the Appellate Bench of the Judicial Commissioner's Court at Karachi. It would appear that whilst the High Court was disposing of the criminal appeal of one Maharaj Nathuram, who had been sentenced to eighteen months rigorous imprisonment on the charge of insulting the Prophet in his book, "History of Islam," the poor man was suddenly stabbed to death in Court by two or three Mahomedans.

The boldness of the attack was described in "The Times of India" as follows:—

> "While the Court was busy disposing of other appeals, a person is said to have whipped out a knife and stabbed Nathuram in the back. When Nathuram yelled, it is stated another man stepped forward and held him while the assailant stabbed him again in the stomach. Nathuram dropped on the floor bleeding profusely."

India is the only country in the world where adverse criticism and unpopular opinion on the character and methods of founders of religion is made a criminal offence :—Section 295A I.P.C. Is not this a great encouragement to fanatics?

* * *

Were such people made to understand that progress and enlightenment demand that religion, including its founders, are a matter of controversy and comment, we might hear less often of these intolerable outrages. An intelligent person would understand that the object of the Government in making such a law was, of course, quite laudable and reasonable in trying to prevent religious hatred and riots. But these ignorant and intolerant people do not seem to take it in this light. They probably imagine that their prophets are so sacrosanct that even the Government should not allow anybody to say a word against them; and if anybody does, not only must the Government punish them, but also they must be allowed to enhance the sentence in the way they think fit! To our mind, the Government have made a blunder by interfering in these matters. It is possible that in time they will recognise the error of it.

Nothing will beat Reuter in frequently reminding us that we are still a race of grown-up children-Morons as they say in America:—All the details given about the activities of Prince George and his future bride the moment their engagement was announced would sicken any right-thinking person. It is a pity that the English Royal Family is not permitted, like other decent people, to enjoy its own private life without the minute details being duly broadcasted. How interesting it was to learn that the Queen was teaching the Young Princess how to dance and Prince George tired himself in executing a Scottish reel!

* * *

The papers recently announced a very interesting ceremony which took place in Bangalore in South India. Owing to the failure of rain in that locality, a body of young men went naked in the streets carrying a clay idol of the Rain God, Jokumara, with a live frog tied to it. They recited hymns songs and ballads, praying to the deity to send rain to Bangalore. They halted at every house and the inmates removed the idol from its basket, poured a bucket of water over its head and burnt camphor. Should we laugh at this when in London, this year, the Bishop of London held an impressive ceremony in which prayers were said to obtain rain?

Though the methods were different, the same mentality animated the good Bishop of London and the rain-maker of Bangalore. The African witch-doctor also belongs to the same school and there is no reason why civilized people should smile at his antics as those of a barbarian. Are we really civilized yet?

* * *

Mahatma Gandhi is always very profound when he dwells on the question of God. His familiarity with that elusive Being is so great that he knows all about His ways and designs. He is certain that "belief in God is co-existent with human-kind", which means that Mahatma Gandhi is perfectly acquainted with the belief of man the moment he appeared on this planet 500,000 years ago as scientists say he did. Whatever might have been the belief of pre-historic man, we know that the moment he began to speak of his god or gods, he has pictured him or them in diverse ways. To the average man now, after thousands of years of thinking and belief, God is a living being-a—sort of an old man in the skies. For others, he is Love, Mind, an Immanence, a Celestial Mathematician, an Universal Architect, or an undefined Reality. For Mahatma Gandhi he is Truth. It would appear that in searching for Truth we discover God. For some other fortunate beings, he is a Banker in the clouds who always supply his favourites with money if they keep on good terms with him.

* * *

We mentioned in our last issue that the Great War is responsible for the intellectual set-back one witnesses in Europe at present. Every day evidences are forthcoming that there is a revival of superstitions there and people are not happy without them. In England according to the English papers, a large number of people now believe in Witch-Craft and and they perform elaborate ceremonies in the pursuit of it. Spiritualism, of course, has now become so fashionable that only cranks and imbeciles do not believe in it. People are taking great interest in Astrology and Fortune-telling has become a lucrative profession. The "News of the World" tells us that in London

society women and others flock to scores of luxuriously-appointed saloons in which incense is burnt and other agents and instruments of mysticism are employed. That paper says that the business is not confined to London, but is practised in most of the larger provincial cities to an extent hitherto unsuspected. Little wonder! For every one says that Science is dead and Mysticism is triumphant.

* * *

Is there any cause to marvel after this that the professors of occultism and the teachers of mysticism of all denominations are having a glorious time and are proclaiming with joy that Materialistic Science is dead and Mysticism has again come into its own? Well may these charlatans rejoice and sneer at freethought, Rationalism, and all that is still sane in this world. Was it not Ingersoll who told us that in the Middle Ages Europe was a vast lunatic asylum and the priests were the keepers of the same? We are fast getting into that condition again.

* * *

Mr. Albert Raymond, the well-known Bombay business man delivered an interesting lecture at the Y. M. C. A. Hall at Byculla in July last. The subject of his lecture was: "My view of Life as a Jew," a summary of which we publish in this issue. Mr. Raymond spoke as a sensible and intelligent man should. He told his audience that though he is a Jew, he does not believe all the extravagant things the average Jew is apt to in matter of religion and customs.

* * *

A Roman Catholic friend of mine, an intelligent lawyer, told me the other day that he was greatly edified by a sermon on the Trinity preached by a Jesuit some time ago. In the opinion of the lawyer, that priest made it clear as daylight what the Trinity is and what is meant by it. I could only congratulate him as being one of those rare mortals who have completely understood that theological tangle. Incidentally, this shows how even a fairly educated man can be mystified by religious belief.

My friend, of course, confessed that he had not the slightest idea of the interminable wrangle and the great upheaval this question of the Trinity gave rise to. He appeared incredulous when I told him that this single question absorbed the attention of the Church for four hundred years, caused numerous schisms and and sects and the death of hundreds of thousands of Christians who fought like wild beasts over the proper status of Jesus in the pantheon. Some maintained that he was HOMOOUSIOS, that is to say, he was of the same essence with the Father, yet a different person, and one with, yet born of the Father; others maintained vehemently that he was HOMOIOUSIOS, that is to say, God born in time and of similar essence with the Father. When it came to define the status of that mysterious being, the Holy Ghost, the dispute rose to fever heat. After 400 years of interminable quarrel which caused much hatred and bloodshed the question was at last settled in Oecumenical Council and became the dogma of the Church as we have it now. It is clear that these infallible people were not enlightened by the Holy Ghost on the subject as the Ghost, itself, was one of the subjects under dispute.

* * *

Speaking of this question in his latest book, Mr. H. W. Nevision, the well-known writer says:—

"The distinction between all these sects and heresies are hardly comprehensible except to the inspired subtlety of theological brains. Yet in the days of their origins the hardly preceptible differences and dogmas were matter of life and death, urged with a conviction so self-assured and a hostility so envenomed that hundreds of thousands of men, women and children were slaughtered in their defence or denial, and controversies over the unity or double nature of Christ's person or will caused as many violent deaths as the denial and assertion of his divinity."

It is indeed merciful that the Christians are mercifully unaware of all this. In their extreme innocence and naivety they imagine that from the beginning God, himself,inspired all the dogmas which form the creed today. *Beati pauperes Spirituo.*

* * *

It is with great regret that we announce the death of Mr. F. S. Taleyarkhan, Barrister-at-law, one of the most eminent lawyers of Bombay. This sad event took place suddenly the other day. As our readers know, Mr. Taleyarkhan and Mr. C. Kanuga, also a great lawyer of this city, undertook to defend us in February last when we were charged under Section 295A I. P. C. with offending the religious susceptibilities of Mahomedans and Catholics. Though Mr. Taleyarkhan was not a Rationalist at the time of his death, he was for many years a member of the Rationalist Press Association of London. He had great sympathy with Rationalism. We offer our deep condolence to the bereaved family, specially to his son, who is also a Barrister-at-law. He helped his father greatly in our case.

THE ALLEGED DEATH OF "SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM"

The absurd belief-so widespread, mostly in English-speaking countries only, that the recent discoveries in physical science have killed the scientific materialism of the last century could not fail, in due time, to reach Bombay. Considering that this belief which has been so sedulously and casuistically fostered by clerical propagandists (especially of the Protestant sects) and so credulously imbibed by many simple souls, thanks to the active enterprise of newspapers and magazines of England and America, it is certainly remarkable that it took such a long time to figure in our newspapers here as sensational news. But the silly news sooner or later had to come. The address of Sir James Jeans at the meeting of the British Association in Aberdeen last month was, perhaps, the long-sought occasion for a paper like "The Times of India" to inform the Bombay public of the awfully sad news of the demise of the Victorian Science. This occupied the leader columns of that paper and anything more silly is hard to imagine. One of the readers of that paper, however, evidently did not think so. He immediately wrote a long rigmarole praising and admiring that leader for the wise things said on the occasion, and he added his own conviction that

the Scientific Materialism of the last century was, indeed, dead as the dodo! Both that leading article and the letter in question could not fail to lecture us very solemnly on the fallibility of science and the enduring verities of religion. Both assured us that it was the new discoveries in science which have operated so fatally on the old theories. These new discoveries, it would appear, are so significant that a perfect intelletual revolution has set in and with it so complete a new orientation, as to make a revised interpretation, both in science and philosophy, inevitable. What these new discoveries are and in what way they have discredited the old science, was, of course, left for the readers to find out, as it is not improbable that both the writer of that leader and the admiring correspondent, with millions of other folk who repeat this, had not the slightest idea of what it is all about. The thing that mattered was to repeat the usual nonsense one hears so often nowadays. Although we were certain that all this was pure Greek for the average newspaper reader of Bombay, we thought it necessary, in the interest of truth, to challenge this mischievous misrepresentation of the real state of things in the scientific world. We are sorry to say that our effort in this direction proved a failure for the simple reason that the paper in question was in no mood to be contradicted and it simply ignored a letter addressed to it on the subject. Incidentally, this explains why it is so difficult to contradict this silly misrepresentation.

Fortunately in Bombay, there are other papers with a better sense of impartiality and fair play and we had no difficulty in persuading the courteous editors of the Bombay Sentinel and the Bombay Chronicle to allow us the use of their columns for a true exposition of the question. In three short articles we were thus able, to the best of our abilities under the circumstances, to explain how this news originated, namely, the apparent confusion that the Theory of Relativity brought on the question of Space, Time, Causality and certain other cosmological problems; the interesting revelations of the Quantum Theory, the composition of the Atom and some other discoveries in physical science which have been interpreted by many to be of so revolutionizing a nature as to upset completely the old theories on on the nature of matter and energy. These and the mystical speculations of some scientists encouraged the pulpit and the press to spread the news that modern scientists were abandoning the old materialistic attitude and were doing their utmost to reconcile science with religion. As far as this goes, there is really nothing of a sensational nature about this. Ever since Darwinism came in conflict with religious teaching, one has often heard this outcry against "Materialism" and the assurance that such a goldless doctrine would die a speedy death. We have heard too often of the death or impending death of Darwinism proclaimed by half-educated priests and parsons to wonder that they only require but the scantiest encouragement to proclaim from the housetop the discomfiture of science and the revival of religion. This is indeed their old game. Only this time the clamour has become much louder owing to the fact that a powerful propaganda, supported by some scientists eminent in their own fields, has feverishly worked in favour of religion at the expense of science said to be discredited! It may not be out of place

here to remark that the bogey of Bolshevism is probably at the bottom of this ardent desire to revive religion, and that these mystical and politically-minded scientists consider it a patriotic duty to discourage anything likely to foster a "godless" society as Russia is trying to do.

To refer to our articles in the Bombay Sentinel and the Bombay Chronicle, following the lines laid down by Mr. Joseph McCabe in his admirable book "The Riddle of the Universe today", we drew attention to the fact that it was ridiculous to speak of Scientific Materialism as Science could not be anything else but materialistic seeing that in all the branches of knowledge it deals with, it is, and can only be concerned with the study and investigation of matter and energy in all their properties. That people who were repeating all the nonsense they read on the subject in newspapers, religious journals and magazines, had not the slightest idea of what they were talking about, and if pressed to explain what they understood by scientific Materialism and how the new discoveries have killed it would be utterly unable to answer coherently. Attention was also drawn to the fact that it was idle to speak of the annihilation of the old science considering that our civilization with all the magnificant scientific discoveries and inventions that have enriched it are based on the old science and that these new discoveries have not added to them as yet in a practical manner. One would have thought that this should have been enough to convince thoughtful people that all this talk of the death of the old science was pure nonsense not worthy of a moment consideration. But no. A few readers of those papers would have it that it is true that the new science, as they call it, has discredited and killed the old, though they could not say how. All they did was to quote vague statements from various encyclopedias and sundry books and other publications that it was so. It is evident that these people could not understand that our contention precisely, was that such publications are responsible for these extravagant and erroneous opinions.

No Rationalist should allow these misrepresentations to go uncontradicted. He should remind people who glibly talk of Materialistic Science and so forth that it is religion, indeed, which is grossly materialistic. With all their mystic talk which they imagine to be very spiritual, their conception ofwhat they imagine to be supernatural things is nothing but materialistic. Their heaven with their god sitting on a throne, their hell full of fire, their souls which are sentient, their angels who weep at the sight of a converted sinner, their devils with horrible black bodies and long tails, have all been drawn from pictures in this materialistic world!

For us, Rationalists, all these agitations and rejoicing about the discomfiture of Science and the revival of religion are indeed good news. They show the desperate state in which religion has fallen and the mighty efforts that are being made to give it a longer lease of life. Theologians are catching at every straw they can lay hold of. They claim that Mind is beyond the province of Science to investigate. They consider it to be a mysterious something, immaterial and inexplicable. They say that as Scientists cannot explain it, it is a problem that concerns religion only. They claim that even if it is admitted that Man is ascended from the lower animals his

soul was implanted in him during a certain stage of his evolution and their god did it. They claim that Evolution supports religion in its contention that nature shows a purpose in its scheme and the finger of God can be discerned in it and finally they contend that even if the mythical part of Christianity is admitted, its spiritual value cannot be disputed and their profession is justified in teaching it. Roman Catholicism and and Fundamentalism, of course, are not bothered with what Science says or not. They continue in the old groove, depending on ignorance to carry on. To think that there are many wiseacres who believe that there is no longer any conflict between Religion and Science! One may as well think that eternal peace now reigns between the Deer and the Tiger. If a deep hatred did not exist between religion and science, one would never hear of such boisterous advertisement and rejoicings at the death of Scientific Materialism and the revival of religion or rather Christianity.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

GURU CRAZE IN WESTERN INDIA

The drift towards obscurantism and a vague fascination for all that is occult and against reason which has led to a blind worship of impostors even by a large section of educated people in this country was commented upon by Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, Vice-Chancellor in his lecture on "Rational Outlook" delivered at a meeting of the University Philosophical Association held on Oct. 2 at the old Chemistry Theatre of the Lucknow University.

Dr. Paranjpye emphasised that man being gifted with rational faculty should guide his conduct by reason alone and reject all theories of life that did not appeal to his reason.

It was curious to note that reason played a negligible factor in guiding the actions of a vast majority of people. In spite of their education they were as gullible as the most ignorant villagers and chose to be driven blindly in the fields of politics, religion and other matters by self-styled leaders who claimed to have derived inspirations from mysterious sources.

Apropos of the present superstitious mentality of a large section of educated Indians Dr. Paranjpye read two articles entitled "The Guru Craze" and "Modern Deification which had been written sometime ago but which still adequately summed up the blind worship of impostors by the present generation.

Referring to what he described as "the Guru Craze" Dr. Paranjpye said:

"To careful observers of the intellectual life of a nation it is no new thing to be told that there are ebbs and flows in the hold that several philosophies have upon the educated part of the community. Some forty years ago Mill was a name to conjure with and all educated people were followers of Mill, Spencer and others of the rationalistic school. After the exaggerated worship of Mill, or

rather in consequence of it, has come the reaction, when it is the prevailing fashion of the exponents of a mere dry philosophy, to sneer at him and his followers. The cold light of reason, so runs the fashionable cant of the day, is not sufficient to satisfy the wants of the inner soul of man.

Growth of Occultism.

"I do not, however propose to discuss the prevailing intellectual atmosphere of the West. I wish to refer only to a backwash of the same movement as seen in India viz., the growing tendency towards occultism among the educated classes of India. The increasing following of such cults as Theosophy, Vedantism, and what for want of a better word, we may call Vivekanandism, is due to the same intellectual or "quasi" intellectual movement. But in these instances at any rate there is an avowed appeal to the intellect. Close followers of Indian thought have recently observed a far more vicious tendency among the educated people of Western India at least. I mean the absolute abdication of all reasoning faculty which consists in adopting a "guru" in the religious sense of the word. A "guru" is a person whose every word is a law to his disciple and whose command is to be obeyed and not argued with however absurd it may be.

"Ancient Hindu books have fancifully exaggerated panegyrics of the "guru": but for some years after the introduction of Western culture the worship of the "guru" decreased. But recently we have been observing a recrudescence of the cult of the "guru" and of the growth of the practice among educated Indians. Leading lights of Indian society have fallen victims to this new —or rather—revived fad. The forms it presents are diverse. But it is interesting to consider the qualifications —or rather the want of them—that are absolutely requisite in a perfect specimen of the genus "guru."

Must be Shameless.

"The indispensable characteristic of a "guru" is a perfect freedom from all ordinary conventions of society, what we ordinary mortals would call a sense of shame. Sufficient clothing is not at all necessary and one may in fact classify "gurus" by the scantiness of their vestments. Filthiness of habits would greatly help in attaining to the select circle. Acquaintance with the inside of goal is no obstacle to this consummation. After some time, religion, caste or creed is a matter of indifference, Thus we may have a Mahomedan 'guru' of the Hindus. Reputation for possessing an ability to fast for a considerable interval is a sure passport. This may be a mere reputation, as you will not be called on to prove your ability. A few disciples properly trained will puff up your merits in this direction. A reputed abhorrence of money will work wonders. You will find in a short time money actually thrown at your feet which you may then carefully collect with affected indifference. A rumour about your having fallen in a trance will give no end of help. One trance—real or feigned—will enable you all your life to relate stories of divine visions. With this reputation to back you, it will do you no harm if afterwards you learn to bring on these trances artificially by partaking of 'ganja,' opium or alcohol.

Charmed Position.

"After the charmed position of a 'guru' is attained and you have a few disciples you may do anything you wish, Your circle of disciples will always interpret your actions in a suitable manner. Have you a special predilection for disciples in good official positions? You will be credited with the purest motives of converting the select of the land. If such a disciple builds you a grand house or sends you a parcel of strawberries every day, it will only be counted as example of his devotion and not of your wordly nature. Do you particularly favour disciples of the softer sex? It will be said in explanation that you are only following the proper way in uplifting the world as the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

"You will find that you are soon reputed to be a prophet. In keeping up this reputation you will have to exercise some common sense. But there are several ways open to you for this purpose. Of course the commonest ways is to give vague answers. But another and far better way of answering an inquiry about the future is to jabber out some entirely meaningless word or phrase. When a Bombay Shetia ask you whether his speculation will prove profitable you may reply that the mango in your hand is sweet? Does a racing barrister ask about the prospects of the horse that he is backing? A reply that it is cloudy to-day will send him into ecstasies. Is it the wife of a subordinate judge who wants to know whether the interesting event that is soon to occur is to result in a boy or girl you may say that the train is late. All these answers to your questions will be properly interpreted and always correctly after the event. Every such answer will only add to your holiness and renown as a prophet.

Tricks of the Trade.

"A few tricks of the trade have also to be learnt. First of all a 'guru' must have some pecularity which distinguishes him from other 'gurus'. Thus one may be a prostrating 'guru' as he prostrates himself before everebody he meets. Another may be a kissing "Guru" whose peculiarty is more agreeable. A third may be a blessing 'guru' blessing everybody he meets. Yet another may be a snuff-giving 'guru' who gives a pinch of snuff to his visitors. His disciples will be found to treasure up these pinches as precious heirlooms. Then a few idiosyncracies about your food and drink will do you no harm. You may be sure that your disciples will be keen in fulfilling them to the very letter.

Again it will be a very great addition to the holiness of a 'guru' if he is known to have been a great reformer before he turned his ambitions towards 'gurudom.' The more heterodox he was before his conversion the greater his merit afterwards. In fact there is at present no such royal road to popularity as to have one's fling first, and then turn a 'guru.' In this land of universal gullibility any person who is sufficiently eccentric is sure to get a following. If he be enterprising enough he will even be able to spread his fame beyond the bounds of India.

American Experience.

"A trip to America will work marvels and some crazy Americans who are always on the look out for novelty will hail him as a new 'avatar.' The penny

magazines recording the doings of a microscopic society of disciples who in the universal American style have ready-made titles of Professor, Colonel or Judge, when sent back here will be used in its turn as a further advertisement of the 'saint' who has recieved recognition at the hands of the most advanced spirits of the civilised west—so would run the usual jargon of his duped disciples. Perhaps a 'muth' will be established with an appropriate brotherhood and the whole conspiracy of deception carried on with a perfect organisation.

"I do not mean to imply that the whole business is a tissue of organised conscious deceipt. Few are conscious hypocrites, a few others are self-deceived, while the vast majority consists of people who have a vague fascination for all that is occult and against reason and satisfy this bent in the way that offers itself. A few of these people have ulterior motives and should not be surprised if some of these were found to be political. But I appeal to the better nature of my countrymen whether it is in the best interests of the country to laud up such men—who to judge them mildy are self-deceived idiots—as models for the ordinary man to follow.

EVOLUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE BHAGVAD-GITA

(Submitted to the Indian Philosophical Congress, 10th Session Waltair.)

Never have the contradictions of society shown themselves more acutely than at the present time when the face of the civilised world "is lined by the ghastly and brutal features of barbarism that have taken shape so rapidly during the past few years." "Those that have thrived and built up their institutions on a false and unscientific practice of social life hasten to assist in diverting the minds of man from the real problems that face him." Prof. H. Levy, in the Literary Guide, Sept. 13th p. 167) A new distortion of science has set in during the past ten years that covers physics, Chemistry, Biology, Ethics, Aesthetics, and even to some extent Sociology. A deeper and deeper mysticism clouds intelligence and confuses the understanding. A close examination of the sociological problems of the time reveals the tendency toward Social Mysticism typified by the 'Creative Evolution' of Bergson, and the writings of ecclesiastics like the Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Barnes), Dean Inge (of St. Paul's Cathedral), Whitehead and Idealist Scientists like Sir J. Jeans, and Prof. Eddington. 'The Riddle of the Universe To-day' (J. Mc. Cabe, publ. Watts. London) shows that in every branch of science, the drive has been consistently towards a deeper and deeper understanding of the nature of matter 'both in the living and the non-living forms.' In the "New Background of Science" Sir J. Jeans argues (p. 298) that as the 'beginning of the road by which we explore nature is mental, the chances are that the end also will be mental." If the political face of Europe is disfigured by the clash of principles as between Russia, Italy and

Germany and the rest, the contrast between Idealism and Materialism is no less keen in Western Philosophy. The antithesis between Religion and Science, Theology and Social Practice, Philosophy and Life is obtruding despite all efforts to discover the formula of their harmonic application. The Bhagvad-Gita, that is claimed to have effected unity amidst the warring theories of the Darshanas, the systems of philosophy that grew in ancient India, and to have presented the essence of Vedic Dharma, may with some advantage be utilised to synthesise the Guana and Vignana, knowledge now available in the varied fields of Religion, Theology. Philosophy, and Science.

The dualism between mind and matter is an eternal problem. The Gita (XIII, 20) supports Descartes' position. "Prakritim Purushamchaiva Viddhyanadi ubhavapi : Matter and Spirit are both fundamentals, without beginning. This again is found in XV, 16, : Dva vimau purushau loke kshrascha akshara evacha : there are two entities in the world, the destructible, and the permanent ; all beings are destructible, while the unchanging is called the indestructible. While the ideal is conceived to be permanent, unchanging, perfect, and static. the world of matter is seen to be impermanent, changeful, imperfect, and dynamic.

The logical correlates of idealism and materialism are the illusion-doctrine, the Vivarta-vada, such as has been propounded by Shankara Acharya, and the Law of Evolution, such as has been formulated by western science. It is no accident that the idealist turns away from the fleeting forms of material existence, as unrealities, the product of Maya, ignorance, Prakriti, and in this respect the Hindu Vedantin, the poetry of Shelly and Wordsworth and the political and philosophical thought of Carlyle and Emerson are the predesessors-in-interest of the Church-dignitaries, and the Scientists of our day named above. The ideal is unmodified, perfect, absolute Truth, where-of the actualities of life are fleeting shadowy froms. The latter are relative and so false. imperfect. They are *Asat*, while the Reality is *Sat*.

The idealist stand of the Gita is transparent. 'Tvamavyayah sasvata Dharma gopta.: Then are Eternal Dharma's changeless guardian." (XI, 18) "Anadi vannirgunatvat paramatma ayamavyayah : without beginning, devoid of qualities, imperishble and Supreme." (XIII, 32). "Amritasya avyayaschahcha, sasvatasyacha Dharmascha : immortal, indestructible, of immemorial Rectitude (Dharam)." (XIV, 27). "Vedaishha sarvai rahameva vedyo, vedantakrit veda videva chaham : the goal of knowledge of all Vedas, the one knower thereof, in fact, the maker of Vedanta." (XV, 15). Alike is the promise of attainment by man of the Surpreme Seat called the Brahmi Bhuta Sthithi, (II, 72) which is eternal, and indestructible, Sasvatam padamavyayam (XVIII, 56) and everlasting, peaceful : Santim, sthanam prapsyasi sasvatam, (XVIII, 62).

The human spirit is invested with this ideal perfection when the Gita reminds us that weapons cleave him not, nor fire burneth him, nor do waters wet him, nor the wind drieth away (II, 23). "Nityah sarvagatah, sthanuh, achaloyam , sanatanah : perpetual, all-pervading, stable, unmoved, and ancient. (II, 24) There is a reality beyond phenomenal existance, life which is *Sat* and the unreal hath no being.

The truth about them both is seen by philosophers; (II, 16, Tatvadarsibhih, the seers of the essence of existence.) Those that take the stand on the Vivarta-vada, (the theory of illusion, that denies reality to the material phenomena) lay stress on "Nasate vidyate bhavo" (the Asat: matter has no existence. But the principle of conservation of energy and the indestructibility of matter that has been resolved into a unity in modern science by the breaking-up of the atom into electron-proton systems may be deemed to have been foreshadowsd in:

Avinasitu tadviddhi yena sarma
midam tatam
Vinasa mavyaya syasya na kaschit
kartu marhati (Gita, II, 17).

(That by which all the universe is pre-v:ded in indestructible. Nor may any-t!ing bring about the ruin of the imperi-shable one.)

We start therefore with the fundamental basis of idealist perfection which explains material universe negatively, by denying its existence any reality. We find an echo of this in Bradley's "Appearance and Reality" (p. 283):—

"The world of physical science, is not something independent, but is a mere element in one total experience." Sir J. Jeans relies on it. (See p. 68, the New Background of Science.) The material universe according to both is non-existent in reality, except in so far as it forms part of a universal Mind, which, according to the latter, may only think, Mathematically. "The old dualism of mind and matter seems likely to disappear ..... through substantial matter resolving itself into a creation and manifestation of mind. (Sir J. Jeans, The Mysterious Universe, p. 137). In annihilating matter the ghost of the old dualism is thus laid in peace.

There are two scales to the balance. Mentalism is one of the two, while matter is the second. Bradley treats matter as an element in one total *experience*, and as all experience is psychic, the idealistic predelictions of these authors are reflected in their language. Even idealism is a partial view of reality. The Gita seems to be more impartial, when it says: "Vishtabhyaha midam kritsnam ekamsena sthitho jagat." (X, 42; I pervade the universe with a fragment of mine, and yet remain whole.) This is in turn the echo of the Upanishads; the Purusha Sukta reads Padesyaha bhavat punah: I enter in the fourth part into making up the universe again. Padesya viswa bhutani, tripadasya amritam divi, tripadurdhva udaitpurushah: a fourth part of this Paramatma is the entire universe of existence, the three-fourth remaining indestructible, and self-luminous, high above the phases of evolution. The physical universe as an Amsa of the Brahman, however attenuated a fraction of its nature it may comprise, will certainly be reckoned to be more real than when it is swept aside as merely illusory. As Max Muller stated the objection to a wholesale 'Vivarta' view of life "there is always something on which illusion is at work, and which cannot be deprived of its reality." (Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p. 185), The concept of an Iswera fractionally entering into the get-up of the world has the added advantage that, unlike Jeans's Great Mathematician whose thoughts are unrelated to the affairs of actual life, much as the solution of conic sections does not implement human happiness. Brahman holds some stake at least to the extent of his fractional permeation,

in the course of its march. But it rests, in the human philosophers to shape divinity as they choose, in terms of the human virtues of mercy, benevolence, and justice or otherwise.

Writing about "Diderot's Atheism" Norman L. Torrey brings out the argument to a point. (See Literary Guide, September, 1834, p. 171.) "If God's justice differs from man's notion of justice and passes his comprehension, then man has no right to use the same term for both. If God's goodness is not our goodness, we should choose rather a meaningless term for an incomprehensible thing and say for instance that God is "blictri". It is the human touch that counts even in our ideas about God.

Modern philosophers have pondered over the Being and the Becoming of the Supreme Principle as phasal expressions thereof. A little reflection will reveal that these simply replace two of the trinitarian concepts of the Hindu Theology. Being stands for Vishnu, Becoming is Brahma, and nonbeing or destruction is Siva, the triple fundamentals of existence. How the universe of life began is indicated in the Gita (XV, 7):—

Mamaivamso jivaloke jivabhutassanatanh
Manashshathani indriyani prakritis-
thani karshati.

(A frgment of Myself, transformed in the finite world into immortal soul, draws close unto itself the six senses including mind, rooted in matter.) This cannot be explained in terms of illusion, for then it would involve Brahman in self-deception. Rather we see in it the attempt to explain the beginnings of evolution. Creative Evolution, with apologies to our Bergsonian friends "Bhutabhavodbhava kare visargah karma sangnitah : that act of giving away is called Karma which emanates beings." (VII, VIII, 3).

That process whereunder the Infinite is conceived as assuming the role of finite life is naturally called the sacrifice. We meet with analogous thought in the religious literature of the west, as when the Christ is understood to be the supreme Sacrifice of God, the Son, to God, the Father.

"Adhi yegno a hamevatra, dedhe dehabhrutamvara," (Gita, VIII, 4): the knowledge of Sacrifice describes Me, the embodied one. I, in the body am the Sacrifice."

"Adhaita matmahah pratima masjujata, yadyagnam tasma dahuh, prajapatir Yagna ityatmanotyetam, pratima masrujata." (Satapatham, XI, 1, VIII, 3).

(God created his image called sacrifice. Hence he is known verily as the sacrifice.) This is very near the saying that God made man in his own image. An elaborate picture of this celestial Sacrifice, Yegna, is contained in the Purusha Sukta, in which the Purusha is the *Havis* (fire-offering.)

"Yat purushana havisha", the sacrificial beast "Abadhnan purusham pasum" which is bound over before being killed in the ritual. "I am the oblation I am sacrifice, the offering, the herb, mantram, butter and fire (Gita, IX, 16)."

The world of matter has now undergone critical study. The battering of the atom under the influence of immense electric power has disclosed that what was previously believed to have been an indivisibe unit consisted of minute electric changes called electrons circling at proportionately large distances around

the positive proton, much as the planets in the solar system revolve round the sun. The atom is now found to be mostly empty space lying between them, just like the inter-steller space that divides astronomical bodies. One physicist pictures the proton-electron relation so that when the proton is magnified to the size of a plum, the electrons resembles bees flying about it at a hundrend yards distance. The mystery of the macrocosmic Akasa (sky) penetrates into the body of the atom no less and if photo-electric effects can trace the course of an electron, what else may defect the potency of the intervening void, from where it may be considered to have withdrawn itself? To admit that a huge proportion of physical nature is yet a sealed book, is not to decry the validity of scientific knowledge as much as to say that the material universe is itself a complete illusion. What is at least an Amsa (fraction, fragment, or emanation) from the Brahman cannot in reality be wiped out as non-existence. In fact some earlier texts in the Rig Veda and the Upanishads give place to matter at least as respectable as mentalism. I have referred to them in some detail in my recent book "The Composite Doctrine" and shall content myself with referring to one passage in Taithiriyopanishad (II, 7) "Asadva idamagra esit, tatovai sadajayata, tadatmanam svayamkuruta,', which apparently gives the palm the *Asat*, or matter. The Gita (IX, 19) declares: "I am both Being and non-Being" (Sadasatchaham Arjuna.) Yet in another context occurs: Aksharam sadasat tatparam yat: unperishing, Being, Non-beiug. That Supreme, (Gita, XI, 37). As if to emphasise that compound of oxygen and hydrogen is neither of them, the Gita (XIII, 13) points out that the primary principle could be neither Sat or Asat: Na sattan-masaduyate, but lies beyond the range of both. To identify truth with either would be a limitation, as much as to identify God with godness would be to fetter his omnipotence. His Vibhuti (Sovereignty) includes existence and non-existence, pleasure as well as pain (Sukham duhkham, bhavo a bhavo, Gita, X, 4) "I make good, I create evil" (Bible, Isaiah, XLV, 7). "Amritamchaiva mrutyuschа" (Immortality and also death, Gita. IX, 19.) To evolve a benevolent agency from the fundamental unity underlying these concepts is no easy task, and the divisions of sociological workers on distinct lines are nothing unnatural. The world is in need of an Iswara at once concerned in it, and seated beyond the range of its mundane considerations. No wonder that philosophical thought flounders in the mystery.

The trend of mentalism that relegated the physical world into an element of one total experience (Vide, Bradley quoted supra) brings forth the statement from Sir Jeans: "We are beginning to suspect that mind is the creator, and governor, of the realm of matter, the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown exist as thoughts." (The mysterious Universe, p. 137). Just as *experience* involves psycho'ogical processes, the correlative on the material side is represented by *event*, a word which since Einstein propounded the Law of Relativity has acquired a scientific significance. Just as events in history have their place and time assigned to them, in the scientific sense, all objects, physical and mental

are events. Each one of these events has its world-line, drawn precisely in its settings of time, place and circumstance, including its casual antecendents. There is no reason to suppose that the Bhagvad Gita favoured the mentalist description of the universe as an *experience* more than countenanced the fact of its existence as *one total event.* The use of the word Brahma-Bhuta in VI, 27, and XVIII, 54 is consistent with the physical view of the fundamental structure behind all experience. The contact with that unitarian element (Brahma Samsparsa, VI, 28) is a contrasted with intercource resulting from external stimuli which yield the dualism of heat and cold, pleasure and pain II, 14). Rather the analogy of physical entry into the subtle element named the Brahman is too long drawn. "Tato mam tatvato gnatva visate tadantaram" (XVIII, 55): having known me thus essence, thereafter they enter into me. The entry into this state dispels all illusion, and even at death it connected riddance from further rebirth (II, 72.).

Religious, philosophical and even scientific thought has been drawn into division owing to the persistence of the two fold method of approach, the natural and what has been called the supernatural. Attempts have been made to explore the avenues of compromise between them by thinkers of all ages. Historic conjunctions have helped either to bridge the gulf by tolerance or widen the breaches through persecution. The Sanatana Dharma has been the product of the diverse forces that operated in this country. It is no accident that in the Bharata Varsha, Aviroda the way of concord and tolerance is recognised as the supreme rule. In spite of the inconsistencies, the conflicts among the branches of knowledge, the desire to approximate to truth from every side is unquenched." Just as the Modern Physist finds it hard to dispense with either the particle-theory or the wave theory, as both help to expalin different phases of the phenomena of matter and radiation, and is thus forced to conclude, that electrons behave as particles under certain conditions and as waves under others, a synthetic view of both the Viverta Vada (illusion theory) and Parinama-Vada (evolution) seems to be requisite to comprehend the processes at work and form an adequate picture of the universe. "(The composite Doctrine, Passed through a gas, the train of electrons behave as particles, while their passage through a thin metal film produces the wave-like motion. It is alike possible to view the continuous flow of events which is the universe, both as an illusion, and an evolution, the gradual unfoldment of pre-existing stages." (Ibid,) If we are able to conjure up in our mind the rise and fall of the Solar Empire, the birth and extinction of the planetary family that resulted from the column of incandecent gases that was torn off from the body of the sun by the gravitational pull of another passing star, treating this as one event, we shall be able to realise ths possibility of a universal vision, whereof illusion and evolution are but partial descriptions. Yet it is not impossible to think of the birth, subsistence, and extinction of any of the astronomical bodies or groups of bodies as mere astronomical EVENTS. "The space-time continuum, that mysterious four-demensinal alley of Akasa and Kala, is the Adhibhuta (super-element) called the Brahman. "Mama yonir mahat Brahma-

(XIV, 3): this Great Brahman is my womb, and out of its evolves the universe. The release of the categories, time, space, casuality is the Vyakta (development) and Vikara (modification) of the Brahma-Bhuta. A movie-picture in which the drama of the rise and fall of the Solar Empire is crammed into a single show will perhaps express the Viswarupa-Darshan envisaged in the Gita (XI, 23, 29 &c.) As our powers of observation increase, as the speed of our experience is enhanced, the velocity with which the events shape themselves rises. If events are spread already in the space-time continuum, what constitutes our experience of them is simply our passage near them, like the point in the rim of a bicycle which touches the road along which its course lies. Our failure to have the entire photograph of the march of the bicycle on the road in our mind at one stroke of the display of the picture is the result of Avidya (ignorance by which we abstract away a fragment of the universe from the rest of the continuum, for which there is no warranty objectively. When we march on the bicycle along the road, spread before us is a stream of experience which we feel fresh at each moment, which would not have been the case had we the capacity to visualise the complete picture of our march at once. The sense of evolution, of progress is thus linked up with the same kind of abstraction, of fragmentation of the universe, of the delimitation of our experience there, confining it to specific bits of time and space instead of seeing it whole, the same process such as lies behind illusion, when we speak of the retrogade motion of a planet, or the march of the sun round the earth. The fuller grasp dispels illusion, as well as fulfils the path of evolution. He who is seated in the universal vision, sees it whole, and is in perfact peace and internal happiness (V. 20, and 24) Brahmani Sthitah, and Antassuhha...Brahmabhutoadhgatchati.)

The Gita does not ignore the fact that the universal Vision, the power to see it whole is not given in life, the span of finite existence. But the power may be developed to greater or less degree. "Divyam dadami te chakshuh": I give you the super eyes (Gita, XI, 8) and why not, when our microscope and the high-powered telescope supplement the normal sight of the retina, why not a faculty to see it fuller and better evolve in man? And the way of the development of that power of larger vision lies in detaching oneself from the lower stimulii. "Asanga Sastrona drudhena chitva" (having out asunder with the weapon of detachment, XV, 3). He who thinks on the objects of sense gets attached to them, and attachment breeds desire, and desire brings on anger, and anger disturbs knowledge, and the disturbed equilibrium leads to faulty memory, which kills reason, which in turn is the ruin (II, 62, 63). To get ever this chain of events, the balanced reason gets over good and evil, and that is Yoga, skill in action (II, 50). To him the benefactors and friends, foes, the indifferent, mediators, the haters, relatives, the asectics, and the evil-doers, stand on the same footing (VI, 6) and for him, happiness and misery, dress and gold, love and hate, fame and obloquy, friends and foes do not make any difference, for he is above the adjectival qualities (XIV, 24).

But in the fleeing poses of life is it possible to attain to the Yogic balance? (Chanchalatvat, VI, 33). Mental life is a constant flux, and cannot be arrested even as the flow of the air. (Vayeriva

sudushkaram, VI, 34). As the in-flow of oxygen affects the cells, the oxidisation of the brain-tissue lead to corresponding mental-processes. Hence the Hata-Yoga Pradipika say :—"Dugdhambuvat sammilitau ubhautau, Tulyakriya manasa marutau he, Yate marut tatra manahpravrittih, yate manastattre marutpravrittih, like milk and water both mix together, the mind and the air have similar action, where the air is, there the mind works, and where the mind is active, there the air operates," Not merely experience, but the whole gamut of existence inherest in the subtle Bhuta, element, the unitary principle." As the air prevades space, even so do being live and move in me (IX, 6)." One would put more than a mere simile, a significance higher than the mere figures of speech, something higher than mere analogy into the scientific content of these utterences. When the burning lamp it not disturbed by the blasts of wind (Yudha dipe nivatasthe, nengate sopama amrita, VI, I9) the Yogi that has attained the equipoise does not burn any portion of the tissue of his being. There is no exidisation of the brain-cells, or other portions of his physical structure. nor is there the expenditure involved in the processes of mentation.

The way of evolution lies in the elimination of these movements that injure the interests of the organism, and the perpetuation of these habits that further its growth. In the spiritual evolution of the individual self, the same method is indicated, the positive and the negative sides of which are both given in (VI 35), Abhyasenatu Kaunteya Vairagyenacha grihyate" by constant habit, and through detachment. The detachment. or turning away is from the reactions to the lower stimuli, e. g., of the senses, and the practice is the perpetuation of these movements that lead up to the further stages of evolution. The Gita lays emphasis upon this potentiality of "Abyasa" and the notion that it inculcates the fatalisitic attitude about the constant, unvarying soul-spirit of man is hardly justified. VI. 36;" It is possible by effect and skill to attain Yoga," Nor does the effort fail to leave its mark on the further stages of its evolution, as in the previous birth (VI, 43) which transmits the chromosomes imbedded in the cell-substance of the successive generations. For, none that did right may go amiss (Nahi kalyana krit kaschit durgatim tata gatchati, VI, 40) and even a mere contemplation of Yoga in thought excels the recitation of the scriptures (Sabda Brahma. VI, 44). The Yoga of practice (Abhyasa, VIII, 8) at all times (saveshu kaleshu VIII. 7) is the path of the deliberate, conscious evolution of the higher self (XII. 9) which is next only to be concentration needed to reach the higher perfection. The survival value given to habit which makes the burdens of life lighter, which enables man to overcome to obstacles, nay which in the end turns his very sorrows into opportunities for deriving satisfaction (XVIII, 36, 37) is nothing opposed to the formation of similar courses of conduct in the lower planes of plant and animal life wherein the principle of natural selection is at work. But that the capacity to conscious perception, and perhaps to little extent of introspection, has stepped some into human life, the selective tendency is the same in method in the higher as in the lower life.

Evolution leads from the comparatively simpler forms of life to the building-up of structures more complex, and more specialised in function. The fear envi-

saged as to the annihilation of castes and their Dharma (I, 40 is answered (IV, 13) "they depend on the differences in qualities and acts," and again (XVIII, 41): "they are natural divisions resting on propensities."

Whether one approves of the caste-by-birth system or no, the division of class is there, and with it the differentiation of function, an index to evolution. As to complexity of structure, few may beat the Gita ideals: when the world is asleep, I gather in the inspiration, and when the world is wide awake, I see that there is nothing in it (Ya nisa sarva bhutanam &c, II, 69). It is darkness under the merely physical sun, when we are not able to read the lesson of life preperly, and when the world gropes in the wilderness of night, the Yogi is radiantly alive. And again: He who sees inaction in action, and action in in action is the doer of all right action (IV, 18). This philosophy has baffled many a thinker. Vedic rutual is not the true Karma, or action, nor is mere conformity to known forms of life. Like the sleeping-top the Yogi is fully alive. His harmony is undisturbed, his balance profound, the gyrations do not apparently strike observation. He has given up the fruit of his aspiration, and is not attracted or repelled by contrary forces. It is complexity of structure beyond comparison, which adverts to the caste-division and yet could sing: "Vidya vinaya sampanne Brahmane gavi hastini, sunichaiva, svapakeshu Pandit has samadarsinah " (V, 18): in the eyes of the learned, the Brahmin, the elephant, the cow, the dog, and the Paraih are equal. The spirit of the samanas permeates its teachings.

Neither does the Gita over-stress the importance of the Vedas. Its attitude towards them is mainly selective (see II, 42 to 46) just as its explanation of the various darshanas is harmonic compromise. Give up the fruit of action, while acting, is both Sankhya and Yoga in a single breath, and it is not wisdom to see any difference between them (V, 4). The Vedas deal with the ideals to be attained by the three Gunas, but one should neither covet the fruits nor seek to retain them (II 45) and just as we use only so much water out of the tank full of water, even so, should the Brahmin derive like benefit from all the Vedas. Believers in the three Vedas conform to the ritual ordained therein, and reach the goal of enjoying celestial bliss (Cf. IX, 20) But that experience, however long, and well meritted, is not final. The merit decreases by user, and the usual cycle of ascent and descent occurs. (IX, 21). The Gita looks over the shoulders of the Vedic ideal and repeatedly states that the Vedas, the Yegnas (sacrifices) Tapas (auterities) and Dana (charity) are unequal to the Yoga enjoined by it. (See, VIII, 28). The Yogi is higher than the austerities, the knowledge of the Pandits, and the ritualists. (VI, 46). The capacity to see it whole (the universal Vision) is not given to the Vediclore, the sacrificer, the almsgiver, and the Karmadeer, nor the austere-mam (XI 48 and 53). Yet the paths of Karma, (action,) Gnana (knowledge) and Bhakti (devotion) are not set the one against the other. It is an interpretational harmony that it apparent in the teachings of the Gita. rather than that stringent regard for the Sanctity of the Word (Sabda Brahma), which characterises the firm adherence of the fellowers of other Scriptures. With regard to these, the attitude of the Gita is plain. "Ye yadha mam prapadyante stadhaiva bhajamyaham": to the manner

in which men resort to me, I respond relatively (IV, 11). It is really the product of high evolutional experiment that would detach itself from all aspects of individual identity and the self-effacement is perhaps no better achieved elsewhere than in the cosmopolitan outlook of the song. To the difficulties raised in the first chapter as to the conflicting forces ranged on the opposite sides both of which are drawn from among close relation? (I 37) the answer of detachment comes with greater force "Asakti ranabhishwogah putra dara grihadishui' (XIII, 10) unattached to sons, wife, and house. It is a pointer to social evolution based on the effacement of the prevailing conceptions of family-life.

CONCLUSION :

"The world by wisdom knew not God" saith the Bible (Corinthians, i, 27) "Bhaktya tvananyayasakya ahamevam vidhojuna: by devotion to me alone may I be percieved" signs the Gita (XL, 54). And the man consists of his faith, rather is he identified with its Saradhamayoyam purushah, yeyat chraddhaha sa evasah (Gita. XVII, 3). It is of vital concern to the race whether individuals place their faith rightly, on what their faith rests. There was a time in the history of man "of visiting the iniquity of the father upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of those that hated" the existing order of beliefs and dogmas. (Cf. The Bible, Exod us, XX). So the Gita (XVI, 20. asurim yoni mapanna &c.) cast into demonaical wombs, deluded birth after birth, and sank the unfaithful into the lowest depths. The old beliefs started with the heart of man "decietful above all things and desperately wicked" (Bible, Jeremiah, xvii, 9) even as his mind is restless, impetuous, and difficult to bend. (Gita, VI, 34).

But the faith according to the Gita rests on the evolutional betterment of the individual and of the race. Unlike the jealous God of the Semites, probably historic settings are responsible for the metaphysical stand that the Lord receieves neither the evil-doing nor well-doing of any (Gita, V, 15). It is indeed natural philosophy that relegates causality to the domain of nature, (V, 14). The manifestation of nature is invested with a reality, which is the bedrock of evolution. Nature is indifferent to human values, mud, stone, and gold, are the same to it. (Samaloshtha smakanchanak, Gita, VI, 8) and is not concerned with human relations of friend ship and enemity (mitra, dveshya) nor even spiritual merit and sin (sadhushvapicha papeshu, Gita, VI, 9). In fact, it is the possibility, the availability in nature of diverse and conflicting values, that renders evolution of all possible.

The process of evolution is known to divide activities into congenial an detrimental categories. Vairagya is the turning away from the latter kind, while abhyasa (habit, or practice) leads to the perpetuation of the movements helpful to the organism, be it the individual or communal. The increased complexity of structure and differentiation of function as envisaged in the Gita have also been adverted to. Those that would build a merely illusionist philosophy on the text are faced with these evolutional implications, and the basic matter frequently driven to the surface does no violence to either of the apparently opposed fundamentals of mentalism (Idealism) and

Materialism, On the other hand avirodha is a composite position blending the *Sat* and the *Asat* (sadasatchaham, Arjuna.)

Of the millions of elements that enter into the ocean of the personality, only very few manage to float to the surface, and enter into the limited field of consciousness. Of the millions of the cells that are discharged, only very few impregnate the ova. Of the millions that strive, a few achieve, and out of the millions, few do strive at all. Who may then explain how Shakespeare or the Budhha were born? Is it evolution or illusion? "Manushyanam sahasreshu kaschityatati siddhaye, yetatamapisiddhanam Kaschimmam vathitatvatah (Gita VII. 3.)

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

THE MENACE OF CATHOLIC ACTION.

After the preliminary agitation that had been carried on by the Bishops to prepare their "flocks", the Joint Pastoral Letter of the Hierarchy of England and Wales on Catholic Action was issued in May of this year. This initiated the formation of a National Board of Catholic Action under the presidency of Cardinal Bourne. The declared aim of this body is:—

> ...to unite the Catholics of the country of every political shade of opinion and of every social grade under the immediate direction of their own Ordinaries, in common action for the common cause of Catholic faith and morals

Or to use the comment of the Catholics Universe:—

> ...the scattered forces of the Catholic Church in England and Wales are now being mobilized into a well organized. efficient but pacific army.

This is neither the application of a new policy nor an unexpected event. It was already rumoured in September, 1932 in certain Catholic newspapers, that the Vatican had plans to co-ordinate Catholic Action in England and other countries. It is, however, another step in the systematic advance of Catholicism in this country, the significance of which all who have the cause of intellectual liberty at heart would do well to consider.

The idea of Catholic Action sprang up in the time of Leo XIII., and the principles on which it is based are formulated in his important encyclicals-particularly the so-called "Workers' Charter" (1891) and "On Christian Democracy" (1901). It has been defined "authentically" by the present Pope Pius XI as "the participation and the collaboration of the laity with the Apostolic Hierarchy" in matters affecting the rights and vital interests of the Mother Church. Pius X., in explaining the reasons for Catholic Social Action in his encyclical on that suject (1905) truly remarks:—

> The Church, throughout her long history, has always, and on every occasion, luminously shown that she possesses a wonderful power of adaptation to the varying conditions of civil

society;.....Always safeguarding her sacred rights, she easily bends and adapts herself in all that is contingent and accidental, to the vicissitudes of time, and the fresh needs of society.

In the modern age, when in many countries the Catholic Church lacks the political privilege and economic power (through land ownership) that it once possessed, it is dependent on the pressure which can be exerted on political parties or governments-eager for votes or afraid of popular revolt-through the masses it controls. It is only through its laity that the Church can exercise this power; for they can enter various organizations without meeting the same suspicion and distrust which the black robes of the priest are likely to arouse, and above all without committing the Church to the paticular set of political or social views and aims which the organizations in question uphold.

It should be well known, at least to Freethinkers, how Catholics have penetrated every Parlimentary Party in this country, successfully removing any open antagonism to Catholicism, and even influencing them to forward Catholic claims, especially in regard to their schools. It is well to remember in this connection the words of Cardinal Bourne when he was interpreting the present Pope's encyclical "On the Social Order" for British Catholics :—

> Happily we may safely say that there is no political party at the present time in England which definitely takes its stand on non-Christian principles..... Good, sincere Catholics have been Conservatives, or Liberals, or members of the Labour Party.

The Cardinal did not fail to add, in instructing the Catholic as to his attitude inside the party of his choice :—

> When his religious faith and his conscience come into conflict with the claims of the party, he must obey his conscience and withstand the demands which his party may make upon him.

Apart from the Civil Service and the police, the Trade Unions and Co-operative Movement have been the particular prey of this Church, for it knows that if it is to capture the masses, it must direct particular attention towards the organizations of the working-class. The rapid formation of Catholic guilds inside most of the strongest trade unions has been one of the most important aspects of this policy in recent years.

The Catholic Directory lists more than fifty Catholic organizations of national import in this country, each appealing to certain special interests, but all furthering the common cause of Catholic advance. Following the example of countries like Italy and Czechoslovakia, the work of these organizations is now to be unified under central control.

The forerunner of the present National Board for Catholic Action has been the Catholic Confederation, of which the Westminster Federation, under the strict control of Cardinal Bourne, has been the most active section, particularly in recent years. In its journal the Catholic Federationist (January, 1927), an article appeared on "What the Federation has done", from which the following is taken :—

> From 1906 to 1920 it has dealt with every Education Bill, from the Birrell Bill to the Fisher proposals: it has continually opposed Socialism, and

stood for the difference between Christian Democracy and Social Democracy; it fought and defeated Secular Education in the Trades Union and Labour Movement, and Divorce in Co-operative Movement; it has continually watched Catholic interests in the Press, Parliaments and Municipalities.....

In the Joint Pastoral Letter, the Hierarchy are at pains to emphasize in connection with the new National Board that "Catholic Action is above and beyond all politics whether national or international". For the Holy Father "has laid it down explicity that abstention from every form of political activity is a fundamental law of this world-wide movement". Then follows this interesting statement:—

The guarantee of its spiritual character and aims is to be found in the Holy Father's statement that "Catholic Action is, and always will be, dependent upon the episcopate".

Now it is undoubtedly true that one of the most important principles of Catholic Action is that the Catholics in acting shall never be more than puppets of the priest. Already, in 1901, Leo XIII. formulated this idea in the following words:—

Finally, we again enjoin, and with greater insistence, that whatever schemes people take up in the popular cause, whether individually or in association, they must be entirely submissive to episcopal authority.

For, said Pious X., in 1905:—

..... it is proper..... and Catholics should submit, like docile, loving children, to this maternal vigilance.

But is the Church then incapable of directing political action? When M. P's and potential M. P's were questioned as to their attitude towards Catholic schools in the 1929 elections, and their answers read out with appropriate comment in the Catholic Churches, when some of them were bombarded with threatening post cards at the time of the Scurr Amendment, was this "spiritual" and not "political" action because the Church controlled it? If in the interest of plain speaking and clear thinking we put this word-play on one side, the most that can be said about previous Catholic Action in this country is that it has avoided definite alliance with any one political party. For tactical reasons, however, the advocacy of a Catholic party for England has been negated by the Church. Here is a representative statement of the reasons from the Christian Democrat (organ of the Catholic Social Guild):—

Why not a Catholic Party? We remember an objection stated by the Cardinal, that the party, like other parties, would make mistakes, and the Church would be held responsible. There is the further objection that we should set ourselves apart in isolation from our non-Catholic brethren, and so sacrifice those countless and important, if individually insignificant, opportunities of penetration, permeation and leadership which lie upon us as a duty of apostolate and Christian patriotism.

In Czechoslovakia, however to take the example of but one other country, a distinction is not even preserved between the Catholic Parties and Catholic Action, as the following extract from the constitution of Catholic Action there illustrates:—

> Catholic Action is non-political.....; if however Parliament is occupied with questions which concern the Church or her clergy, Catholic Action also co-opts on to its councils the Parliamentary representatives of such parties as are professedly Catholic, and have included in their programme the settlement of Catholic claims.

If we consider the general aims of the new National Board as they are carefully formulated in the Pastoral Letter, it is clear that certain of them are only attainable through political means :—

> Under ecclesiastical control and guidance Catholic action will be directed to watching the Press and broadcast utterances for misrepresentations with regard to Catholic faith and practice; it will sedulously safeguard the interests of Catholic schools in the face of threatened inimical legislation ; it will defeat the principles of Catholic morality against the insidious propaganda of the new Paganism ; it will strive to secure for Catholics adequate representation on public bodies ; it will aim at co-ordinating and intensifying all the means hitherto employed to bring the knowledge our Holy Faith to the minds of our fellow countrymen both by the spoken and written word !

As in the past, so in the future, only with a greater co-ordination of effort through the new National Board of Catholic Action, the Catholic Laity in each of the political parties will fight for further grants for Non-Provided Schools, will oppose more enlightened facilities for disseminating birth-control information, will seek a tightening-up of the Blasphemy Laws and so on.

The study of this, as of any aspect of Catholic Action, brings one inevitably to to the conclusion that in matters of organization and tactics this Church, which manages to advance successfully a bad cause based on an out-worn superstition, is an object-lesson to us all in the Freethought Movement. The vigorous activity of many Catholics forms a striking and tragic contrast to the complacency and lethargy of many who lightly pledge their service to the cause Reason. It is true that we cannot secure unity and action on the basis of an obedience that results from fear, Can we not do so, however, as a consequnce of our conviction of the truth and the nobility of our cause? Let us take a concrete example. The average Catholic refuses to send his child to a non-Catholic school, without the consent of his Bishop, because he fears excommunication. Has the secularist not sufficient reason to withdraw his children from religious instruction at school, in the knowledge that such instruction is detrimental to the child's mind, and therefore, is a violence of its rights? This is really but an elemcatary form of Secular Action. But how many Freethinkers have fulfilled this duty?

ALLAN FLANDERS.

In the Freethinker.

BROTHERHOOD IN CHRISTIANITY.

As a result of English education, Indians who have not accepted the religion of the ruling power, have adopted the prevailing English phraseology to such an extent as to freely use such phrases as Christian fortitude, Christian charity, Christian resignation and Christian brotherhood. The Edilor of a well-known Hindu magazine has just told the missionaries that Christianity is losing ground in the cultured sections of the East because of the failure on their part in adopting "Christian" methods. Educated Hindus have, in consequence of their Western education, a very high notion of Christianity and its methods. Let us see, as a test, how far Christianity has promoted brotherhood. The history of Europe disproves the contention that Christianity has made for peace. There is close inter-relation between peace and brotherhood. Jesus taught his disciples saying: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," This no doubt implies brotherhood; but the question arises now, as it arose in his own time,—what meaning did Jesus himself attach to the term "neighbourhood"? His own answer to this question (Luke x, 29–37) was that it applied only to those who are our benefactors. The real attitude of Jesus towards this great question is explained also by his utterances and conduct as set forth in other parts of the New Testament. It is well known that in his magnificent mission of salvation he discriminated between man and man. He did not seek converts outside Israel and refused to give equal chance to all men. We are told in Luke: "The Son of Man has come to save men of the house of Abraham." Christ told his Jewish apostles: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and every city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Adressing them he thus made the point further clear: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God: but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them." Professor F. C, Burkitt, D. D. has stated in "Jesus Christ, an Historical Outline," that Jesus himself is reported to have said, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs," and further that the oldest repetition of this story tells us quite distinctly that he had not been sent to outside nations but the Israelities. Here the founder of Christianity places non-Jews at a serious disadvantage. All the same, Missionaries coolly tell the heathen that Christ alone among the world's religious leaders not only taught the truth but electrified world by his example in living the truth which he taught. Can it be contended, from what has been said, that he set a noble example of truth? It must be conceded that he does not go in his teachings just quoted so far as Jehovah the God of the Jews who, in order to find excuse for inflicting dire punishment on the Egyptian King hardened that man's heart. But St. Paul, who has played so large a part in building up the Christian Church, has in Roman ix cited Jehovah's treatment of Pharaoh as a Christian precedent. Christ himself has given proof of his "sweet reasonableness" by cursing unbelievers and relegating them

to "everlasting fire." Moreover, the Bible assigns to the heathen a miserable position. In Psalm ii Jehovah tells his Son; "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession..... Thou shall break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Colonel Seton (who has, on retirement from the Army entered Holy Orders and is now Vicar of Barley in Rutland) thus comments on this charming passage: "Surely that means the teeming millions of India, Africa, and the South Sea Islands, Burma etc., to whom we have taken good government and the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.', ("British-Israel, Fact or Fallacy? London: the Covenant Publishing Co., Ltd., 1918). Dissrimination and not brotherhood stands out from the use by Jesus of such choice terms as "hypocrites." "like unto whited sepulchres", "serpents", "generation of vipers" to scribes and Pharisees. The Western nations find ample authority for regarding all heathen countries as their birth-right. The early Christians adopted the principle that "all the wealth of the heathen world belonged to the faithful." (Barbeyroc in "Traite de morale des Peres"). Pope Nicholas II (1958-61) declared that Jesus had conferred upon Peter the control (*jura*) of an earthly as well as of a heavenly empire; and this phrase was embodied in the canon law. Another Pope, at a later date, asserted that James, the brother of Jesus, left to Peter not only the government of the whole Church but that of the whole world (*totum seculum gubernandum*). Pope Gregory VII claimed the entire Earth as the property of the Holy See; and on the discovery of America and the East (India) the Popes allotted to the Portuguese all lands to the eastward of Cape Nun on the African coast and to the Spaniards all lands to the West, the islands being regarded as the appanage of the Holy See. India was thus allotted to the Portuguese. The Christianity of Christ is well expressed in 2 Cor. VI where it is stated that there can be no friendly relations between believers and infidels. The Christian nations of the West have had no compunction in forcibly dispossessing the heathen aboriginals of their homes in East Africa and in relegating them to "Native reserves" which were of the least use to white settlers. But when it came to the granting of the franchise to Indians who had helped them in their exploits there was bitter opposition to the proposal from the white settlers. We have been told by the Rev, C F. Andrews that the Bishop of Uganda had probably done most of all to set the British public against the Indians by his presentation of the case. The Bishop solemly warned the government against any attempt to subject the Colony to a *condominium* of the Christian British and the heathen Indian settlers. Men of religion are naturally the foremost in carrying out the teachings of their religion. Sir Norman Angell writes in *The Fruits of Victory*: "Some of the worst crimes against justice have been due to the very fierceness of our passion for righteousness—a passion so fierce that it becomes undiscriminating and unseeing. It was the passion for what men believe to be religious truth which gave us the Inquisition and the religious wars." John Stuart Mill has thus dwelt on the effect of Christianity on its followers: "Armed with the prestige and filled with the scornful overbearingness of the conquering nation they have the feelings inspired by absolute power

without its sense of responsibility. They think the people of the country were dirt under their feet: it seems to them monstrous that any rights of the natives should stand in the way of their smallest pretensions: the simplest act of protection to the inhabitants against any act of power on their part which they may consider useful to their commercial objects, they denounce and sincerely regard as an injury." (Representative Government," Chap. xviii). The Rev. Dr. Thomas Arnold, D. D., the famous Headmaster of Rugby, has stated: "In a world made up of Christians and non-Christians the latter should have no rights." A writer stated in the Manchester Guardian Weekly" (May 6, 1927) that there is a "settled habit that assumes that the native exists for the benefit of the white man and has no rights where his interests conflict with those of his superior." Sir Alexandre Cardew has stated in the "Rationalist Annual" for 1934 that there was in the minds of good Christians such an almost *generic* difference between Christians and "the heathen" that no one dreamt of applying to the latter the principles which held good as regards the former. This has been pointed out by Lecky in his "History of Rationalism" Vol. II, page 333.

S. HALDAR

LIFE AFTER DEATH

It is usually preached in the Catholic church that there is a life beyond death. Scientifically speaking, this means that "*conscious ness* will survive death." The idea that most people have about death is quite the same. That there is a "life after death" is the creed of each and every religion except Buddhism. Masons believe in the existence of the soul and Theosophist hold the opinion that we will reincarnate into a new physical body, and that our present ego may have belonged to some person who lived hundreds of years ago The conception of a future life, it will be seen, differs according to the creeds and countries of a people. But they all believe in the existence of the soul and in immortality.

Though there are prominent philosophers who support the idea that when we die we will enjoy a new life, it is quite clear that their strange conception cannot, anyhow, have any scientific basis, as we are but the outcome of human evolution and, as other animals, we will have to submit to nature's laws, The man's sum-total of flesh, nerves and blood, is all he is, and no immaterial substance can be found in him. The idea that we have a "spiritual" body is not logical, for if there is any non-material or spiritual substance in us we must think that this substance must have had its origin in our physical body, and that it will die with us. as must any intrinsic *force* of our body. Otherwise, we may ask: From where does this substance come, and when does it enter into our physicial body?" It is not logical to believe that it is insuffated in our body soon after we are born. It is also inadmissible that we are born with that immaterial substance, as the material cannot produce the immaterial. (See Russell's *What I believe.*)

It has been also said by many that the existence of the immaterial substance (soul) can be proved by our thought faculty. They say that it proves our spiritual environment. If, however, they could be able to perceive the weakness of their arguments to prove immortality, they would look at facts and see that the idea of immorality cannot resist any good logical argument. Consciousness depends on our physical body and cannot survive death as "in order to continue knowing or doing anything, we must have a physical body". It is absured to believe in such things as all proofs are against it. Death is the end of all life and it destroys all our faculties, and all our functions cease. It is the end of consciousness, and that "non-material" substance, the "life after death" and all such ridiculous things will never more torment our brain. It is the end of ALL,

R. S. FONTES.

Religion would cease to exist the moment it is admitted that death ends all. Priests must preach this with all the vehemence they are capable of, as their whole business is founded on this belief.

ED. REASON.

WITCHCRAFT RAMPANT IN ENGLAND.

Twenty Thousand People Practise Sorcery at a Profit.

Not long ago, says a writer in "John Bull" a Norfolk village was in turmoil because one of its housewives got a scalded foot. A day or two before she slammed her door in the face of a peddling sorcerer, who cursed her (so she said) and a few minutes afterwards a kettle boiled over on to her foot.

At Wolverhampton recently a man refused to give evidence in a court of law because the woman in the case was said to be a "witch."

A young London woman, with a small child, committed suicide a short while ago because another cheap necromancer had foretold a series of disasters to her.

One of them was that the woman's mother (aged nearly ninety, by the way) would die shortly: The mother did die, and the woman therefore assumed that the other disasters would follow.

This is the year of grace 1934, the third generation of compulsory education in this country; the age of the aeroplane, of wireless, of science, of the triumphs of man the reasoning animal, over the dark beliefs and inhibitions of his forebears.

The Last Witch.

The last "witch" was burned in England in 1784; some poor unfortunate old woman, no doubt. After that the law had had enough. It would no longer recognise a stupid belief by exercising its mighty machinery to suppress it. The law was repealed.

But, two centuries after, the belief in witchcraft persists in every part of the country. Every kind of bugaboo of superstition and idiot necromancy still prevails. Witches to-day, however, own rows of houses and have substantial balances in the bank.

Therein lies John Bull's chief interest in the matter. The gullible are presumably born with their credulity and cannot be blamed for it any more than a person with a physical deformity. There is a deformity which they can only cure themselves.

Exploitation.

But the exploitation of it is a different thing. It has been estimated by the police that about 20,000 people are now practising sorcery in all its various forms in this country, and practising to ample profit.

At Beverley, Yorkshire, recently, a woman sent to prison for fraud, sold a "love potion" called "Zep" prepared from "an animal bred in the East," at prices ranging fro £25 to £75 a bottle.

It was shown in evidence that she had succeeded in the getting over £400 from several woman in a very short space of time.

We have mentioned the case of the Wolverhampton man who refused to give evidence in Court because the woman concerned was a "witch.' In those same hard-headed Midlands, the place where motor-cars and machinery are made, there is a roaring trade done in love philtres.

In South Staffordshire, and in the heart of Warwickshire, there are modern sorcerers masquerading as herbalist and "psycho-analysts," who have a wholesale turnover in other forms of "mumbo-jumboo,"

For 7s. 6d., 10s. 5d., and a guinea you can buy gruesome natural preparations to ensure good luck, prevent yourself being "overlooked" or ward off every imaginable complaint from rheumatism to the "king's evil."

Dragon's Blood.

Dove's heart dust, bat's wings, goat's tongues ("killed when Jupiter is in the ascendant") and other offals are merely a few of the magic substances sold at the price of half a week's wages to the credulous.

"Dragon's blood," used by the ton by photographic block makers and by the paint trade, is sold in small bottles at 5s. each to country people in Cornwall, South Wales and Norfolk.

A small quantity of it smeared over the door lintel is supposed to keep erring husbands at home, and to attract a lover for the daughter of the house.

The Black Country seems to be truly named. A Staffordshire husband recently appeared in the police court on an asault summons. His wife had paid 10s. for a recipe for "love drops," which are wildly sold to credulous women, who are told that by administering them they can keep their husband's affection.

The husband told the court that he caught his wife pouring something out of a blue bottle into his tea. He demanded to know what it was, and when she told him he took off his belt and started to use it. The sequel to those "love drops" was an assault summons.

The same country is, appropriately enough, the chief source of supply for the deluge of amulets, lucky charms and other gadgets which are now pouring out as fast as the mills and metal presses of Birmingham can turn them out.

A Chamber of Commerce official recently estimated that nearly a £1,000,000 worth of them are being sold annually at all prices ranging from sixpense to jewelled signs of the Zodaic and cabalistic symbols costing pounds.

It is an ironic commentary on this that in a dozen "found drowned" inquests lately, lucky charms were specifically mentioned as being found on the dead person.

Superstition Kept Alive.

People who ought to know better help to keep superstitious practices alive and make hay for the sorcerers. A few weeks ago Gloucester Council, sitting in all solemnity, decided that the miniature horseshoes which form the mayoral chain should be altered so that the points hang downwards—their traditional position. The last mayor had them turned round with the points upwards so that the city's luck would not run out of the shoes."

And then there are the widely quoted visits of Society leaders and politicians to the various necromancers who flourish in Mayfair and the West End of London on five-figure incomes.

They have their counterparts in the hordes of cheaper sorcerers who prey upon the credulous in all parts of the country,

There is no need to mince words about this modern witchcraft. It is as much a fraud and theft as three-card trick.

There is abundant proof of its more more margin aspects. There have been half a dozen suicides during the past year by people bedazed and hypnotised by the gloomy prophecies or some of these pernicious soothsayers.

And there are plenty of places, particularly in rural areas, where the local sorcerer practically bosses the community to his or her ample profit, and to the harm of the inhabitants. Many country doctors can confirm from their experience cases like that of a Dorset woman who recently took a dying child to the local "witch" rather than to the doctor.

There is plenty of evidence to make the authorities bestir themselves and amend the law. To compel policemen's wives to act as "agents provocateur" so that an occasional crystal gazer can be haled into court and fined. is not enough.

This modern witchcraft has now become a profitable and a dangerous racket in this country, and it should be stamped out ruthlessly. Let the sorcerers try their magic on prison bars.

[It is not in England alone that many people still believe in witch-craft, sorcery and other occult absurdities. They are so all over Europe and America. Faulty education or the lack of it is responsibie for this. In Schools and Churches they learn from childhood of miracles, of the power of charms and amulets and the baneful effects of curses and so forth. Is there any wonder that such people will continue to believe in such kind of superstitions whether performed by priests, witch doctors or sorcerers?

ED. REASON]

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF
THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the masses of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

"Tambourine in one hand and gas bomb in the other" is the way U. S. Senator Bone describes the activities of a Missionary in Eucador, who sold munitions in conjunction with his reforming duties. The phrase, says the Montreal Gazette, recalls the witty remark of the late Max O'Rell, who said that the English did their civilizing work in the Dark Continent with the Bible and a bottle of gin. The English appear to believe a good deal in the civilizing influence of these Missionaries. Although the activities of Missionaries in India are very great, the net result of their work, so far, is very

meagre. From the point of view of conversion, it may be said to be negligible. In times of famine, a few thousands are converted here and there, and this fact has led one cynic to remark that these converts were "Bread and Butter Christians." These Missionaries, in order to attract would-be converts, depend a good deal on the medical relief they can afford to give to the people in remote districts. This, with their schools, absorbs a good deal of their activities.

* * *

Our late Viceroy, Lord Irwin, now Lord Halifax, appears to think that only these missionaries will succeed in civilizing India. At any rate, he is reported to have recently said in England that the salvation of India depended on Christianity and unstinted support must be given to them. This, perhaps, explains why the officials here have always such a soft corner for these Missionaries, whatever may be there denominations. If their schools are visited, one hears nothing but eulogies of their methods and efforts. One must certainly admit that were it not for the Missionaries the people of India would have been still without schools and colleges, except in the big cities where the Government have provided some. Take the case of a city like Bombay. Here, education is mostly provided by the Jesuists and R. C. nuns, while the Missionaries of the Protestant sects have also numerous schools, colleges and so forth. Dr. Paranjpye, in his book, "The Crux of the Indian Problem", has well described the nature of education in India and the disadvantages of teaching in such a country as India.

* * *

That mysticism often causes madness is, of course, well known. The following sad case taken from "Le Journal" of Paris of the 3rd November last is very interesting.

"On the 2nd of November last, a well-dressed man of respectable appearance, aged about 44 years, presented himself before the priest of the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris and declared to him that he had just killed his mother because she was Satan, himself, under the guise of his mother. Not believing what he said, since he knew him to be a country man who belongs to a good and respectable family, the priest, all the same, took him to the nearest police station where the Russian, (for he was one) made the following statement:—

"My mother was a Lutherian and I recently got converted to the Orthodox religion, which is the only true one. For a long time now, I am struggling against Satan, who has assumed the shape of my mother. Since then, we have only had one idea, and that was to kill my mother who is Satan. Last night, at about 4 a.m. I got up. God, then, commanded me to kill the enemy. I could not back out of this divine command. At that moment my mother ceased to be my mother, but she became truly the evil one whom it was necessary for me to destroy. I threw her down and strangled her till she died. She struggled and scratched me, but I prayed to God to give me the strength and I choked her to death. Replying to the Commissioner who asked him if he did not regret having done such an act, he said; "No, I have done my duty, you can do what you like with me."

* * *

The Police immediately went to the place where the Russian said he lived, and true enough, they found that he had strangled his mother who was already cold.

After a little while, a pastor of the Lutherian Church in Paris, came to the police station and made the following declaration:—

"I have known De Brix (the name of the Russian) long before his conversion to the Orthodox faith. He belongs to a good and respectable family. He and his mother were refugees from Russia to Paris during the Russian Revolution. His father was a Colonel in the Imperial Army. Many times De Brix has asked for my advice in his religious difficulties, and I found that his mind was rather deranged. Eight days ago, I saw him when he told me, in a very mysterious manner, that he had received a very important communication from St. Theresa of Lizieux (also known as the Little Flower of Jesus)."

A neighbour of the Russian also made a statement to the effect that of late he had appeared deranged in mind and used to talk incoherently mixing up Satan in his conversation.

* * *

When one thinks that the Christian religion is nothing else but the teaching how man is constantly agitated by the Devil and what he must do to escape his snares, he wonders that there are not more cases of insanity among staunch believers in that religion. Some denominations of religion picture the wrath of God, and the malice of the Devil in such lurid and awful fashion that despair must fill the minds of many in their helplessness to escape the anger of one and the machinations of the other. It is really fortunate that very few, indeed, even among staunch believers dwell constantly on these gloomy features of their religion. Christianity is the only religion that has surrounded death with all the terrors one can possibly imagine.

* * *

Our readers must have read with surprise the wicked and malicious attacks in the Times of India by two individuals on this Journal and our Association.—While the Times of India, by publishing such baseless and cowardly allegations against us, undoubtedly showed its bias and prejudice against Rationalism, we must express our thanks to the Bombay Sentinel and the Bombay Chronicle who allowed us the use of their columns to expose thoroughly the nature of these attacks and the motives that prompted them. Bombay is really fortunate in possessing two such papers as the Bombay Sentinel and the Bombay Chronicle which are fast becoming the most popular papers of the Western Presidency. They deserve their sucess on account of their impartiality and fearlessness.

* * *

Like many others, General Smuts sees grave and immediate danger in the political situation of Europe.—Speaking recently at the St. Andrews University in Scotland, he said that he was not so afraid of the possibility of another great war as he was of the decline in individual freedom in many European countries including England. "I fear this new tyranny more than I fear the danger of another great war. Even in this island home of constitutional freedom I do not know that you are immune. Democracy seems to be going out of favour and unless its methods can be overhauled, its unpopularity may involve the cause of liberty itself." There is no use denying the fact that the tendency all over is for autocracy. We are on the tide of reaction and no mistake

about it. Who can say that this is not one of the baneful effects of the last disastrous war? I think that they are again working feverishly for another. Our civilization is really surface deep and there is yet too much of the cave-man in most of us. Who was it who recently said:—"After two thousand years of Christianity we are still at the Mass and the poison gas? Yet thousands of pulpits all over the world assure us that Christ came to save mankind. Save it from what?

* * *

A French aeroplane recently met with disaster in Africa and it is believed that it fell in a village in Portuguese West Africa and that the two pilots were eaten by cannibals who still exist in those places. The Portuguese authorities, it would appear, showed their unwillingness to help in the investigation of this disaster and even the French authorities in Africa, from where the aeroplane started, did not appear very keen on investigating the disaster thoroughly. The wife of one of the pilots, however, organized a party and made a thorough search and succeeded in locating the place of the disaster. It was only then that the Portuguese authorities made up their mind to go through the matter properly. From the first they showed their inclination to use violent methods with the natives to find out what had become of the plane and the pilots. Some of the natives, after great difficulties, confessed that one Alfredo, a converted native to Roman Catholicism, who was dreaded as a great sorcerer in the village, had, with his friends, eaten the two pilots and buried the plane in the sands. He had, it is stated, threatened the blacks with the greatest punishment, through sorcery, if they divulged the secret. When apprehended, Alfredo refused to talk as did his confederates. The Portuguese then applied their methods to make them talk. We will let Monsieur Didier Poulain, the special representative of Le Journal sent to Portuguese West Africa to further investigate the matter, speak:—"On the outskirts of the village of Susanoh a great scene was enacted. Yells and howlings were incessant, blood flowed and blows from the "palmatore" punctuated the answers of the blacks who were questioned. What is the "palmatore"? Well, it is a club, very much like the wooden mallet of a washer-woman. Holes are bored through it which act like suckers when it strikes the flesh. About the tenth stroke the skin bursts and the flesh is torn. From that moment, the torture becomes unbearable. If this is not enough, there remains "le carcan a crane" which I call thus from ignorance of its true name. It consists of two pieces of bamboo placed on either side of the head and they are progressively tightened by means of a piece of rope. When these methods were applied the natives made up their minds to speak."

* * *

It transpired that the villagers confessed that the aeroplane fell in their village and that Alfredo dispatched the pilots and ate them with his friends. As Alfredo would not confess completely, in spite of the torture, he was hanged to the nearest tree. Mme. Gate, wife of one of the pilots, implored the Portuguese authorities not to use cruel means to extract confession. To which she was replied by the Portuguese authorities:—"Madame, laissez nous mener l'enquete comme nous l'entendous. Nous ne reculerous devant rien pour savoir la verite". She especially begged for the life of an old villager who was not

only weak and old. but also one-sighted; but the poor fellow was hanged without ceremony. Then followed a general massacre in which many natives were exterminated and their village burnt down.

* * *

The methods of the Inquisition in the twentieth century! Who would say that we are civilized? We are still cave men and we show it at the slightest provocation. To think that even Le Journal does not altogether condemn this savage procedure to extract confession is remarkable for it says:—"Ces procedes sont barbares et cruels, mais il faut reconnaitre qu'avec les sauvages aussi primitifs, les methods europennes resteraient sans effet. Et n'oubliez pas que siles Portugais y font appel. a regret, tres certainment—c'est pour retrouver l'equipage d'un avion francais". It is pleasing for us to note that the English would never resort to such extreme methods in trying to extract confession from even such primitive people.

* * *

Our best congratulations to our President, Dr. Deshmukh, in his great triumph and victory in the last election in Bombay for the Legislative Assembly.

THE TRUTH OF EVOLUTION

Sir Arthur Keith some years ago reminded us in his Presidential address of the British Scientific Association, the proofs of the truth of Evolution have become so overwhelming that only a blind idiot would refuse to recognize them. There were many such fools in the world as recently as twenty years ago, and, as we are now, there are millions among the so-called educated who have not the slightest idea what Evolution really means. All they have heard about that word is something that makes them laugh, namely, that a certain person named Darwin was stupid enough to say that once upon a time monkeys became men. They have heard the story from their priests and parsons who could not control their laughter when they told them to what length some scientists would go in their attempt to dethrone God and ridicule religion. In some countries like Tennessee in America, these ignorant bigots have actually succeeded in preventing the teaching of Evolution, and the Roman Catholic Church, which commands the adherance of millions of people, continues to teach the story of Creation, according to the Jewish Bible! Though it does not dare contradict openly the teaching of science on the subject, it privately insinuates that Evolution is not true. Pius the Ninth, in his famous Quanta Cura, actually condemned the teaching of modern science and pronounced an anathema on those who do not believe that man was created by a Personal God out of dust and woman was formed out of one of his ribs! Well, we will let the Catholic and the Fundamentalist believe what they like. but one is

pleased to note that among earnest seekers after Truth the truth of Evolution is being generally recognized.

It must, however, be recognized that among many of these there is still a strong desire to placate religion by suggesting that God chose the method of Evolution to create the world and its living beings and that the process of Evolution bears unmistakable evidence of the orderly progress which could have only emanated from the Divine Mind.

Such an attempt is made by twenty-four scientists in a book "Creation by Evolution," edited by Francis Mason (Duckworth & Co., London). It is claimed that the author of each paper has chosen the evidence for evolution from facts with which he is in intimate touch and to the elucidation of which he himself has contributed very largely. The reviewer of that book, in "The Hindu" of the 8th November last, seem to have been so impressed with the array of scientists who have discovered the finger of God in the evolutionary process, that he cannot help expressing his admiration thus ;-"That so many biologists", he says, "should agree on the basis of evidence at their disposal that there has been orderly progress from the dawn of life is in itself conclusive evidence to prove that there has been creation by evolution." The special creation idea of theologians is made to look grander because "Is not creation by evolution a far more exalted conception than any creation by fiat imagined of old"? And does it not reveal a God hand infinitely worthy of obedience and adoration"? Like our Brahmin friend. we must exclaim Wah? Wah!! to this. It is only a strong desire to coquette with religion that can make some men of science (not all eminent biologists in the list of contributors of that book) to find "a God hand infinitely worthy of obedience and adoration" in this creation of evolution as they call the series of changes that have taken place on this planet, both in the inorganic and organic worlds

When one remembers that it has taken Nature (blind nature at work) millions and millions of years to turn the simplex into the complex after repeated failures and enormous waste of life as palæontological records clearly show, one must conclude that Nature has tried her clumsy hands at it after inconceivable ages and countless failures to produce Man, the highest product of evolution so far. Can one discover any orderly progress in the creation and the extinction of such monsters as the dinosaurs, the brontosaurs, the megalosaurus; in fact, all the horrors of the reptilian age and other clumsy creatures that have mercifully been extinct? If a God hand, infinitely worth of obedience and adoration was really responsible for these colossal blunders and failures, one must say that it took him millions and millions of years to discover his failures, to try again for millions of years, fail again and so on, until the present forms of life have been perfected And are they perfected? Can one explain any divine wisdom in turning a mammalian like the whale into an aquatic animal with vestigial limbs ? Or the reason why such a monster like the crocodile should have survived its horrible contemporaries which perished millions of years ago ? Imagine the hippotamus, the rhinoceros, the elephant, the python, and other clumsy and curious creatures to have been created by a being who aimed at order and progress in his mighty work ! The whole idea when one

thinks of it is absurd in the extreme. On the contrary, it makes the Godhead ridiculous in the eyes of scientific and thoughtful men for they must naturally ask :-"Was it necessary for a Wise and and Omnipotent being to take millions and millions of years to do what, with intelligence and foresight, he could have accomplished in the twinkle of an eye?" With the rest of the review of that book by "The Hindu" we are in cordial agreement. It is quite true that "the vast amount of biological knowledge, anatomical, embryological, palaeontological, geographical and physiological, accumulated by patient research during the last fifty years can only be explained on the basis of evolution.

It is only evolution that can explain the meaning of the general similarity of plan which exists among the vetebrates both in regard to external morphology and internal structure.

It is only evolution that can explain the occurence of vestigial organs such as the claws at the sides of the vent of the python, the reduced wings of the Kiwi, the femur of a whale, the ear muscles, and the vermiform appendix in man, and so many other vestigial organs too numerous to mention here.

It is only evolution that can explain why animals during their individual development show evidence of the racial history through which their ancestors have passed. Why, for instance, the tadpole resembles a fish ; why a lizard or a chick, when developing inside the egg, shows gill slits? Why at a certain stage of development the embryo of a pig, dog, or monkey, cannot be differentiated from one another, and why that of man also, at a very early stage of development, resembles that of any of the animals just mentioned. It is quite true, as the reviewer says, that the theory of Special Creation is helpless in the face of such facts as these.

A student of palcontolgy who would remain unconvinced before the facts revealed by that science as to the series of life forms, both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, which have succeeded one after the other, must be regarded as a peculiarly unintelligent individual indeed. He would be at a loss to explain the pedigree of the horse or elephant, to mention only two animals, the life forms of whose ancestors are so faithfully recorded in the rocks.

When we come to ths evidence of the evolution of man, we cannot but be struck by the fact that it took at least two millions of years for the fully developed *homo* of today to have evolved from a lowly ancestor in Tertiary Period. Various "missing links" recently discovered show how slowly this evolution has been and how suggestive it is that natural selection and doubtless some other factors, slowly picked out man as a creature with a better developed brain to go on improving him until he emerges as the creature we know him today. Is there anything in this natural process to suggest that a God, whatever is understood by that word, watched for millions of years from the moment the tiny unicellular organism was formed till civilized man appeared on the scene? Unless we identify this "God" with Nature itself, it is almost ridiculous to say as H. H. Newman says that "Evolution no more takes God out of the universe than does gravitation." They indicate the methods used by the ruling power back of the universe. The Theory of Evolution, as has been said, does not deny creation; it merely explains the method of creation."

The candid and well-informed man, who has no desire to placate religious sentiment, or who is not himself a mystic, will answer "Bosh" to this statement. "The ruling power at the back of the universe"! What is that and what is it like? Is it an impersonal power, in other words, the forces of nature or the full-bearded Jehovah who has managed to get behind the scene of things to guide with his fingers the development of living beings. The very idea is absurd.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA ON THE RELATIVITY OF ETHICAL VALUES.

Moral agency rests upon freedom. An individual or society that has no choice is incapable of action that may be properly named conduct. It is no doubt impossible to remain totally inactive even for a minute.

Nahi kaschit kshanamapi jatu
thisthatyakarmakrit
Karyateh yavasah karma sarvah
prakritijairgunaih. (Gita, III, 5)

(None can remain really actionless even for a moment. For, helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities of nature.)

An act which cannot be helped does not afford basis for judgment. As with individuals, so with regard to communities and nations, ethical value attaches to such actions only as are the result of free choice. A downtrodden community that reacts to the spur of pricking iniquity has no moral responsibility more than the horse that chafes under an irritating saddle. The kick is but an impulse stimulated by sore skin. It is even a virtual deception to attribute agency for deeds.

Prakriteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani
sarvasah
Ahamkara vimudhatma kartaham iti
manyate. (Gita, III, 27)

(Deeds are the outcome of the qualities of nature. The fool deluded by egoism thinks "I am the doer.")

The ways of nature are inexorable, human wisdom notwithstanding. It is futile to think of overriding its dictates. How we act, feel and think is determined by the setting into which we have been carried by the current of evolution.

Sadrisam cheshtate svasyah prakritim
gnanavanapi,
Prakritim yanti bhutani nighah kim
karishyati (Gita, III, 33.)

(Even the wise man behaves in conformity with his own nature; all beings follow their evolution, and restraint avails not.)

An effort to stem the tide of natural processes is not merely doomed to failure, but is often fraught with danger. The path of reform is none to smooth. Very few indeed may detach themselves from their environmental trappings, and overcome the fear involved in breaking away from the familiar ground of Swadharma.

Sreyan swadharmo vigunah paradharmat
swanushtithat
Swadharmo nidhanam sreyah para
dharmo bhayavahah (Gita, III, 35.)

(One's own natural action though devoid of merit, is to be preferred to the duty of another well performed. Even death in one's duty is higher. Another's duty is fraught with fear.)

This is the confirmation of the path of action relatively to one's own position. Those that would sustain the conservative ground on the basis of pronouncements in the Gita must be prepared when the Song declares that such attachment is itself the outcome of Moha or illusion. Elsewhere in diverse contexts, the discourse turns upon the cutting off of the conventional relationships. (Cf. Asang sastrena drudhena chitva, cutting down by the weapon off non-attachment, XV, 3).

The tendency to identify oneself with events is condemned in unmistakable terms, and the spirit of Yoga, the capacity to retain the detached view of lifs, the life of mere Sakshi (disinterested witness) sitting indifferently (udasinavad asina) is enjoined. It is claimed that such an effort at Yoga will result, even if faintly commenced, in emancipation from great fear. (Swalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat, II, 40). In the face of the dynamic activity that the Gita ordains, it will be futile to seek support in its teachings for the reactionary position which the stablising sociologists wish to maintain. These that would chain human action for ever in the illusory faith that the final word was already said, the final deed was already done, and the final shapes was already given to human society forget the fundamental truth regarding life, viz., the central doctrine of the relativity of human values.

In an article "Coloured Vision" by Prof. H. Levy of the London University (see R. P. A. Annual, 1934, pp, 21–26) the tendency to leave out of account the most important element, the creative man, from the consideration of the world's economic, scientific, political, and social problems is brought out. Even while philosophising, man tends to isolate his concepts, as much as the chemist would isolate the phenomena of his experiment in the laboratory. "One of the consequences of the stratification of the society he builds up is to provide the unsuspecting victim who is born in it and bred in these classes with sets of values, dogmas, and interlocking forms of behaviour. While out of these he may erect a set of principles signifying something fixed and permanent to him, for which if necessary he will fight or accept martyrdom they are effectively rationalisations with a class and individual colouring. Of absolutes there are none in nature, other than the fact of existence of objective nature itself. Our pictures of the world are only approximate, their accuracy being relative to the state of scientific knowledge of the times. Our values again are certainly relative, borrowing the tints from the social strata from which we are drawn, and from those features of the world, that have specially stirred us in our encounter with them." (Ibid, p. 25). This tendency towards overstressed abstraction is responsible for the confusion at the basis of all calculation. The reflective account given by Prof. Levy brings to mind the peculiar fallacy attributed to the disciples of a philosopher, named Paramanandayya. They were nine in number, but when the revered guru (master) wanted each one to count them all, each would give out the number as eight, forgetting himself. It is the fallacy of the forgotten self. "Even Science that prides itself

on the fact that it stands above race, class and creed, is not immune from this relativity of values." It strips all human values, from the world, leaving man completely out of its calculations. The industrialist condemns science that carries on as if he did not exist. It discovers new methods of production, too fast to cope with. The very machinery becomes obsolete during erection. "What has science done for us," cnimes in the worker, "except give us rationalisation, and with it unemployment so that we are robbed of the very fruits it offers us." (ibid, p. 26).

While science ignores man and ignores society, philosophy loses itself in the speculation of the problems of the mind separated from matter. The worker and the industrialist change the face of the earth and create forms of society. He who is able to realise the relativity of these values is one who has thrown away the coloured spectacles.

Adhyatma gnana nityatam tatva
gnanardha darsanam
Etat gnanam iti proktam agnamam
yadatoanyadha (Gita, XIII, 12)

(Constancy in the knowledge of the real nature of the self, the realisation of the true essence, that is wisdom. All else is ignarance.)

The recognition of the fact that experiments carried on under laboratory conditions convey imperfect truth, that codes of morals formulated under conditions widely differing from our own have to be accepted with caution, that the so-called "permanent and fundamental principles" are "unconsciously rationalised from the particular society within which we have been cradled," is the true beginning of emanicipation through knowledge, the Moksha attained by Gnana. He who has realised this relativity is the seer, who looks beyond the temporalities of life. Having reached the ideal, no hankering is left in him after fresh pursuits, whatever his mode of life.

Ya enam vetti purusham prakritimcha
gunaissaha
Sarvadha vartamanopi nasa bhuyopi
jayate (XIII, 24)

(He who thus knoweth life, with the limitations inherent in its settings whatever be his condition, has nothing left to return for.)

To be aware of the relativity of values is in itself emanicipation from their supremacy. The Gita stands for Dvandva among the Samasas. (X, 33) "the duality of a compound." It can bridge the paradox between yes and no with a conjunction. The recognition of the relativity of human values is thus the attainment of absolute truth, the whole truth and nothing but truth. The wise man is not affected by the transformations occurring to individuals and societies in their limited histories. (Dheerastatra na muhyati,—the steadfast one grieveth not, II, 13.)

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

BEHIND THE INDIAN VEIL

MODERN DEIFICATION

(By an Indian.)

The agnostic philosopher has well said that if, according to the Scripture, God made man in his own image, man has retaliated and made God in his own image. Again, was it not Ovid who first said, and his words have since been copied by and even attributed to more recent writers, that if the gods did not exist we should have to invent them? In this country, this process of god-making has been going on at a furious rate since time immemorial. But since the advent of British rule, with its new ideas of science and logic and reason, people had for some time begun to think that the process had at last ended, and perhaps that even the science of god-making had become lost like that of mummification or staining glass. But no! if we read recent events aright, the process is again becoming very common. May be there is a sub-conscious feeling in the air that a large demand is likely to arise soon. Our forefathers had, as they thought, made fair provision for all eventualities by having once for all created thirty-three crores. But the last census shows that the population of India is fast approaching this figure and in all probability the Census of 1941 will disclose the awful spectacle of some Indians being left without one all to themselves. The figure that our ancestors had thought was so large as to be beyond the dreams of avarice is on the point of being exceeded even as many others only seen in the wildest flights of imagination a hundred years ago are being daily surpassed at the present moment. We propose to describe to the uninitiated some of the ways of modern god-making and enable them to guess the principal centres of their manufacture.

New " Raw Material "

In olden days god-making was the same as idol making and the only essential was a peice of metal or a stone of any kind and a hammer and chisel. Sometimes even this was unnecessary and any stone lying about immediately became a god if you put red powder and oil on it. At one time people suspected that Government was taking a great share in this manufacture by putting stones with red paint to mark the road boundaries in the country: but when ignorant people were discovered doing *puja* to these stones, the colour of these stones was changed to white which are now so many white Rao Bahadurs (R. B. Road Boundary). But even in the case of idols, many strokes of the hammer were required before perfect godship was attained and many a time have the saintly Maratha poets eloquently pointed out the moral that just as hammerstrokes are required before attaining godship, so great suffering and sacrifice have to be borne by frail man before he attains the supreme happiness of communion with the Creator. In these days however, the raw material for gods is a human being, it does not matter whether it a boy, a man, or a woman. A girl has not to our knowledge yet been utilised to this purpose in this country, apparently because many a girl has since the

creation of the world enjoyed devotion at the hands of others though this devotion is of a different kind from the one we are speaking about and there may be some risk of confusion.

The Complete Process.

There is no one patent process for this deification. You may take a boy and say that in his fifty-third previous birth he was a king to whom worship was done by the painted Indians of Mexico. You can then give the history of all his successive incarnations; in one other birth he in the form of an earthworm happened to have been unwittingly trodden upon by Lord Buddha, who greatly grieved over the accident and blessed him; in another he was Christ himself; in a third Joan of Arc, in a fourth he was a pumpkin which Guru Nanak ate when he was very hungry, and so on. Fortunately even the British Museum or the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris contains no records or references to these past births and you are not likely to be challenged as to the truth of your statements if you swear hard to their truth and pretend to have revelations in your dreams. If you make and keep a sufficiently serious countenance, nobody will think of the insult offered to the memory of the great persons with whom you associate your budding God. Then the best thing to be done is to send him to a European university. The efficacy of Oxford in this respect has been recently discovered and we have recently seen an advance proof copy of a hustling advertisement of that seat of learning in which in addition to its usual claim as the home of lost causes she claims to be the "Institute of Instructing Incarnations." The inevitable Satan in the guise of a father or some near relative will soon appear and the invention of a suitable name and perhaps the publication of a book in the name of the master will complete the process.

Other Methods.

Another way is to start as a very religious person, then pass through the whole gamut of religious sects, turn an atheist for a time, because the disciples of I. Q. C. get to know—or, what is quite as good, say that you have known—sages in the inaccessible heights of the Himalayas—N. B. This part of the prescription cannot long be executed after the labours of the Bullock-Workmans and others in the exploration of these mountains—and at last attain to the headship of your own sect with the help of visions of these sages. In this process you will probably shed a few followers, but that does not matter as those that are left are intended to complete the process of your deification. A Satan will arise in this case who will only publish far and wide this fact of your deification and lo! there you are, a full fledged "one of the greatest rulers of gods and men."

English blood or at least education in England are not absolutely necessary. On a hill near the town of Ardhaw we heard of a new god in the making some time ago, but our latest information is that the process was spoiled in the middle. This would-be god started brilliantly; after experiencing the state of atheism, which did not pay, he assumed a very humble name, fell at the feet of everybody, begged for a day or two his own food—in a few days this work was done for him by his pupils—dedicated temples to himself or ostensibly to his master and then began to prophesy and also recount the happenings in the past births of several people. But when he thought, good easy man! that full surely

his godship was a ripening, he met one who was his wife in a past existence. Having once studied law, the effect of which had not quite passed, he tried to apply the doctrine of priority. But his disciples had not yet seen their wives of their past existences and therefore took offence at this good luck of their master and spoiled what should have been a fine specimen of a god.

Others in the Making.

At the little village of Idris in the villayet of Kisan—from the name it ought to be in Turkey or Russia—there is another god almost ready. He does not go about dedicating temples. Temples are built for him where he stays. He does not prophesy in every intelligible words but his inner disciples interpret these for him. His general disciples feel great peace of mind in his presence, but so far as we know a Satan has not yet appeared. In fact he is comparatively harmless even to those who are not his disciples. His one characteristic is to ask money of all visitors, but of course you need not visit if you don't want to pay. He never shouts his godship from the housetops. But we shall only warn his disciples not to pitch his claim too high, as a reaction may follow.

There are many other gods in the making in various places. The unbelieving public will say that they have feet and even bodies made very much of clay. But what god ever was without his detractors? But even the relics on the plate of his half-eaten dinner or his spittle which the uninitiated will think too nasty for words is regarded by his followers as nectar fit to be stored up for their descendants. Who knows whether our grand-children will not find miracles worked by these holy relics?

HYPOCRISY RAMPANT

Truth stands no chance in a world full of shams. Honesty is theoretically recognized as a virtue, but if you try to put it into practice, you will soon find it is a prohibited virtue. Hypocrisy is the order of the day. Honesty is supposed to be good for children, so we invent lies in order to impress the value of truth upon them. The story of George Washington refusing to tell a lie and the one about Napoleon striking medals in advance to commemorate his anticipated victory over England, are well-known lies invented for the benefit of children. The copy-book maxim about honesty being the best policy does not sufficiently strike the imagination, so we must invent stories that will. Honest teachers may, indeed, go so far as to put undue emphasis on the word "policy" and point out that honesty is not considered desirable for its own sake, but only as a policy. Of course it does not take long to find out that it is not even the best 'policy' and that one may get into extremely hot water by putting it to the test.

In politics, of course, it is admitted on all hands that honesty is unthinkable. Powerful nations have to find plausible excuses for harassing and, if possible,

swallowing smaller nations, and where would they be if they had to be honest? That would spell the end of imperialism! How could they then pretend that they have a mandate from an obliging Almighty himself to govern as much of the earth as possible for its own good? In countries like India, which are for the moment concerned about their own independence—I hope this is not sedition—politicians with any ambition have to pretend that they agree or differ from Gandhi or the Government as happens to suit their particular purpose, and change their views as often as may be required by the exigencies of the situation, and in any case pretend to be honest all the time if they can manage it. Genuine honesty in politics is prohibited by law in all countries. In a recent sedition case, the judge openly declared that it was no defence to prove that certain allegations against Government were true, because even true statements may excite disaffection and thus be seditious. Then there is the Official Secrets Act. Most governments rely on lying and spying and treachery in addition to brute force and not only have spies in other countries, friendly or inemical, but assume the right to open the private letters of their own subjects, being perpetually afraid of political plots. Acts that would be considered extremely mean on the part of a private individual are a part of the current politics of almost every country, just as the murder of a person who has harmed you is a horrible thing, but it is extremely heroic to murder on a large scale persons who have done absolutely nothing to you, and you get war medals for doing it.

Law courts are supposed to administer justice and it is a pardonable error to think that justice has some connection with truth. In practice, however, it has none. We have already seen one case in which truth is prohibited by law. In that case truth is called sedition. In other case, it is called libel, which is also prohibited. Law courts are very funny places, provided you are not the accused. The law pretends that it expects witnesses to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. But lawyers have full licence to try their best to prove that black is white or that white is black, as the case may be, by a process of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. In fact that is their *raison d'etre*. A magistrate on the other hand is constitutionally as incapable of lying as the English King of doing wrong and is also constitutionally "learned". It is said that our Sages of yore could even compel laws of nature to adjust themselves so that even their accidental utterances might come true. Even so, a magistrate says "I convict you", and suddenly an honest man becomes a criminal, without redress if the magistrate keeps within certain limits.

Religions have the special privilege of being entirely based on lies, as they deal with imaginary quantities, endowed with still more imaginary qualities, which do not lend themselves to verification. Religions are terribly afraid of truth or even any theory opposed to their tenets. The theory of evolution must not be taught because it is opposed to Christianity. A Hindu missionary recently admitted that he considered it permissible to cheat for religious propaganda: merely a matter of 'policy'.

Sex is perhaps the subject in which lying is most openly advocated and considered absolutely essential for the welfare of humanity. People are aghast with

horror at the very idea of telling the truth to children, whom it is apparently a duty to mislead. Parents and everybody else must lie in order that children may remain "innocent". This supposed duty is carried so far by some protagonists of ignorance that they falsify anatomical illustrations for children's text-books. In one of these, I found the bladder looking exactly like a lemon cut through its poles, with an opening at one of these, and the urethral passage entirely absent. That is apparently obscene, in spite of the famous remark of a Christian preacher to the effect that he was not ashamed to name what God was not ashame to create.

The most ridiculous definitions of obscenity emanate from apparently sensible people. A legal luminary in France had the honesty to admit that it was impossible to define obscenity, and still quite a number of wiseacres have made fools of themselves by trying their hand at it. The most ludicrous definition was given by an English Judge, Chief Justice Cockburn, and this ancient definition is theoretically accepted in England and India. A look into the history of what is known as Lord Campbell's Act (1857) will expose the utter absurdity of the interpretation. In the parliamentary debate on the Bill, Lord Campbell explained that it was aimed against " works written for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth". The measure was thus *intended* to apply only to these. But Cockburn, who succeeded Lord Campbell as Chief Justice, interpreted it eleven years later to include anything having a tendency " to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall." Mr. H. F. Rubenstein remarks: " In one sentence the scope of the Act has been extended to embrace potentially, not merely the works of some of our most eminent poets, but any book in general circulation, except perhaps *Whitaker's Almanac* and the *Telephone Directory*." I am not sure of the latter being excluded either, because some Hindu surnames I know would certainly be called obscene and they may easily be in the *Telephone Directory*. Lord Chief Justice Cockburn is said to have been one of the greatest lawyers of his time. How then did he commit this absurdity? The *Encyclopedia Britannica* throws some light on it. He died in 1882, a bachelor, aged 78, a man of "small stature, but great dignity of deportment ..... He was fond too, of society and was throughout his life addicted to frivolities not altogether consistent with the positions of dignity which he successively occupied." Naturally, his dignity required that the frivolity of his private life should be compensated by consummate hypocrisy in public and hence this absurd interpretation, a monument of stupidity.

Of course, as I have stated above, this definition is only theoretically accepted. The difficulty of applying it is obvious and a magistrate can therefore declare anything obscene if it is not acceptable to him. And this is what he does in practice. He decides first of all whether he is going to call a thing obscene, then faithfully recites the above definition as a sort of religious formula and convicts or acquits as he chooses, *asserting that he is acting on that definition.*

Another convenient thing in law is what they call 'precedent.' If it happens to agree with the magistrate's view, he quotes it in support, otherwise he cooly ignores it. The Bombay High Court, for instance, in a famous Obscenity case, laid down that obscenity is a matter of

language, since the same thought could be expressed in decent or in filthy language. Nothing is intrinsically obscene; only the way of expressing it can be obscene. In spite of this, I was convicted on two occasions though it was admitted even by the prosecution that my language was not obscene.

The League of Nations has taken a hand in this obscenity business. Now the League of Nations may be expected to be sensible. But the members of that most august body have naturally to pretend to be dignified, in spite of that suspicious incident of a brothel being taken from Paris to Geneva expressly to cater for some conference connected with the League; and can anybody imagine any of these dignified people voting against any measure, however stupid, for the suppression of so called obscenity? Naturally therefore anything of this kind proposed by prudes is passed without opposition. How absurd such a measure can be may be judged from a few instances of the way it works. A definition of obscenity being admittedly out of question, it is left to the discretion of the Customs authorities in every country to prevent the import of "obscene matter." And discretion in this matter is liable to the greatest abuse. Pictures which are not obscene in an Art Exhibition are obscene elsewhere. Bible stories are not obscene in the Bible, but a French judge opined that if anyone took into his head to publish a selection of them separately, they would certainly be considered obscene. Still the Bible is distributed free and even children may read it. The fact is that nothing is intrinsically obscene and it is only obscene minds that find obscenity in certain things because their point of view is obscene. That is why magistrates and Collectors of Customs give differing judgments about the same writings. An Assistant Collector of Customs once informed me that some "obscene mater" had arrived by the Foreign Post for me and asked me to show cause why it should not be confiscated and I should not be penalized for it. As I had not ordered any "obscene matter" and had not the faintest idea what it could be, I replied to that effect and added that he was welcome to confiscate it if he liked to, but that it would not be justice to penalize me. In the meanwhile, another Assistant Collector of Customs took his place and wrote to me that in his opinion the "matter" was not "obscene" and forwarded it to me. They turned out to be books by reputed authors. Obscenity is therefore a personal quality, which people transfer (or pretend to transfer) to things according to circumstances. And this is why no definition of obscenity can be given, and this is why laws against obscenity result in a display of idiosyncrasies of magistrates and Collectors of Customs. And so all modern writers claim that laws against obscenity should be abolished.

In a world ruled by hypocrisy, brute force and money, it is extremely dangerous to tell the truth, whether you are dealing with political, social, religious or sex matters. People prefer their prejudices and will defend them tooth and nail and unless you are prepared to take the consequences, it is better to leave truth alone, or at least to keep it to yourself instead of trying to spread it. Will the truth ever cease to be dangerous? It is difficult to say. At present it certainly is.

R. D. KARVE.

PRAYER, FAITH, TRUST, and THEN WHAT?

In reply to the statement that one has prayed to God and trusted him, but that God did not answer one's prayers, a preacher will say that you prayed amiss or that you did not have faith.

Christ prayed: "Father, keep them in thy name...that they may be one, even as we are... Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; **that the world may believe that thou didst send me.**" John 17:11, 20, 21.

No wonder the majority of the people in the world do not believe that God sent Christ, for after the passing of over 1900 years Christ's prayer has not yet been answered. Christians quarrel over baptism, prohibition, sabbath-keeping, the difference between spirit, soul and mind, immortality of the soul, transubstantiation, hell, heaven, purgatory, second coming of Christ, who or what is God, or the devil. Christians cannot agree as to the correct translation of many words in the Greek and the Hebrew text of the Bible, such as sheol, pneuma, psuche, nepheah, etc. As the originals of none of the books of the Bible are in existence. Christians cannot agree as to which copies are correct; they cannot agree as to what books in the Bible are genuine and which are apocryphal; and they cannot agree on thousands of other subjects.

Why hasn't God answered Christ's prayer? Didn't Christ have the faith of a grain of mustard seed, and for that reason has his prayer not been answered? Possibly Christ prayed amiss! If God would answer Christ's prayer, there could not be "many minds, many opinions," but many minds with but one universal system of religious FACTS. Irrespective of race, colour or creed, the intelligent people of the world agree in regard to the principles of arithmetic, algebra and geometry. All religions agree at least in one thing—to take up a collection or ask for contributions for their respective deities.

All intelligent people, irrespective of their various religious beliefs, resort to the same methods of putting out a serious fire by using water, not prayers. Christ said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ... nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matt. 17:20. Yet persons caught in a fire of a burning religious hospital, or home, or hotel or church, will offer an agonizing prayer to their supreme deity, but that ever-present deity will allow them to be roasted and burnt like a despised rat in a trap or a vicious lion. What good were their prayers? They met the same fate as a helpless Atheist or pagan.

In 2 Kings 2:22, 24, we read that when some young lads mocked Elisha, saying, "Go up, thou baldhead; go up, thou baldhead," Elisha's trust in God caused God to send "forth two she-bears out of the woods and tear forty and two children of them." But the prayers of all the preachers in the world could not induce their deities to prevent the World War, or any other war. The God in whom they trusted allowed the Christian nations to make manure out of their best physical manhood, which is considerably worse than cannibals

honoring God-trusting Christian missionaries by using them as food.

What does one receive by trusting God that the pagan or Atheist does not receive? The Chinese receive a flood or drought in China; so does the trusting Christian in the United States and other places in the world.

Very often we are told we must look to God for "spiritual" gifts, not for material. If God can give spiritual gifts, cannot he also give material gifts especially as Christ said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.....If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will do." John 14: 12-14.

"Whatsoever" and "anything" include material things as well as spiritual things. Proof. We are told Christ turned water into wine; that he multiplied the loaves and the fishes; he healed the sick and raised the dead.

When persons desire spiritual things, such as wisdom or knowledge, they generally go to school, or read books on subjects, or listen to lectures. Solomon asked God for wisdom, and God allowed Solomon to choose seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. 1 Kings 11: 3. Most of these women were undoubtedly inteliigent, and from the information obtained from them, Solomon possibly could have written the Book of Proverbs. But why didn't God prevent Solomon from disgracing himself? God compelled Jonah, as well as Balaam and his ass, to obey him.

If there is any efficacy in prayer, why does a God-trusting Pope surround himself with walls and bodyguards having rifles, etc.? Is he afraid a bullet may go through an omnipresent God and strike the Pope, injuring or killing him? If the Pope really trusted God to answer his prayers and protect him, why does he depend upon human aid the same as a Buddhist, Mohammedan, Atheist, or Pagan? Why doesn't he do as Elisha did? "Elisha prayed unto Jehovah, and said, Smite this people with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha." 2 Kings 6: 18.

It has been suggested that these elegantly uniformed guards are only ornaments. Can anyone imagine the poor lowly Jesus surrounding himself with such expensive decorations, especially when there is so much poverty in the world? Christ rode to Jerusalem on a borrowed (some claim stolen) ass, but many of our ministers ride in expensive automobiles.

What is said about the Pope applies also to presidents, kings, premiers, and many wealthy persons in the world. Why are many of them surrounded by secret service men with the latest improved weapons? Why do God-trusting nations build submarines, cannons, airplanes? Why do they manufacture poison gas? Why do Christians lock the doors of their homes and churches just as a pagan does? They do not trust God to protect their homes from burglars or wild animals.

When Christians get sick or injured, they hurry for human aid, whether it is a preacher, or a doctor, or a Christian Science practitioner. They all want to stay on this wicked earth and help an omnipotent God to reform it. God's invitation to come to heaven

is not accepted. Why do Christian Science practitioners go to dentists? Why doesn't God keep their teeth sound? If teeth decay, why do not all Christians ask God to repair their teeth? "NOTHING shall be impossible unto you."

We hear it said, "Trust in God and keep your powder dry"; "God helps them who help themselves." What is the use of trusting him? The heathens, pagans, gentiles, Mohammedans, Buddhists, etc., do the same thing; they trust in their deities and keep their war weapons in good condition. What's the difference? Atheists and Agnostics admit that the only help that they, or anyone else, receive is through their own efforts and the assistance of others, irrespective of a belief in any deity.

Christ said, "O ye of little faith! Be not therefore anxious, saying. What shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or. Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Matt, 6; 30, 31.

Why does a person who trusts God save money; why speculate in stocks to get more money; why invest in real estate? Why insure one's life, or certain parts of one's body, against disease or accident? Why not sing to one's relatives that familiar song, "God Will Take Care of You"? Why not show one's trust in God by doing these things differently from the methods used by non-believers in Christ? Why take out earthquake or fire insurance on a house or church? When the walls of Jericho fell God protected a harlot and her relatives. Josh 6:25. Has God lost his power, or doesn't he exist? When the big fire was in San Fransisco, many of the saloons were saved, but many of the churches and homes were destroyed. Why? If God didn't have anything to do with it, why trust him, if he exists?

Almost all religions claim that their deity answers prayer. Therefore, it seems that most answered prayers are like praying: "O piece of Wood (Baal, God, Buddha, Jupiter, Mohammed, Saints, etc.), let the sun, tomorrow, rise in the east and set in the west." And thereafter go around bragging that THE Wood answered the prayer. Let us have another prayer contest (1 Kg. 18:20-39) between the different religions and denominations, and from the results discover the true religion.

In the Bible we find many instances where God did not protect those who trusted him. Cain killed Abel; David had Uriah killed; Jezebel had Naboth killed; Zachariah was killed. Little innocent children were slaughtered about the time Christ was supposed to have been born. John the Baptist was beheaded. Stephen was stoned to death. James, Peter and Paul were killed. No one knows how many thousands, some claim millions, of persons were tortured and killed during the reign of the Holy Inquisitions. Persons that are willing to lay down their lives for a principle are the very persons that should be preserved to populate the earth, not the cowardst hat submit to the persecutions of a religious sect. Those who were killed, and those who did the killing, were undoubtedly, sincere. Christ said, "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. Why didn't God in response to the pain-wrung cries and prayers of women, men and children from thousands of blazing piles of fagots, send the promised Holy Spirit, and guide into the truth all persons connected with these persecutions, making them one, for the reason given

by Christ—" that the world may believe that thou didst send me "?

It has been said that God willed it. What would we think of a human father who allowed his son to be murdered, when the father could easily have prevented it? If a human being saw an innocent child being tortured and killed, not by Herod, but by gangsters, and the person did not try to prevent the slaughter, we would have the utmost contempt for the coward. If a father deliberately allowed his child to be tortured and crucified and did not try to prevent it, we would say he was an accessory to the crime, or else that the father was insane. Why didn't the Father kill the gangster-devil who was torturing his child—handle him as we would handle a brutal murderer?

If Christ knew everything, why did he ask in prayer a question to which he knew the answer? " My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" My mind (nephesh) is shocked, sickened at the thought of a righteous judge punishing an innocent person instead of the guilty one, when the judge could easily kill the master criminal—the devil—or at least put him in jail. No sane, self-respecting man would allow an innocent person, voluntarily, to die for him. When a person sacrifices his life or health in order to discover the cause or cure of a disease, the question of the guilt or innocence of a person is not involved.

Some one says Christ had to die for the sins of the world. Bah! You might as well say that an innocent child must die for other children. Why? Because we or God have not found a way yet to destroy the unnatural conditions that make gangsters. We at least try to get gangsters; but if God exists he CAN get the devil and does not do it. If there is a God he knows that the cannot reform the devil. (Omnipotent God!) Why, then, hasn't an all-powerful God killed the devil long ago, or at least put him in jail somewhere, instead of waiting thousands of years, allowing millions of people in the meantime to suffer on this earth and then to roast after death? If God doesn't will the evil in the world, the devil must be stronger than God.

If there is an omnipotent God occupying in any manner, shape, or condition, all space, (Psa. 139:7-10), where is there room for a devil? Isa. 45:7.

It has been said that we trust in God when we use the brains he has given us. Tell me, then, wherein the Christians' trust in God differs from the trust of ancient Greeks who developed geometry; or the Chinese, trusting in their idols, who invented paper, silk, perfected chinaware, printing gunpowder, compass, etc. Or wherein does the trust in God differ from the pagans who invested the alphabet that we now use: or the Arabians who invented the numerals now in use in arithmetic; or the pagans who invented algebra? All intelligent people trust in their knowledge of the laws of nature.

Someone says, " Now you are caught; who made nature?" I don't know. But I believe that the same elements and forces that made your God (if he exists) made everything else in the universe. I am a doubter like Thomas, one of Christ's disciples. John 20:25.

FRED W. LOCH.
(2225 Market St., Oakland, Calif., United States.)

A PRACTICAL PROGRAMME

[By EDITH HOW-MARTIN, M. Sc., Director, Birth Control International Centre, London]

The Editor of *Marriage Hygiene* calls upon the supporters of this new venture to fight "against prejudice, evasion and meaningless taboos." This call is timely for, unless believers in the value of freedom as applied to all aspects of life bestir themselves, they will be overwhelmed by the prejudices and new meaningless taboos that are being enforced by modern dictators, notably as regards marriage in Roman Catholic countries.

If this new journal of *Marriage Hygiene* can help to bring the light of scientific knowledge to bear upon and to overcome even some of the prejudices and social and religious taboos with which marriage is surrounded, it will make a notable contribution to human happiness.

There can be no healthy and happy marriage without healthy and happy men and women. To ensure the conditions for healthy human beings involves an immense social and political programme, and it is obvious that the proposals supported by this journal must be limited in scope in order to have a practical programme.

First in importance comes the age of marriage. This should be legally not less than 16 for girls and 18 for boys, with public opinion favouring not less than 20 for both sexes.

Next in importance comes sex education. This must begin in infancy in the homes, must be continued in the schools, and sex and marriage education centres must be made available for adults where information and advice can be freely obtained.

In marriage itself, eugenic considerations should take precedence over all others. Personal preferences should be the deciding factor. Arranged marriages should disappear, and especially should the cruel custom of buying, selling and inheriting wives be abolished. All marriage customs should be equal as between the sexes. The important question of miscegenation should be studied. At present mixed marriages are denounced or advocated mainly on emotional grounds. Social customs inimical to such marriages are enforced by a public opinion based on prejudices and with small consideration for the future welfare and happiness of the offspring.

Parents or the partners themselves should demand a clean bill of health and have a clear understanding about the desirable number of children who may be born.

A healthy and satisfactory marriage must include a knowledge of birth control methods. Then sterilisation, and in some cases abortion, must be freely available to married people. Mistakes in marriage must be capable of rectification, which means cheap and easy divorce. Health Centres where parents can obtain information on their own health, prenatal care and advice, care of infants and children and guidance in psychological problems and difficulties of married life.

Good beginnings in all these directions have been made in many countries. The valuable experiences gained need to be made available to serious workers everywhere and this journal can act as a medium for exchange of ideas.

Outside the limits of normal marriage are many serious problems which impinge on marriage and challenge not only accepted ideas but also our self-complacency. These too should be faced. What have sincere thinkers and workers to say about companionate marriage, free experimentation in premarital sexual experiences, prostitution, homosexuality, the care and prospects of so-called "illegitimate" children?

The only sure basis of all work on marriage problems is accurate knowledge, based on careful observations and, whenever possible, subjected to the tests of experiment and experience.

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RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION IS BUTT OF SILLY ATTACKS

Malicious Effusions Published Without Sense of Responsibility

(By Dr. C. L. D'Avoine)

After the unsuccessful prosecution the Bombay Police launched against me as the Editor of "Reason," the Journal of Rationalist Association of India, under Section 29 S. A. I.P.C., in January last, the public must have been quite surprised to read in "The Times of India" of recent dates repeated serious allegations by two correspondents of that paper, that the Journal "Reason" continues to make malicious effusions and insulting attacks against the founders of religions, particularly against the Prophet Mahomet and the founder of Christianity.

It was also stated that in the last issue of "Reason" (October-November issue) on the first two pages, a malicious attack is made on the Prophet Mahomet, the English Royal Family and the Bishop of London. These two correspondents allege that the Rationalist Association of India is a pernicious body, which must be in league with Moscow and one of them, who signs himself "Curious," expressed his surprise that the authorities do not surpress it.

Baseless Allegations

On the appearance of the first letter under the signature of "Curious" in "The Times of India," on or about the 30th of October last, the Hony: Secretary of the Association wrote a letter to the Editor of "The Times of India" (which was published) pointing out that these allegations were malicious and baseless and that the Association was not in any way connected with Moscow or any political body outside or in India.

In spite of this, another letter appeared in that paper, this time under the signature of one Arthur Young, making more serious allegations against the Association and its Journal. This was followed, after a brief interval, by another letter from the same Arthur Young, making still further allegations and reiterating his belief that the Association must be in league with Moscow. On the same day, in the same issue of the paper, a second letter from "Curious" appeared endorsing all that Young had said.

Considering that a copy of "Reason" is sent every month to "The Times of India," one expected the Editor of that paper to make sure whether there was any foundation in these allegations before publishing these letters. "The Times of India did nothing of the kind. Had it done so, it would have found that neither in the number of "Reason" in question, nor in any previous numbers since the Journal has appeared had there been any attack or effusion on Prophet Mahomet, Jesus Christ, Moses, or any other founder of religion!

Cowardiy Insinuations.

That these allegations and cowardly insinuations were quite baseless and are obviously the work of individuals, who have a grudge against the Rationalsit Association of India or the Editor of its Journal, is quite clear as will be seen presently. They have taken advantage of the confidence of "The Times of India," in them to use its columns for such calumny in order to vent their spleen

against me, and "The Times of India" never thought it prudent to verify their malicious allegations.

Now, who are these two correspondents of "The Times of India" who make these allegations against an Association like R. A. I.? Arthur Young, I understand, is a European, about whom little or nothing is known in Bombay, except that he is trying to exploit the fears of the Indian Princes on the coming New Constitution in India and their abhorrence of Bolshevism. Young, it would appear, is going to protect them against these menaces, and he has boasted everywhere that the Princes and other high officials in India are giving him the greatest encouragement and support.

Refused Finance

"Curious," who is no other than our old friend, J. D. Jenkins of Poona, has joined him in this scheme, and both wanted me and one of my sons to join them to exploit the "gold mine," as they call this project of theirs. We were to begin by first financing them, which I flatly refused to do. J. D. Jenkins, of course, is wellknown character. He is the man who has an itch to write on every subject under the sun. He has even contributed rationalistic articles frequently to my Journal, and yet, when it suits him, proclaims himself to be very anti-rationalistic! One who is ever ready to poke his nose in every discussion going, scientific, political, literary and what not, though he is in reality an ignoramus and does not appear to know it. One who runs down the Indians in Anglo-Indian papers and professes to be interested in their welfare in Indian papers. One who runs down the Congress in Anglo-Indian papers; one who professes to admire Mahatma Gandhi in Nationalist Papers and slashes him in Anglo-Indian papers and in this fashion he is both for or against this or that as it suits his purpose.

Just now he is very anti-Communistic and is a great admirer of Imperialism, doubtless to impress the Native Princes and the powers-that-be. The zeal to write any nonsense he can against the Soviet has greatly increased of late, since he made the discovery that "The Times of India" is ridiculously prejudiced against Russia. He is sure that any nonsense he writes against that country will be readily published in that paper. This, of course, is part of his plan to mystify the Native Princes if he gets the chance to approach them.

Asked For Loan

My first acquaintance with Arthur Young was through Jenkins. As recently as the 29th of last month. I received a letter from Jenkins, who informed me that he had a Captain Young staying with him at Poona, who, he says, "Is a great admirer of your efforts in "Reason" and elsewhere." (The same Young who a few days after this has such a lot to say against "Reason!")

Jenkins wanted me to see him in Bombay on a certain date for an important business (in which there was a gold mine in prospect). It turned out that Young whom I saw as desired, wanted me to join him and Jenkins to canduct a weekly journal on behalf of the Indian Princes. As this Arthur Young straightaway asked me to loan the sum of Rs. 1,000 to start this business, I promptly refused. From that moment I appear to have made an enemy of him and of Jenkins. When I informed Jenkins about it, he, in a letter dated 2nd November 1934 affected great surprise

that Young should have asked me for such a sum.

"I am more than surprised," wrote Jenkins, "that Young 'touched' you for Rs. 1000. I am writing to tell him to go to hell. He is rather fishy.

I complained to Jenkins that his letter to "The Times of India" under the signature of "Curious" might do harm to the Rationalist Association of India and in the same letter, in which he writes about Young, he simply says that "I do not think the Association will be harmed in any way by what appears in "The Times of India." Your Association is getting excellent publicity.

Motive For Attack

A few days after this, Jenkins in a post card, informed me that "Young is replying to your 'Reason' articles in 'The Times of India,' but I don't think it will appear."

I think this is enough to show the motive that prompted these two men to attack me and and the annoyance they knew it would cause me and the Association.

The public can now form their own opinion on the part "The Times of India" has played in this sorry business, and yet it does not think that in all decency, it owes an apology to me and the Association. "*The Sentinel.*"

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the masses of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

We have already drawn attention in these columns to the existence of a Christian Sadhu who is alleged to perform miraculous cures. When we first heard of him he was in Poona where a number of people flocked to receive the benefit of his "supernatural" powers. In his great charity for suffering humanity he extended his operations to Bombay where he appeared last month. As may be guessed he soon attracted attention and for some days he was followed by a large crowd. A large number of sick children were taken to him and it was pitiful to see these poor helpless sufferers exposed to sun for hours by their silly parents

with the hope that the faith healer would cure them. It did not take long for these credulous people to be disillusioned. No miracle took place, but a lot of money exchanged hands. It is sad to think that among the eager crowd who sought the ministry of that adventurer the Parsees predominated. It is strange that the Parsees are always strongly attracted by charlatans. Being more educated than the rest here they should know better. But mysticism always appeals to them and they must pay the price for their credulity until they are enlightened enough to understand that the age of miracles is gone never to come back again.

* * *

Our Association has done well to inagurate a novel social function which should soon become very popular. It has decided to hold a lunch several times during the year at which members and their friends may meet. The first meeting of this kind at Mongini's, Bombay, in Oct. last was a grand success. More than sixty members and their friends spent a pleasant hour or two together and enjoyed the good things provided by the caterers.

* * *

We are glad to notice that a large number of young men professing Rationalism have banded themselves together and formed a Rationalist Youth League. There has been a good response to its call and already about 75 members have enlisted. Its objects are to encourage Rationalism, disseminating pamphlets and tracts on Freethought, holding lectures and do propaganda work in general.

It intends to work in co-operation with Our Association. The following is the message of the League delivered by Mr. A. Salomon, the Hony. Secretary.

Coming of the Rationalist Youth League.

"Our elders fail frequently because they are rigid in their minds and unable to change their mental outlook or adapt themselves to changing facts. Youth is not hidebound nor rigid. Youth can think and is not afraid of the consequences of thought.....And it is because Youth can think and dare act that it holds out the promise of taking this country and this world of ours out from the ruts and mire into which they have sunk." Jawaharlal Nehru.

Here we are; we youths have come forward to do all we can to free the country from all superstition and fear. We shall not allow ourselves to be influenced by tradition or drugged by mysticism. We want facts, we want the TRUTH. We shall not follow the old because it is old or reject the new because it is new. We shall fearlessly reject what we rationally think to be wrong and courageously support what we think to be right. The Rationalist Youth League is formed. We are proud to say that our League, The Rationalist Youth League, stands for freedom of thought and dares to follow the teachings of Reason.

If some pious people when they hear of this League accuse us of inexperience, I shall reply them in Chatham's words: "I shall neither palliate nor deny, but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience".

We shall work with the ardour of conviction and the zeal for the service of what is right and reasonable.

* * *

That the League is in earnest may be seen by its activities. Already it has delivered an interesting lecture on Rationalism by Mr. S. A. Megherian, (the Editor of "Calvacade") of which we publish a resume elsewhere. It has arranged to distribute thousands of pamphlets and tracts such as the following:—"What it is worth?" "A study of the Bible" by Col. R. G. Ingersoll. "What is Secularism." "Do you want the Truth" "Does Man desire God" all pamphlets by the National Secular Society. "The Belief of Unbelievers" By Chapman Cohen. We wish the League every success.

* * *

It is well known that a good deal of superstition about the East in general and India in particular, exists in England. In this connection it is interesting to read the book, "The Myth of the Mystic East" by Colonel R. H. Elliot. M. D., I. M. S. which has recently been published by Messrs Blackpool and Co. It deals mostly with the belief that exists in England about the occult powers of the Indians. It would appear that many people in England firmly believe that Indians are endowed with such mystical and occult powers that they can perform countless uncanny things which baffle the science of the West. Colonel Elliot, who has lived many years in India, exposes all this nonsense. He gives an instance of the credulity of some people in England regarding this:—

"In a large provincial town in England recently a drapery and furnishing establishment staged an Indian Village to attract their customers. An Indian Swami, so called in the advertisement, told fortunes. I saw and spoke with the Swami, who had been once a cook and came from Goa. He was suitably dressed in a white turban and a flowing robe. A few stuffed snakes, and a crystal globe on a pseudo-Eastern table decorated his consulting room, and the place reeked with incense and synthetic jasmine. His services was in great demand, and for half an hour I watched the continual stream of people passing in and out of the Swami's presence. They were obviously impressed with his prognostications. I heard one woman say to a companion:—"Of course these Indians do understand the mysterious. They are born with second sight." Others implied the same thing. Few of us here would credit our Goan cooks with such uncanny powers.

Colonel Elliot also exposes the so-called rope trick and the superstition about snakes.

* * *

"When truth is revealed," said St. Augustine, "let custom give place, let no man prefer custom before reason and truth." In India, it is quite the opposite. People here prefer custom and tradition; they have no time for Reason and Truth.

* * *

We read in the newspapers that Mrs. Edith How-Martyn, well-known birth-control worker, who left Karachi for Hyderabad (Sind) to-day, announced that it was proposed to hold an all-India Birth-Control Conference, in December, in Travancore, just after the all-India Women's Conference, which would be held there this year.

She said that Lord Horder, the well-known Harley Street physician, would be invited to preside over the conference,

and that she hoped to complete all the preliminary arrangements in connection with it before she left India in March.

Emphasising the importance of imparting birth control education to the Indian masses, Mrs. How-Martyn pointed out that no lasting improvement in the standard of living of the people could possibly be attained if every enhancement of the purchasing power of the cultivator was to be followed by a proportionate increase in the population—precisely, she added, the view taken by the Linlithgow Commission.

To Indians who objected to birth-control on religious and moral grounds, Mrs. How-Martyn said she had only to quote the opinion of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, who felt that in a hunger-striken country like India, it was cruel thoughtlessly to bring more children into existence than could properly be taken care of causing endless suffering to them and imposing degrading conditions upon the whole family.

* * *

This is welcome news. We shall doubtless hear a good deal of protest against this by the usual fanatics who have their own ideas about "God's laws," " Morality " and so forth. These people think that birth-control is immoral; that it is against "God's laws", that is to say laws of their own invention, that it is detrimental to health, that it encourages race suicide. Those people who utter such views are generally well cared for and well-fed priests who do not care two-pence for the agonies and miseries of unwanted children who come into this world to suffer the pangs of hunger, the pains of diseases and to die a miserable death before they even begin to talk. It is only natural that the Churches should welcome large populations. It means larger congregations for them for the perpetuation of their superstitions and the retardation of progress.

* * *

There is no doubt that the pulpit has taken great advantage of Sir James Jeans' belief that a Celestial Mathematician constructed the Universe as an instance of an eminent scientist supporting religion. Some theologians have gone so far as to proclaim that such eminent scientists as Sir James Jeans, Sir A. Eddington, Prof. Whitehead and a few others have, by their discoveries and speculations in physical science, completely discredited what they are pleased to call the materialistic science of the last century. The fact is that these scientists have done nothing of the kind. They are, of course, free to speculate on the latest revelations of physical science, though in doing so they leave the scientific realm to penetrate into a metaphysical one in which their opinions carry no greater weight than others who have so speculated. Far from discrediting science and upholding superstitious beliefs as these religious people would have us believe, Sir James Jeans made a vigorous defence of Science in his Presidential Address to 3,000 members of the British Association at Aberdeen in Autumn last. He said:—

"It was obvious, that a country which called a halt to scientific progress would soon fall behind in every other respect as well. Although some new inventions had thrown people out of work, scientific discoveries had provided work for millions."

* * *

Sir James added: "Those who sigh for an Arcadia, wherein all machinery is scrapped and all invention is proclaimed crime as in "Erewhon," forget that Erewhonians have neither to compete with highly organised scientific competitions for the trade of the world, nor to protect themselves against possible bomb-dropping, blockade or invasion.

"If science has made attack more deadly in war, it has also made defence more efficient. In the long run it will show no partiality in the age long race between weapons of attack and defence.

"This being so, it would, I think, be hard to maintain in cold blood that its activities are likely to make wars either more frequent or more prolonged. It would at-least be arguable that a more deadly war would be less likely to occur. Still it might occur.

* * *

"Science has given man control over Nature before he has gained control over himself. Scientific knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another, while acquired characteristics are not. Thus in respect of knowledge each generation stands on the same ground. These are hard facts which we cannot hope to alter and which we may as well admit may wreck civilisation.

"If there is an avenue of escape it lies as I see it, not in the direction of less science, but in the direction of more science in psychology, which holds out the hope that for the first time in his long history man may be enabled to obey the command "Know thyself."

"*To this I for one would like to see adjoined a morality and, if possible even a religion, consistent with our new psychological knowledge and established facts of science, a scientific and constructive measure of eugenics and birth control, scientific research in agriculture and industry sufficient at least to defeat the gloomy prophecies of Malthus and to enable even larger populations to live in comfort and contentment on the same limited area of land. Our great need at the moment is for industrial discoveries.*"

* * *

A reader of "Reason", some time ago, sent us a newspaper cutting in which a summary of an, address delivered by a Father L. D. Murphy at Madras a few months ago is given. He wishes us to comment on this. It is not easy to comment on the mere summary of an address. To judge by the following it would appear that the address was full of the usual cant of Catholic priests when out to boost their creed. Father Murphy, in effect, is reported to have said among other things that Christian nations of to-day were Christian in name only and had forgotten the spirit. In his lecture he would deal with the specifically distinctive characteristics of the religion of Christ. Externally, Christianity was a religion of severity and non-Christians might be disappointed with the principles of the Gospel. Christ had said that it was impossible to serve God and Mammon. The Bible stated: "It is as easy for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God as it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle." The hyperbole, Father Murphy, asserted was not extravagant. Man in his search after riches, pushed out God and life became ruinous. Wealth by itself was not bad as nothing created by God could be bad. The falling away from Christianity in the West was due to

its quest after wealth. The feverish pursuit of wealth was a blot on Western civilisation. He could never support sweated labour in factories which was the result of consuming devotion to Mammon. The renunciation of wealth was perfect in the teaching of Christ. It was want of courage, want of a spirit of adventure that made people go after wealth. Riches in themselves were not bad but riches must be under the supervision of God, not for personal agrandisement and excluding worship of God.

In conclusion, he referred to the persecution of Christianity from the time of Christ and so long as one was in the company of Christ, the yoke was sweeter and the burden lighter and to-day Russia and Germany were up against Christianity but Christianity would brave it up.

* * *

Father Murphy must have spoken with his tongue in his cheek when he uttered such balderdash. He admitted that Christianity was falling away in the West and his belief about this is beeause people there are in quest after wealth! Of course, these blind people will never admit that their creed has been found out, and that with the spread of education, the enlightened all over the world no longer believe in their fables. It is simply amusing to hear the disparagement of wealth by a Catholic priest. Why? Nobody appreciates wealth better than Catholic priests. Imagine the princes of the Church—both Catholic and Protestant—abandoning their luxuries, their palaces, their aristocratic surroundings, to live like Christ who is reported to have said that the foxes have holes to live in but the Son of Man has not even a place to sleep in. Father Murphy would not stay a minute in Madras if the source of his well being there was suddenly cut off.

* * *

As regards his lament about the failure of Christianity in the West and cause of it which, as we have seen, he puts down to the quest for wealth and so forth, if he was sincere he would have admitted that the spread of education is responsible for this and nothing else.

When on this topic priests and parsons are fond of assuring their followers that Christianity is falling off because it has not yet been tried properly.

After 1900 years of trial in which Christianity has had every opportunity to do as it wished—as every body knows, it suppressed all opposition, enforced its own teaching and compelled belief by fire and sword and other dreadful measures—it has the effrontary to tell us now that Christianity has not been sufficiently tried yet.

In Madras the platitudes of Father Murphy were evidently listened to with great respect. Little wonder! Things that are no longer saleable in European markets find ready buyers here in India. Father Murphy and his likes should really concentrate all their efforts on this country where a long lease of life is yet assured to all kind of creeds.

GOD OR MAN?

It is an undeniable fact that the majority of mankind, in every age and country, from the very earliest times, have acknowledged themselves as being quite helpless and timid when confronted with the unknown and the mysterious—though ever present—forces of nature. Death, disease, earthquakes, cyclones &c. have always paralysed the activities of man and rendered him helpless. Misfortunes have always predominated in his career, and successes comparatively few. That peace of mind and freedom from discomforts, which have always been the dream of humanity everywhere in all ages, have been really attained by the exceptional few, if at all.

No wonder, then, that never being successful in his attempts at attaining the always-desired freedom from grief and worry, and never having succeeded in attaining mastery over death and the other visitations of nature which have made his life so miserable, man has always lent a ready ear to the preaching and teaching of those who have assured him that there is a beneficient and powerful Being who will some day or other, whether here or in after life, right all his wrongs soothe all his sorrows and remove all his miseries, punish the wicked and reward the virtuous. Though unseen, man has been taught to believe that this beneficient Being always watches over him, and will some day or other redress all his wrongs by taking him to a land where he will enjoy everlasting bliss. He has also been taught to believe that those who disobey this unseen Being in this life will be condemned to terrible punishment—in the other world.

This is what goes by the name of religion throughout the world, and mankind has, almost without exception, accepted one or other of these religions. The reasons for this universal acceptance are not far to seek. Firstly, because of his helplessness and inability to remove his troubles in spite of best endeavours, he has always been glad to learn that there is another Agency—though unseen and unknown for the time being—Who will some day or other reveal Himself in his divine effulgence, and come to his aid and remove all his sufferings, and secondly, because of his conviction that a belief in the existence of this Divine Being will actually make this world a much better place than it really is.

And precisely for that reason, individuals, having the hardihood of questioning the truth of the existence of this Divine Being, have been everywhere persecuted, condemned and tortured. Even today, when torture for difference of religious opinions is comparatively unknown (though not entirely absent) only a man with a very strong courage of his conviction is found to be definitely and boldly taking up the attitude that God does NOT exist, and that a belief in His existence does not necessarily elevate the moral nature of the believer. To be known as an atheist is almost equivalent—even in this rationalistic age—to be afflicted with moral leprosy, resulting in social ostracism. There are individuals throughout the world, and their number is neither few nor far between, who quite honestly believe that even the worst criminal—provided he belongs to some religion or other—is far

better than the atheist, who is an embodiment of all that is wicked.

Curiously enough, this view, so universally held, will be found on a calm and dispassionate examination of actual facts to be generally incorrect. Almost every condemned murderer is found to be readily listening to the religious consolation of the priest of the sect to which he belongs, before going to the gallows. Almost every thief or forger or ravisher in and out of gaol happens to profess some religion or other. They cannot, therefore, be said to be better than an atheist (assuming the latter to be the incarnation of Satan himself—who, incidentally, if the Biblical legend is correct, was not an atheist) because they choose to believe in the existence of God. History contains instances of many God-fearing saints and hermits who have caused more blood to flow and more crimes to be committed than many others whose avowed profession was plunder or theft and bloodshed. The most bloody wars and massacres are those that have been committed in the name of religion by God-fearing prelates and potentates. The most atrocious persecutions have been those that have been carried on in the interests of religion. The most venomous and deadly form of hatred is that which is cherished by the follower of one religion against that of another, both believing in the existence of God.

Religion and a belief in God, therefore, do not necessarily help in making the world a better place than what it would have been without them. On the other hand, assuming the truth of what we have stated above, they sometimes make it worse.

Now, is there any evidence worth the name to show that the atheist is really the bad man he is so often represented to be? Is there any record to show that out of the huge number of malfactors who have disgraced humanity from time immemorial, atheists have preponderated? Have they ever oppressed and murdered their neighbours for not being atheists? Does history contain any instance when atheists have been found to be guilty of a St. Bartholomew's Day or of the Crusade? It is really very hard to understand the grounds on which the poor atheist is represented as a vile wretch unworthy of breathing God's air, and living in God's world, fit only for the halter stake.

On the other hand, History does contain at least a few instances of atheists who, by the manner of their living, have actually helped in making at least a small portion of this world of ours a much better place than what it would have otherwise been. Have we not heard of utter disbelievers in God, nevertheless serving humanity nobly in every walk of life, feeding the poor, relieving the distressed, reforming abuses, and doing every other thing which is usually regarded as the monopoly of the God-fearing and the religiously disposed? Have we not heard of atheists shedding their last drop of blood for suffering humanity?

To be brief, we are definitely of opinion that one need not be a good man or a bad man just because one is a theist or atheist. Or, in other words, a belief or disbelief in the existence of God has nothing to do with the goodness or badness of his moral nature.

But it will be said, "all this might perhaps apply to the advanced and edu-

cated, but not to the illiterate and less advanced, who would certainly have been more depraved and ferocious if God and religion had never been taught to them. This is a myth. No murderer, cultured or otherwise, is ever restrained from cutting the throat of his victim by the belief that if he did so, God would punish him eternally for his crime. No liar is prevented from perjuring himself by the horrors of a future punishment at the hands of an unknown God. If such had been the case, very few men professing any religion would have been found guilty of any moral turpitude. As a matter of fact, avowed atheists are so rare in numbers that the percentage of criminality can be said to be almost non-existent within their ranks, if at all. It invariably requires moral courage of the highest order to be a sincere and real atheist, and such a class does not usually produce bad men.

Why then this universal prejudice against them? Why is it that we find followers of different religions agreeing in nothing else, and running at each other's throats at little or no provocation, always agreeing in their hatred and condemnation of atheists? The answer is not far to seek. If they don't agree with each other on many other points, they at least agree in believing that God exists. The atheist differs from them in this vital respect. He is pitted alone against the whole world, so to say. Nothing is easier for the "religionists" than to show off their superiority and contempt for the poor atheist by pretending to hate him. It is a melancholy, but none the less true and undeniable trait of human nature that we are in a position to be above somebody else. The atheist enables us, by virtue of his isolated position, to do this. Small wonder then if he is thus made the universal target for contempt, ridicule and hatred. How often it has been my lot to see hypocrites of the first water, but professing some religion or other speaking of a saintly atheist—one, the latchet of whose shoe they were unfit to touch—with withering scorn on the sole ground that he honestly and in spite of utmost endeavours could not persuade himself to believe in the existence of an unknown and unknowable God.

Another reason why followers of religions agree so unanimously in decrying the atheist lies in the fact that his theory tends to shatter all their fond hopes and belief and leave them disheartened. These good souls somehow or other manage to outlive all their miseries in this world—their sorrows and bereavements, their failures and worries—almost exclusively with the fond expectation that in some strange and unaccountable way, all their losses in this life will be made good by some imaginary Gods. It never occurs to these good souls that a Being who never cares to manifest Himself, even for the fraction of a second to His devoted children whom He is supposed to love so much, who never hesitates to wipe them off from the face of the earth by thousands and tens of thousands (as in the case of earthquakes, epidemics &c.) for no conceivable fault of theirs, can hardly be expected to care for in a future state of existence, of which there is absolutely no evidence worth the name. But to be deprived suddenly of this grand consolation by a person who has the unpardonable effrontery of telling them to their faces that their beloved God does not exist,

constitutes in their eyes an offence for which no punishment is too severe. They never stop to consider if what the despised atheist says is consistent with probability and reason. Like the red rag to the bull, the mere statement is enough for them.

One of the main reasons advanced almost in every instance by theist to show that they are right and the atheists wrong is the fact that they hopelessly outnumber their rivals. "If", they pompously declare, "God had not really existed, we would not have found almost everybody in all ages believing in His existence". And such is the way of the world that this is considered by even many sensible people to be a most convincing reason. They would never care to discuss the matter honestly, logically and frankly, but declare the other side to be mistaken and dishonest, merely because their number was out of all proportion greater than that of their rivals. The mere fact that a certain thing has been implicitly believed in by the world at large, say, for five thousand years, appears to them to be proof conclusive of its truth. As if things, the truth of which had been held as unassailable in the past, have never been since disproved! As if innocent men have never been wickedly persecuted and tortured for not believing in things which have been since proved beyond doubt to be moonshine.

Having thus attempted to make out that a belief or disbelief in the existence of God or religion does not tend to make us better or worse men, we shall now proceed to discuss the question whether or not He exists at all.

Does God exist? If so, what is the proof? If no satisfactory proof is forthcoming, shall we continue to believe in Him, merely because a host of people have done so? Why should we thus believe in His existence notwithstanding the non-existence of proof?

We will now discuss these questions, little caring for what the believers might say in return, if they at all think it worth their while to say anything by way of refutation. The last word on the subject has not certainly been said as yet. And the very fact that arguments and discussions are still waged from time to time to prove or disprove the existence of God goes to show that the world is not yet unanimous on the question. If it was, we should have heard no more about it. Nobody argues, for instance now a days, as to whether or not any two sides of a triangle are togther greater than the third side. And so long as that degree of certainly is not reached, arguments and discussions must continue. Only the enemies of truth and progress will seek to shut them out. Such arguments and discussions can never indeed be unprofitable. And as we shall presently try to make out, they can be of the highest value.

How do we seek to establish the existence of anything? Must the criterion of proof be different in the case where the existence of God is the subject at issue? If so, why? And what are the other criteria by which one is to abide?

Very few people, if at all, claim to have seen God. The generally accepted view is that He is formless, and as such, invisible. There are, as already observed just an infinitesimally small number of men who claim to have actually seen Him. Without calling their veracity in

to question even for a moment, it nevertheless remains to be considered if they really saw Him or fancied that they saw Him. We do not say that they were dishonest men, who deliberately bluffed and hoodwinked a credulous public. But does that necessarily go to show that they could not have been in any conceivable manner the unconscious dupes of their own imagination? Of the designedly rascally group of imposters and charlatans who deliberately attempt at swindling their community into entertaining false and extravagant notions relating to God and His attributes, I propose to say little, though their influence and the extent of mischief wrought by them is by no means inconsiderable. But even eliminating them from the field of our present inquiry, it is by no means sure that God exists just because some really good and virtuous men have told us from time to time that they saw Him, or what amounts to the same thing, He revealed Himself to them.

But it will be argued by not a few (whose number is by far the greatest) that although He cannot be seen with the eyes, as we see other tangible objects, He can be realised, and His influence felt. The reply is, "How"? How are we to be sure that what we sometimes ascribe to the influence of God, is really so, and not a mere combination of circumstances? I pray fervently, for instance, for being cured of a malady I am suffering from, pronounced by skilled doctors to be past all surgery and past all aid. My prayer is apparently granted, and to the astonishment of friends and foes alike, and of the doctors themselves, I recover. Does that prove beyond all reasonable doubt that I owe my recovery to Divine intercession? Have there not been patients known to recover from apparently hopeless deseases without offering any prayer at all? Has not the same patient who once recovered by what he thought to be the sole result of devout and fervent prayer, been known to succumb in another instance in spite of prayers no less devout and fervent as on the first occasion? Do we not find numberless victims suffering from untold agony in the shape of disease, starvation, poverty, bereavement &c, in spite of sincere prayers offered to God every moment of their lives? How are we then to feel and realise the existence of God?

Take another instance. An apparently hopeless victim to Drink is found to rally and abandon drinking for the rest of his days. Devout theists at once ascribe the miracle to the mercy of God. The victim himself acknowledges it with sincere thanksgiving. Does that prove irrefutably that it is due to God? Is it altogether unreasonable to hold that the cure is due to the exercise of his will-power? Why should we, when it is possible to find out known and ascertainable causes, go in quest of unknown and inexplicable ones? That, we contend, should be the attitude of a rational, bold, honest and self-reliant mind. A fondness for the mysterious and vague in life is too often the outcome of timidity and helplessness. and ignorance.

God is said to be kind and merciful. Indeed, in every age and country, the conception of kindness seems to be inseparable from the conception of Godhead. Speaking for ourselves, we cannot help wondering that this should have persisted through so many cen-

turies, notwithstanding the diffusion of so much knowledge and wisdom. People for whom we have the highest regard, not only for the depth of their knowledge, but also for their stainless character, piety and benevolence are found to be unanimous in their belief in God. And that is the reason why we propose to go into this question and discuss it somewhat elaborately, according to the degree of intelligence we happen to possess. He is said to be not only merciful, but also the Divine Father of the universe and everything contained therein.

Let us try to find out if God—supposing He exists—can be called kind and fatherly, even by the most violent stretch of the imagination. He is said to be all-powerful. Why does misery exist? Does an almighty and loving Father, even in this imperfect world, suffer his children to undergo so much grinding misery and torture and sees it unmoved when he can remove it by a mere exercise of his will-power? Every well informed man knows that the whole world is full of unnecessary and cruel warfare. Man wages war against man and beasts. Beasts prey upon each other and upon man alike. One must kill in order to live. Why this fierce and relentless struggle for existence? What is the beneficient idea underlying the doctrine of "survival of the fittest"? Why should the weak always go to the wall? Is it consistent with the existence of a loving all-powerful Father? Why these virulent diseases, leprosy, plague, insanity, tuberculosis and others too numerous to mention? Need we really multiply instances?

It will be said, man suffers by his own folly, and it is sacrilegious to find fault with the Creator. Is that an axiomatic truth which always holds good? What offence, for instance, has a child, fresh from its mother's womb, committed when it is born into the world with poisonous sores all over its body, or born blind? Or deaf or lame? Why should the sins of the parents be visited on the heads of their unoffending children? Supposing, as some seriously contend, that such punishments to the newly born are due to their having committed sins in some previous incarnation, where is the sense in making the poor little thing entirely oblivious of what it had done in such previous incarnation? Where is the evidence to show that it had ever existed in a previous incarnation? All punishments, in order to be effective, and salutary, should be inflicted in a manner by which he offender might feel that he is being punished for some particular offence committed even in a previous incarnation. But if he is utterly oblivious of what he did in that previous incarnation, how can the punishment be of any use?

Then again, are we to understand that when a vast body of men suffer for wrongs committed by a handful of wicked persons, all the sufferers deserve their hard fate? A war, for instance, is declared by a group of scheming cabinet ministers in a particular country. What offence have millions of unborn babes committed throughout the globe that they must be doomed to life-long poverty and suffering in consequence thereof? Is this divine justice and divine mercy? A ship, to take another instance, goes down with thousands of men by crashing against an iceberg at dead of night. Were all the helpless individuals on

board that ship equally guilty so as to deserve the same fate? And supposing they were, what about the widows and orphans? What about their life-long penury and starvation? Is it the work of a kind and just and all-powerful Father?

An earthquake reduces hundreds of flourishing towns to a mass of debris in the twinkling of an eye, while the "kind Father", having full power to shield and protect them does absolutely nothing. As if to the misery already inflicted He sends pestilence and floods to wipe out the last flicker in all these places. What is this? Mercy indeed! What had the unoffending babes and animals done in all these places to deserve this "fatherly treatment"?

Are these cases rare? Do we not find them taking place almost daily in some part of the world or other? Must we pin our faith on the sayings of prophets and Mahatmas that the sufferings thus caused are due solely and exclusively to the sins of the sufferers? What right has the prophet or Mahatma to utter such monstrous opinions?

Either there is a God, or there is not. If there is one, such things can never be explained except on the assumption that though all-powerful, He is far from being kind, just and merciful. If He is non-existent, it is high time that the truth was proclaimed fearlessly from house tops. An unjust God is inconceivable and a contradiction in terms.

At this stage, we feel sure, the assurance of a future state of existence will come in. "This world is not all. There are many, many others," will be the consolation offered to us. "Whatever little inconveniences you might be subjected to in this life in the shape of congenital maladies, slow processes of starvation, abject poverty, unjustified tyranny, &c., &c., will all be atoned for in a bright future in the next world, 'where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest'". 'God, Himself, will see to that" we are assured by almost every religion. New-fledged pseudo-scientists also rush in to help religion by saying, "you need not any longer entertain any doubt as to the existence of the next world, Spiritualism has solved the mystery once for all."

In reply to these consoling words of assurance, we would like to ask why, even admitting the existence of a future life after death, should we care to suffer even for a moment unmerited punishment at the hands of an unfailing, just and merciful Father? A punishment is a punishment, and on no account for however short a period—should one be made to undergo it without rhyme or reason, even if one is compensated for it in a future state of existence by the enjoyment of eternal bliss. Surely He must be a fantastic judge who would needlessly punish an innocent person on the ground that an eternal period of enjoyment would follow the short spell of misery consequent on the punishment. Even human justice, imperfect and vindictive as it is, hesitates to punish an individual without making him feel the nature of the offence committed by him and without satisfactory proof of his guilt. What must we say of a perfect and Divine Being, overflowing with the milk of kindness towards His creatures, and posing as their Father, never hesitating to punish them for offences, the nature of which they are not even aware

and for many of which they are in all probability not responsible?

Then again, is it an undisputed fact that there is a future state of existence, where all wrongs will be righted? What proof of it is forthcoming, saving and excepting the vapourings of a few dabblers in the equivocal subject of spiritualism, and the ipse-dixit of some preachers? Has communication between the living and the dead been established beyond doubt in the sense that we now communicate with a distant friend by wireless to-day? Assuming even for the moment that it has, have the spiritualists been able to satisfy us beyond all doubt that existence there is such an unqualified blessing as to make amends for all our unmerited sufferings here? If not, why drag the question of a life beyond death into the present discussion?

It will next be argued that ever-man is by his very nature a sinner, and that no punishment, however severe, can be said to be "too severe", when inflicted on him. All of us should, instead of being rebellious really be grateful to the Divine Father that in His infinite mercy and wisdom, He has not condemned us to more severe forms of punishment (in this life) for our misdeeds. In proof of his infinite mercy and love, we are reminded by the followers of a particular religion that the same punishment awaits all sinners—be their guilt however great or small—if they do not accept certain things as undisputed facts. You may have been a genuine philanthropist in your earthly life, you may never have cherished the slightest ill-will towards anybody while on earth, and you may have done a thousand other good things, but all these will avail you nothing if you did not accept a particular individual, borne close upon a thousand years ago, as the only Saviour and Mediator between yourself and your Heavenly Father, and you are sure to condemned eternally to be consumed by the Fire which never quencheth and to be devoured by the Fire which dieth not, for this single act of problematic transgression.

Let us assume that we are all born sinners, "conceived in sin", for whom no punishment is severe enough, and that it is the divine clemency alone which does not condemn us to worse forms of punishment (though we must humbly beg leave to state that we can conceive of no worse form of punishment than to be condemned by never-quenching fire, and devoured by never-dying worms). But will our theistic friends condescend to inform us for our salvation as to Who implanted in our frail hearts this desire to commit so many deadly sins? Who created the First Man with such temptation in his mind? We, his descendants, are perhaps being justly punished in addition to our own sins—also committed as a result of irresistible temptations—for the sins of our ancestors of the nth degree. But what divine necessity was there for the all-powerful and merciful Father by which He made the first sinner on earth frail enough to succumb to temptation? Couldn't He, in His omnipotence, make His beloved creatures proof against all evil temptations that flesh is heir to? Could it have been His deliberate object to create an imperfect world, peopled by timid, weak and imperfect beings, thirsting for each other's blood, falling victims to the first temptation offering itself, and then subjecting them to untold miseries

for their transgressions? Does the merciful Providence and heavenly Father rejoice in suffering for its own sake? The man who is reported to have exclaimed, "If I were God, I could have created a better world really expressed a true saying!"

I beg to assure the reader in all humility, that it is in no sacrilegious spirit that I write this article. The views expressed above represent my innermost convictions, born out of a supreme disability to reconcile the idea of existence of God with the prevailing state of affairs. For nearly half a century, I have tried to maintain my faith in the existence of God. Often did I waver in that faith, but always came back to it, feeling that I may be wrong, and what I had been taught to believe must be right. But I now feel, perhaps once for all, that it is no longer possible for me to entertain any the existence of a thoroughly callous and heartless mysterious Being, who, having the power to banish all misery from this universe quietly watches it and suffers His so-called "beloved" children to wallow in the mire of agony. I also seem to feel that the time is about to come when mankind will refuse to be duped any longer into believing such an absurdity. The mere fact that they have in the past entertained such a belief almost universally, is no reason why they will continue to do so ever afterwards, as already stated. The oft-repeated parrot-cry that man, by becoming irreligious everywhere in the world, will soon draw upon himself divine wrath and vengeance, will I am convinced, no longer succeed in making him return to God-fearing ways of life. Old superstitions always die hard, and take an unconscionably long time in disappearing. Instead of sorrowing, the real well-wisher of mankind should rejoice at the prospect of deliverence from the thraldom of a supposed divinity. The millineum will only dawn, if at all, when God is universally rejected.

We shall now proceed to show the good results which are likely to be caused in consequence of the abandonment of the ideas of God and religion throughout the world. They can be briefly enumerated thus:—

(a) **Establishment of an Universal Brotherhood.**—This is the most important item. Religion is the most potent factor which helps in keeping man apart from man. Here in India, this appears to be the only thing which prevents a Hindu from calling a Mussalman his brother. Let it be abolished once for all, and the miracle is bound to happen. Is there absolutely any difference between a Hindu and a Moslem except in matters of religion so far at least as India is concerned? With the same language, same mother country, almost the same food, and living side by side for close upon a thousand years, the things that prevent these two big communities from blending their interests and forming one great nation, must be pure and unmixed evils. Is further proof necessary? We have every reason to believe that not only Hindus and Muhammadans in India, but Muhammadans in every other part of Asia, will not take a long time in being fused together, if they all agreed on giving up their respective religions. Think of the immense potentialities of a Federated Asia? Is religion such a great thing that we cannot afford to sacrifice it at

the altar of humanity for this grand object? Let us serve Man instead of a non-existent God. Westerners might perhaps require a longer time to conquer their colour prejudice and to be merged with Asia by giving up their religion and God. But they are bound to, sooner or later, if we can show them the way. There is nothing Utopean or Quixotic in the idea, which is intensely practical. Every other method has been preached, and some practised. But **all of them have failed.** There is no other way. None but an enemy of the whole human race, blinded by race and colour prejudice, should oppose the idea. God and religion, by pretending to be able to bring us together, have hitherto succeeded in only keeping us apart. Away with them, if the millienum is really to dawn on earth. "Man, not God," should be the new slogan, in our march to perfection.

(b) **Abolition of War and Establishment of Peace.** This is also bound to come, and is indeed covered by the former item, to wit, an Universal Brotherhood. I can well anticipate and visualise the smile of contempt and disbelief with which this statement of mine will be received. But let me assure the reader that it is not a wild or unpractical statement. My opponent will say that there is no difference of religion in Europe, yet Europe continues to be ths biggest battle-field of the world. But he will be pleased to remember that my suggestion is not to have one religion in the world, but no religion whatever. This will facilitate the disappearance of War and the establishment of an Universal Brotherhood. And then again, with the formation of a Federate Asia based on the suggested platform, Europe is bound to realise the utility and beneficience of giving up God and religion for its own welfare. At any rate, other experiments for the purpose having signally failed (Hague Conference, Geneva Conferncee &c), this experiment seems certainly well worth the attempt. The sacrifice, if any, is purely sentimental. The profits expected, vastly material.

Count Tolstoi, who was a great thinker of the present age, has preached that the only thing which is calculated to banish War from the face of the globe is the giving effect to the great truth said to have been proclaimed by Christ two thousand years ago, in His Sermon on the Mount, "Resist not evil". Very logically, Tolstoi has laid down that every other effort having been made and found unavailing, humanity, has only this resource left, viz:—to refuse to retaliate, even when oppressed and hard hit by tyrants and oppressor, to avoid War. He has, at least to our mind, convincingly demonstrated the utter fallacy of the doctrine—so familiar to politicians of the latter part of the nineteenth and beginning of the present century, that the best way to prevent War is to be always prepared for it. He has shewn beyond all doubt that this is but the best way to provoke and bring about War. My neighbour is bound to increase his armaments if he finds me doing the same. Well equipped armies and navies and squadrons of fighting aeroplanes &c. will await the first opportunity of plunging into devastating wars, and will create such opportunities, if they are not easily forthcoming.

With the greatest deference, however, to the genius, sagacity and loftiness of purpose of the great Russian political

philosopher, we would most humbly submit that very few nations and individuals in the world would be found ready and willing, to follow the precept "resist not evil", in spite of its inherent and unassailable truth. How difficult it is for ordinary mortals to practise it, has been proved in India during recent years by the palpable failure of the country as a whole to follow the doctrine of non-violence. Perhaps Swaraj would have been attained before the expiry of the period prophesied by Mahatma Gandhi if the whole of India had strictly and literally observed non-violence. Who knows? But it was a foregone conclusion—and we sometimes feel tempted to believe that it was suspected by Mahatmaji himself—that not only the whole of India, but even a considerable majority thereof would never be found spiritually advanced enough to practise it. How many persons, having the physical power to retaliate, can continue to remain quiet in the face of persistent flogging? How many persons of ordinary patience and forbearence can be expected to present their right cheek after being smitten on the left? Yet this is the sum total of the lesson inculcated by the Sermon on the Mount, and Gandhiji's doctrine of non-violence. It really requires moral preparation of the highest order extending through a long series of years—if not generations—to attain such a frame of mind. And so long as that frame of mind is not reached, not only by the advanced few, but by the masses as well, it is hard to expect the abolition of War through the practice either of non-violence or the lesson contained in the Sermon on the Mount. We must once more reiterate our firm conviction that it is really by the attainment of the mental state contemplated by the aforesaid two doctrines the abolition of War can be made possible. But before that stage can be reached, it is essential that God and religion shall be given up once for all by men of all shades of opinion. We have no hesitation in affirming that the latter is not so difficult as the former. It is certainly far easier to relinquish one's belief in God than to continue to be passive and cheerful in the face of torture and oppression. Nay, we fully believe that if faced with the two alternatives, an overwhelming majority of our fellow beings would be found to decline God and religion rather than accept flogging without retaliation. That being so, we are of opinion that the giving up of all religious belief and the belief in the existence of God are the only things calculated to bring up men of all countries to that common platform of brotherhood from which they will be in a position to practise the great truth embodied in the three words "Resist not evil" which will ultimately banish war from the face of the globe and bring about Peace and Good-Will instead. Let it be distinctly understood that what we propose, to wit, the giving up of all belief in God and religion cannot be achieved in a moment. It will take years, if not generations. But it is the only way, and certainly worth attempting. God and religion have increased bloodshed and ill-will from the dawn of creation. It is time they make room for other measures calculated to diminish bloodshed and bring about peace and goodwill. Give up God, the rest will be easy.

(c) **Economic Saving.** Though a comparatively minor factor elsewhere, this is by no means so in India. When

we remember the immense amount of money spent year after year in pilgrimages, religious ceremonies, &c., by people of all stations in life, particularly by the poorer classes who cannot afford to have even a square meal per day, we should unfeignedly rejoice at the prospect of their deliverance from this huge and wanton extravagance which would enable them, to spend their hard-earned savings in more desirable objects, into the details of which we need not enter here.

Then again, when we also take into account the fabulous sums invested in religious institutions in different parts of this country and the unworthy objects on which the income accruing therefrom is very often squandered, we cannot but realize at the good which would be caused to the country as a whole if we could secure the spending of these amounts on worthier objects.

Let the available surplus energy of the world, instead of being devoted to the service of non-existent God, be utilized iu the Service of Humanity, and let mankind decide once for all to place Humanity on the pedestal hitherto occupied by a non-entity.

(d) **Elevation of Character and Attainment of Mental Peace.** This is also bound to follow. Instead of the puny and timid specimens of humanity which have disgraced the world from time immemorial, especially in the God-ridden countries we can well visualise a race of brave and self-reliant beings who will start with the conviction deeply implanted in their minds that they will have to solve all their own problems without fear or favour from an unknown and mysterious entity, will learn to follow truth for its own sake without the selfish idea of rewards and punishments in a problematic future state of existence.

Nay, we firmly believe that an individual who disbelieves in the existence of God and a future state of existence can face the prospect of impending dissolution which to him is equivalent to utter annihilation with far more equanimity and self composure than many a pious theist. This has been borne out times without number and vouched for by unimpeachable evidence. We are not prepared to believe just because Addison is reported to have said so in his death-bed, that Christians die very peacefully and beautifully. Perhaps Addison himself left the world in that enviable frame of mind. But we venture to affirm that his professing the Christian creed had nothing to do with his resignation and equanimity at the of his death. Many well known and pious theists—Christians as well as non-Christians—are known to have shuddered at the bare mention of death, and to have left the world with the greatest dread.

Now, is there anything to wonder at this? In spite of the assurance conveyed to them by their respective religious that they will enter into a state of perpetual bliss after their short sojourn on earth, very few theists are to be met with who really believe in its truth. They have a sort of hazy faith in the correctness of such assurances, and are torn asunder between conflicting emotions, especially in their last moments, as to the fate awaiting them after death. It may be a stage of terrible punishment (and this is generally what they fear the most) extending over an interminably

long period, followed, perhaps, by the enjoyment of pleasures for another long period which again, it its turn, will be the prelude to another incarnation somewhere in some shape or other. Or it may be a long spell of slumber to be followed by a sentence of eternal punishment pronounced by an inexorable divinity on the Day of Judgment, or perhaps utter annihilation. In a word, the poor dying victim is absolutely in the dark as to his future. Stretched on his deathbed, usually after an excruciatingly painful period of agony owing to illness, and divided between hope and fear as to the awful doom which waits him after his breath leaves the body, the death of such a man can be rarely pleasant.

With the real atheist, on the other hand, it is not difficult to imagine that having trained himself in his lifetime by a process of reasoned and intellectual discipline to consider death as inevitable annihilation, pure and simple, and entertaining no doubt as to his ultimate fate, however unpleasant in its aspects, he is more resigned to it, and yields to the inevitable with more fortitude than the other class of individuals enumerated above.

We, therefore, hold, that on this ground alone, to wit, of being able to leave the world in a better frame of mind, it is more desirable to be an atheist rather than a theist, if it appears that the evidence for and against the existence of a Supreme Being happens to be equally balanced. Atheism, contrary to popular belief, instead of driving us to despair, gives more peace of mind. An atheist knows where he stands, and is sure of his position. The theist does not. He cannot, therefore, enjoy the same peace of mind as the atheist whom he pretends to hate so much.

Let every one of us try to help our neighbour, be it ever so little, without caring for caste, creed or colour, and the milleneum will not be long in coming. Such is the closing message of the undersigned.

ANNADAPROSAD CHATTERJEE.

RELIGIOUS BLINDNESS

The will to believe induces in religious people a variety of blindness for which there seems to be no cure. Apparently educated people, whom one would expect to be acquainted with at least the elements of logic, will, with the utmost sriousness, make the most ridiculous statements which will send the non-beliver into convulsions of laughter. An amusing illustration is provided by a Marathi monthlycalled "Dharma-Jagriti" (Religious Awakening) a magazine run on theosophical lines and edited by Mr. R. S. Bhagvat M.A. of Thana.

The November issue of this magazine contains an article by Mr. Chiplunkar, a theosophist pleader of Akola, which refutes the claims of Hindu orthodoxy that the current orthodox morals of Hindu society are based on ancient Aryan culture. It is a reply to an attack launched by another religious magazine against modern radical opinions, especial-

ly in sex matters, as expressed by some modern writers in others magazines. Mr. Chiplunkar cites evidence from ancient Sanskrit Literature to show that not only all the demands of the new morality were included in Aryan culture, but that in some respects the ancients went far beyond what the moderns claim as moral.

There is evidence to show that even Brahmins in Vedic times ate meat and even beef and drank wine, and people considered very virtuous indulged in gambling, staking not only their property and personal liberty, but even their wives! In fact one of the principal incidents in the "Mahabharata" is the gambling between Dharma, the very incarnation of righteousness, and his cousin and enemy, Duryodhana, in which the former staked all his property and his wife Draupadi, who was also the common wife of his four brothers. He lost everything and his cousin thereupon had Draupadi dragged to the court of his blind father and there tried to denude her in the presence of her five heroic husbands, who could not defend her since she had become the slave of the enemy. A truely edifying story! And it occurs in the same epic which contains the Bhagvadgita, which is supposed to epitomize the Hindu religion. Ultimately Shrikrishna, the propounder of the Bhagavadgita, himself came to the rescue of Draupadi by supplying her with endless garments. The whole Durbar, and apparently Shrikrishna himself took it for granted that the husband had a perfect right to stake her. Is this not on a par with the biblical commandment, not covet your neighbour's wife or cattle? And this same Shrikrishna, according to Mr. C. V. Vaidya, an acknowledged scholar, recited the whole of the Bhagavadgita in verse as it now stands, on the field of battle in order to induce Arjuna to fight, when he showed some reluctance to kill his own relatives. Of course being an incarnation of God, it was an easy matter for him to string verses together.

To return to the article in question, it cites the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad which recommends a man to eat the flesh of a bull or a male calf, mixed with rice and ghee if he wished to have a learned son who would be invincible in debate. Both the ancient epics "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata" teem with descriptions of meat-eating in abundance. It was only under Buddhist and Jain influence that Brahmins in some provinces gave up meat altogether and others castes gave up beef. As for wine, the very names "Suras" and "Asuras" given to Gods and demons in Hindu mythology denote that the former drank wine and the latter did not. Krishna's clan and especially his brother were celebrated for love of wine and he himself was not exempt. In fact the Mahabharata gives a description of Krishna, his pupil Arjuna and their wives Satyabhama and Draupadi lying drunk on the same couch! In battle and on festive occassions, these heroes used to get dead drunk. Krisnna's clan, the Yadavas, ultimately wrought their own destruction in drunken brawls in which this incarnation of God also took part, and even a religious Marathi poet like Moropant has described this. As for gambling, besides the incident already mentioned, there is the story of another famous King Nala, who staked his all in gambling and wasexiled from his kingdom in consequence. Both these gamblers are described as two of the four most virtuous people of their time.

Turning to sex morality, the sage Shvetaketu is mentioned as having created the institution of marriage, so that before this time both sexes enjoyed complete liberty. Even after this, all kinds of sons were recognized as legitimate, because Aryans were in need of numbers and could not afford to leave anybody outside the fold. A son born to an unmarried girl was called "Kanina," which the late Mr. Rajwade interpreted to mean "a son conceived by an unmarried girl from her father." A son born of adultery was recognized and so was a son who was in the womb at marriage. All these were recognized as sons and heirs in different degrees. At present only a legitimate or an adopted son is recognized and still the orthodox claim that Hindu morality is unchangeable. If two people cohabited without any ceremony, simply because they liked each other, that was also called a 'marriage' by the Gandharva form, merely a trick to legalize it. This was the case of Shakuntala, whose story is famous, and any number of others. There were also plenty of cases of brother-and-sister marriages periodical marriages, extra-marital relations, the famous "Niyoga", which meant getting children from somebody else in case they were impossible from the husband for any reason. Aryan wives we comed holy guests by receiving them into their beds. There is one story in particular which in itself sufficient to explode the claim of the ancients to any kind of morality. The famous Rishi "Vishwamitra" had a pupil named Galava, who wished to give him 800 horses of a special type in return for his teaching. So he started to beg for these (begging is perfectly honourable for Brahmins). He went to King Yayati, who had no horses to give him, but gave his daughter instead, saying that he could easily get the horses by trading upon her charms. So Galava took the daughter to another King, asking for 800 horses in exchange. This King could only give him 200 of the type he wanted, so he promised to return the girl after she had given him a son. Now this girl had received a boon which made her a virgin again after every son was born. So he took this re-made virgin to another king and then another and each time received 200 horses and took back the virgin after she had given a son to each. This made only 600 horses and he was told that no more of that type were to be found anywhere. So he took the 600 horses and the girl and asked his Guru to accept the girl in lieu of the deficit. To this Guru agreed and begot a son by her. The first three sons became kings after their fathers! Under the present law, Galava would be prosecuted for living on the earnings of prostitution.

All these stories are well-known. What I want to point out is the mentality revealed by the editorial comments on this article, which only cities recognized books often cited by the orthodox for their own purposes. The editor prefers to juggle with these authorities rather than admit that Krishna, the incarnation of God, could have got drunk. This is what he says: "We agree with Mr. Chiplunkar that common people in ancient times indulged in immoral practices, but that does not mean that high-souled individuals like Krishna who reformed society by setting them an example were themselves immoral. It is certainly wrong to say that Shrikrishna was addicted to wine. The Mahabharata was a small work at first and was edited and added to at different times to make the present epic of that name. Different

readings are found in different editions. So it cannot be considered an accurate history of all that occurred at that time. Besides it is a poem and poets are free to insert imaginary stories. So the poets who added to the Mahabharata from time to time must have to put in their own ideas of morals. If a poet belongs to a society which does not consider drinking immoral, and aays that Shrikrishna drank, that cannot be accepted as true. One can only infer that the poet and his contemporaries did not think it bad for a good man to drink. Christian writers say that Christ drank. Buddhist books relate that Buddha himself, who taught 'Ahimsa' (non-killing) to the world, died of indigestion caused by eating boar's flesh. Even God is described as cruel in many books. But it is quite impossible that these stories can be true. It is a contradiction in terms to say that Shrikrishna, who taught Bhagvadgita to the world, who showed Arjuna his 'Vishvarupa' (showed the whole world as contained himself), who had attained the highest knowledge and the final stage of evolution was addicted to wine." Mr. Bhagwat also stresses the fact that scholars are inclined to believe that the popular idea of Shrikrishna is made up by combining the lives of three distinct persons of that name. In the case of Shakuntala, he gives the puerile defence that she was married. If mutual consent constitutes marriage, any man is married to any woman, provided they like each other. As for Aryan hostesses receiving guests into their beds, he pretends that Rishis can never have accepted this kind of homage, since they were great men! How they can it be called a custom of all? It is by this kind of subterfuge that orthodoxy tries to smother everything that they do not like. It is very convenient to say that any portion of the epic which you do not approve of is a later addition and must be imaginary. In that case, why is any portion of it to be believed at all, and especially the Bhagvadgita itself, which forms a part of it? Mr. Bhagvat must know that different editions of this last differ even in the number of stanzas they contain. Some authorities put the number of original stanzas at 94, some at 700, some at 718 and others at 745. Who is to be believed? Other people's ideas about Shrikrishna are not to be accepted, because they conform to their ideas of morality. Why then is Mr. Bhagvat's picture of Shrikrishna to be accepted, since it obviously conforms to his ideas of morals? Christian writers on Christ and Buddhist writers on Buddha are not to be believed, because Mr. Bhagvat thinks it impossible for Christ to have drank or Buddha to have eaten meat, when as a matter of fact, wine forms an essential part of a Christian religious ceremony, and it is very well known that the only restriction placed by Buddha on his followers (Bhikshus) was not to let meat be specially prepared for them, but allowed them to partake of meat already prepared! Theosophy accepts all rellgions, so all the prophets must have been vegetarians and teetotallers to please Mr. Bhagvat!

R. D. KARVE.

"THE FUTURE OF RELIGION."

"Knowledge for the sake of Knowledge" is an old principle professed and followed by every wise man of the past and the present. Such prominent personalities of our time as Mahatma Gandhi and Sir Oliver Lodge stick to the same principle today. But how many Gandhis and Lodges are there today upon the surface of this planet? Perhaps the number of such persons is negligible. The majority of the people does not acquire knowledge for its own sake because most of them are preoccupied with the affairs of their daily bread and know that by so doing they will not be able to fill their hungry stomachs; and a bare minority which can afford to do so, not only for itself but for others as well, is too overfed and selfish to take trouble for "such trivival things." Therefore, keeping these facts in view it seems quite futile to enter into any discussions regarding the necessity and origin of religion in the past. At present, the aim of all knowledge is to promote the happiness of mankind. We do or learn a thing for what we gain from it; we weigh everything in terms of material advantage it is capable of yielding to us, and discard that which is otherwise. Applying this formula to religion we get a big round zero as the result. We observe that religion is not capable of yielding any material advantage to us, and, moreover, it can never be made to do so unless its meaning should be twisted into some far-fetched beyond the popular understanding.

To any ordinary mind, free from religious bigotry, religion is nothing but a number of dogmatic principles heaped up together in a haphazard manner. It is totally devoid of logic and sound reasoning, and the element of fear is predominent in it. It imposes restrictions on mankind with the fear of some supernatural being—so erroneously termed God—which looks over the acts of every single individual and governs the destiny of man. It sings of this supernatural being in a very high strain, and crowns it as the sole arbiter of the universe. Religion presents to us this supernatural being as a magnified image of man together with all his sentiments and emotions. It tells us to follow a definite code of morality, but does not explain its hows and whys; and accuses of heresy to any one who dares to question its absolute validity. It promises ample rewards to those who will live according to the moral principle laid down by it, and warns them of the horrible punishments they shall incur if gone otherwise. It speaks of itself as perfect in all respects, and incapable of any alterations and adjustments, whatsoever, with the changes in the environment of mankind. Religion, therefore is a full-stop to human progress. (At this place I must add that Buddhaism has nothing of this sort, hence it is not a religion).

Now let us review the foregoing facts in the light of Science—the most accurate instrument of finding the truth known to this day. The existence of a supernatural being is not tangible with the scientific knowledge, hence its nonentity is confirmed. There is, of course, evidence for the existence of a universal law, but none of that of any such supernatural being as God. Henceforth I shall write God (with big g) when used in a religious sense, and god (with small g) when in scientific; and refer to them as "He"

and "it", respectively.

Science breaks up every material substance into molecules (of compounds and elements), into atoms, and atoms into protons and electrons. It fathoms into the nature of them and tells us that they are waves in æther. Aether, as yet, has but only a theoretical importance. Even if æther be isolated tomorrow, what beyond it? This is quite unknown and this unknown you may call god, or whatever else you please. It can very well be said that something new may be discovered the day after tomorrow. But will the discovery of this "something new" put an end to research? Nay, it is impossible for there is no end to research, since there always remains something yet so be discovered. Science defies god as something which stretches beyond the limits of known in to the infinite unknown. It can neither deny the existence of god to day, nor ever in future.

So much for the science of Physics, and then comes Psychology—the scienco of human mind. Psychology is the greatest enemy of religion and has done it irreparable loss. It has exploded each and every doctrine of religion, and this is why so many religious fanatics of today are so much afraid of the explanations of psychologists like William James and Sigmond Freud, and so vehemently oppose them. "God is the creation of man and man is the creation of God" is a famous may be notorious–psychological paradox, but a little thinking will reveal its truth. Who came to tell mankind that God exists. Nobody but man. Who said that God created mankind? The answer is man, again. Then, in the name of common sense, what is God but man's own creation and who else is there but man who says God created me? Psychology traces out the element of fear in the backbone of religion; and this the very foundation on which the Temple of Religion stands is illusory and sure to give way one day or the other. It has altogether changed our conception of morality today. In psychology there is nothing like religious morality, but ethical morality of course, there is. Fear of punishment and temptation of reward after death, are responsible for religious morality, while a sound reasoning mind is the stronghold of ethical morality. To quote the words of the well-known English author, Mr. H. G. Wells, "We have no use for blind faith today. We think of cleanliness instead of purity, and health instead of chastity". (See "Illustrated Weekly of India", Feb, 4, 1934). Indeed, if one refrains from sexual promiscuity for some other reason than of endangering physical health–the loss of which must ultimately result in social disintegration, one is bound to turn into a terrible pest to society sooner or later. Such persons being enemies of society, are simply to be abhorred and get rid of as soon as possible.

Psychologically there is no criterion of good and evil. The goodness and badness of our actions is judged by the convention and common acceptance of the society. As the great Poet Shakespeare has truly said, "There is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so". But somebody may challenge the accuracy of this statment, and say, "What about conscience, the god-given power to guide our actions"? Before answering this question let me put it into a better form, that is "What about conscience which is born in man to guide his actions"? Thus modifying it we come face to face with another important question whether conscience, as popularly known, is born or made. The answer is

simple and shall be given by a counter question. Why does a certain section of people shudder at the very idea of pork, and another at that of beef, while a third one enjoys both of these diets without feeling the slightest prick of its conscience? Whence came the difference in the reactions of these three sections of people cited here? Obviously it is due to the difference of their sense of good and bad that is conscience. The three sections of people are brought up in three different kinds of atmosphere of belief and behaviour. Hence conscience, as popularly understood, is made and never born. Examples can be multiplied likewise to prove that, but I think this one will be sufficient. Thus the question of "its being born in man to guide his actions" is clearly fallacious.

Taking out the element of conscience from religion, there remains to be discussed only the fear of punishment and temptation of reward after death. But the modern researches in the field of human evolution has robbed the poor religious fanatics of the last hope of going to heaven. They clearly point that the soul does not exist, as an entity and there is no life after death in the sense in which religion presents it. When a man dies he ceases to be, and the cellular death takes place in the pyre or the grave. Even if we suppose that each cell in man has a soul of its own, then a man cannot have a single soul but a lot of souls. From this it is also obvious that the reincarnation or the continuance of individual personality of man as a whole, as maintained by certain forms of religion, is impossible. Hence a scientific person need not worry about any such speculation.

Although the realization of these facts concerning religion has been much retarded by the existing superstition, prejudice, selfishness, and something like a hereditary desire for the revival of what is wrongfully known as "good old days," the world is gradually beginning to accept them. The West has realized the hollowness of religion and is trying to abolish it. Russia has openly started an anti-religion propaganda and much good will come out of this. Turkey has advanced rapidly in this direction under the direction of that admirable political genius, Kemal Pasha. In Britain and nearly all the European countries such anti-religious or rationalist organisations have been established and are gathering more and more enthusiastic adherents every day. India the most wretched and superstitious country, has also a rationalist organisation of its own. The Indian Rationalist Association has brightened up like a sun amidst the darkness of ignorance, and although many blood-hounds have been set upon it, it has gained sufficient power to muzzle them.

World circumstances will gradually open the eyes of every thinking being all over the world to the truth that maximum happiness can only be gained through unselfishness, which depends on oneness of thought, and the oneness of thought implies a complete eradication of all the current forms of religion from the surface of the earth. If peace and happiness are ever to come, religion must go. To attain universal brotherhood, the world must free itself from the shackles of religion. Many people foolishly hold that religion teaches Love. In truth, it is just the opposite of love. It is the cause of hatred, the most bitter hatred between man and man. Anybody who has any doubt with regard to this statement should read the history of

European Renaissance and the days of Papal Inquisition, and have a look at the present condition of India. Then he will realize the truth of statement.

As scientific education advances, more and more centres of Rationalism will be formed, which some day will unite in one whole to combat religion. What will remain will be a certain code based on ethical standards evolved by circumstances, compelling this reasonable animal, that is man, to guide his conduct in such a way as to attain the greatest happiness for the largest numbers. The end of religion is coming, and the very thought of it will vanish from the human mind, once and for ever. There shall be no religion but the religion (if you are so reluctant to abolish the word altogether) of rationalism in future.

AGRA. A. A. KHAN USMANI.

[We admire the optimism of our correspondent, though we do not share it. Ignorance is still too deep-rooted in the world for people to give up their cherished superstitions for rationalism. ED. REASON.]

THE KORAN—WHAT DOES IT TEACH ?

As I am writing this article, I imagine some of my friends pitying me, thinking I am heading straight to Hell, others smiling at the 'foolish thing" who tries to show off as an ultra modernist. "But no", says the Bhendi Bazar Musalman, "God is going to burn you in Hell, but we are not going to leave you in peace here".

First of all, I shall try and deal with the chief dogma of Islam, viz., the Divine Revelation of the Quran. The other dogmas are Unity of God, The Immortality of the Soul, predestination, a Last Judgment, and Heaven and Hell, etc.

It is said that the Koran has existed from eternity and will exist for ever. (Ch. 56, V. 76, and Ch. 85, V. 22). It was brought done by Gabriel on different occasions and was revealed to Mohomed and was written down by his friends and assistants. If the Koran has existed from eternity, the world is surely of a later date and the events described in that book ought to be in future tense but they are all in past tense.

"The text", says Rodwell in his Preface to the Koran, "assumes the from of a most unreadable and incongruous patchwork"; "un assemblage", says M. Kasimirki in his preface, "informe et incoherent de preceptes moraux, religieux, civils et politiques, meles d'exhortations, de promess et de menaces".

The Koran, we are told, is a divine revelation. But in fact it is a book full of threats of hell to infidels and bribes of a sensual paradise to the pious believers. It is full of contradictions and repetitions. The subjects are take haphazardly. It seems God must be having the limited knowledge of an Arab author and editor who existed thirteen centuries ago. There are about two hundred contradictions in the Koran.

We are told (in Ch. 32, V. 4) that the length of the day of judgment will be

one thousand years and (in Ch. 70. V. 4) fifty thousand years. In Ch. 55, V 13, etc., man is said to have been created out of clay. In Ch. 3, V. 52, he is created out of dust, in Ch. 96, V. 2, out of clots of blood and in Ch. 24. V. 44, it is given that all animals are created out of water (that is, men also), and many others.

Gibbon says in his History (Vol: 9, Ch 50). The Koran is "an endless incoherent rhapsody of fable, and precept, and declamation, which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea which sometimes crawls in the dust and is sometimes lost in the clouds. The divine attributes exalt the fancy of the Arabian missionary; but loftiest strains must yield to the sublime simplicity of the book of Job, composed in a remote age, in the same country, and in the same language. If the composition of the Koran exceed the faculties of a man, to what superior intelligence should we ascribe the Iliad of Homer, or the Philippies of Demosthenes?

The Koran is supposed to be an original revelation, but most of its fables are taken from Biblical and Rabbinical sources which in their turn can be traced back to Essenism, Mithraism, etc.,

Many of the things taken from these sources are mistakenly stated. Rodwell says in his 'Koran' page 385 (sura III) that Mohomed supposed Imran or Amran to be the father of the Virgin Mary (sura CIX LXVI. 12)—Mary and Elizabeth to be sisters who, with Jesus, John and Zacharies, make up the family of Imran. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Mohamed is guilty of the anachronism of confounding Miriam with the Virgin Mary.

The Koran does not mention anything that an ordinary man of Mohamed's time was not aware of.

The Koran's account of creation is entirely fantastic. It is really surprising to find God selecting Arabic as his medium of instruction—a language whose characters were invented as late as at the end of sixth century and even today very few people know the language. Why should God send a revelation to Arabia and to ignorant Arabs when Greece was the seat of learning and Greek was more widely spoken? Are we to suppose that god wanted the Arabs alone in heaven and he wanted to damn the rest of the world or are we to suppose that the Koran was a human creation and was intended for the Arabs only?

The Koran sanctions slavery, polygamy, and concubinage. It bribes believers with a sensual heaven where "Aye blooming youth go round about to them with goblets and ewers and a cup of flowing wine" (Ch. 56, V. 17-18) and "theirs (believers), shall be the Houries, with large dark eyes like pearls hidden in their shells (Ch. 56, V. 23). "Of a rare creation have we created the Houries and we have made them ever virgins, dear to their spouses, equal age with them", (Ch. 56, V. 35—38 for the believers.

"In shades of bridal couches reclining, they and their spouses" (Ch. 35, V. 57). There, in Paradise, are "rivers of water. which corrupt not; rivers of milk, whose taste changeth not; and rivers of wine. delicious to those who quaff it" (Ch. 47, V. 16-17).

It threatens the infidels with eternal hell. "They shalt be inmates of fire, to abide there in eternity", (Ch. 3, V. 112.)

"Those who disbelieve our signs we will cast into fire"; so oft as their shall be well burnt, we will change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the torment" (Ch. 4, V. 59).

"Many, moreover, of the Djinn and men have we created for Hell" (Ch. 7, V. 178). In this case men are Djinn are created for Hell and yet they are held responsible for their actions. According to Islam all our actions are determined by God and yet men are held responsible for their doings and sent to Heaven and Hell.

"Hell is before him (unbeliever) and of tainted water shall he be made to drink". "He shall sup it and scarce swallow it for loathing, and death shall assail him on every side, but he shall not die; and before him shall be seen a grievous torment" (Ch. 14, V. 19-20).

The infidels will be "amid pestilential winds and in scalding water and in the shadow of the black smoke, not cool, and horrid to behold. For they, truly, were blessed with worldly goods, but persisted in heinous sin, and were wont to say," What, after we have died, and become dust and bones, raised? And our fathers, the men of yore?" Say: Aye, the former and the latter gathered shall they all be for the time of a known day. Then ye, O ye the erring, the gain saying shall surely eat of the tree Ex-Zakkoam, and fill your bellies with it, and thereupon shall ye drink boiling water and ye shall druuk as the thirsty camel drinketh (Ch. 56, V. 42-56). Now we exactly know how merciful is God, the all merciful.

Following are the examples of democracy and brotherhood of Islam:—

"And when sacred months are passed, y e kill those who join other gods with God wherever you shall find them; and seize them, besiege them, and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush; but if they shall convert and observe prayer, and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way, for God is gracious, merciful, (Ch. 9, V. 5. What an example of tolerance: I think this sentence has caused rivers of blood to flow and it has reddened the pages of history, under the hands of Taimurlane and Aurangzeb and other Mohomedan Emperors.

"When ye encounter the infidels strike off their heads till ye have made a great slaughter among them, and of the rest make fast the fetters" (Ch. 49, V. 7). This is what they called tolerance, brotherhood and democracy.

Here's one more:—

"When the Lord spake unto the angels, I will be with you; therefore establish ye the faithful, I will cast a dread into the hearts of the infidels; strike off their heads and strike off from them every finger tip" (Ch. 8, V. 12).

Many Mohomedans claim that Islam is the only religion giving equal rights to both the sexes. It is a pure fallacy. A Mohomedan husband can divorce his wife without giving any reason whatsoever. While woman is ma le pollution and a property. "They will also question thee as to the course of women. Say: they are a pollution. Separate yourselves therefore from women and approach them not, until they are cleansed, etc "(Ch. 2, V. 222). "Your wives are your fields: go in, therefore, to your fields as ye, will, etc.,". (Ch. 2, V. 223).

But chide those for whose refractories e have cause to fear; remove them into

beds apart, and scourge them", (Ch. 4, V. 38).

The Koran also gives the account of the creation of Universe in 6 days, creation of 7 Earths in 2 days and tries to prove the resurrection by rain and sun that die every night and resurrected every morning!

In short, most of the Mohomedans know the topography, geography, geology, chemistry, and physics of the "other world", but as far as this world is concerned they are three to four hundred years in arrears.

The Koran does contain many good things, but it only gives us the idea of the psychology of the Arabs, and the only rational conclusion that we can draw from it, is that the Koran is purely a human creation.

The Mohomedans have one chief God and many angels, and polytheists have also a chief God and many smaller gods to help him; the only difference is in name, some called them angels and oth,er the gods.

Allah of Islam is very much like Jehovah of the Jews and Brahmah of the Hindus. After all, what is there in a man!

IMA REBEL.

THE RATIONALIST YOUTH LEAGUE.

This League has been formed by some young members of the Association with same objects as the R. A. I. and with the desire of working in co-operation with the Rationalist Association of India.

The membership of the League is open to any person under the age of twenty-five, and the annual subscription is a minimum of Rs. 1/-. We gather that the membership is rapidly increasing and we request all those young men and women who are interested in Rationalism to write to the Secretary of the Rationalist Youth League, Fanaswala Building, Block A, Room 59, Sankli Street, Byculla, Bombay.

The League holds monthy meetings with lectures and discussion classes. It is circulating rationalistic literature free of charge and is having a small circulating library amongst its young members and is doing wonderfully useful work ever since it has been started. It can be commended to anybody who wants to study Rationalism.

BIRTH CONTROL WILL REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY

Lord Horder says It will have Immensely Valuable Results.

Lord Horder, one of the most famous doctors of the day, declares he believes birth-control to be the most important of all the activities which will eventually help us in regard to the preservation of human life and happiness. He was speaking at a dinner of the National Birth-Control Association, of which he is President, held here to raise funds for the Association. It was later announced that £1.000 had been subscribed.

Birth-control was an important factor in such problems as Eugenics, material mortality, infant welfare and the voluntary sterilisation of the unfit. "I cannot escape the conviction," he said, "that in the proper spacing of children and the elimination of the unwanted child, lies not only the easiest, but the most effective contribution to preventive medicine and social betterment."

When maternal mortality was discussed it was all very well to censure the doctor or the nurse. "Surely the question of the fitness of the mother to bear her child is a very important factor," said Lord Horder. "I think myself it is the most important factor in this question of maternal mortality."

He was interested in the voluntary sterilisation of the unfit. They would get that in time, no doubt. But what would they have achieved? The unfit were only a few thousands in number. Better birth-control among the millions of the normal population would have immensely valuable results.

The Countess of Limerick said that birth-control was no longer regarded as a sort of indecent quackery, but had passed into the sphere of preventive medicine. It was to be hoped that birth-control clinics would soon be recognised by the State. Birth-control did not mean the prevention but the proper spacing of births. It stood for wise parenthood.

Sir Patrick Hastings, K.C., urged that every doctor and every hospital ought to study and advocate the subject. The real trouble was not to educate the poor women in the use of birth-control, but to educate the rich doctors to produce a perfect method.

[In England influential and learned people such as Lord Horder, The Countess of Limerick and Sir Patrick Hastings K. C. advocate birth-control. Here in India, bigoted priests and their ignorant followers condemn it. (Ed. Reason.)]

A LECTURE AT THE RATIONALIST YOUTH LEAGUE.

A lecture was delivered by Mr. Megherian (Editor: Cavalcade) on "Rationalism" under the auspices of the Rationalist Youth League on Saturday 15th December at the Students' Brotherhood Hall, Bombay. A short summary is given below.

In the beginning the speaker proceeded to clear all the wrong ideas which existed among many people. He said that Rationalism was supposed to be consisting of dogmas but that this is not a fact. "Rationalism is simply and purely an attitude that a person takes towards the existing superstitions, beliefs and customs."

Rationalists claimed the right of freedom of thought in religious and other subjects and extended the same right to others, for, it would be quite irrational to deny a right to others while one claimed it for himself.

He further stated that in his opinion the attitude of all the prophets of the past such as Christ, Mahomed, Guru Nanak and others has been Rationalistic. They have fought against the ideas and superstitions that existed during their times, e. g. Mahomed said that he had come in the world in order to destroy the foolish superstitions of the idolators. "Which Rationalist would say anything better than Guru Nanak when he said, the best duty of a man is the search for Truth, or Christ who condemned those who have eyes but refuse to see, and ears yet refuse to hear?" They have played their part as Rationalists according to their time.

He went on to say: "The whole moral attitude of Rationalism can be summed up in one single word and that word is 'Tolerance". It is necessary to take into account the question of degree. Rationalists held that there was no greater immorality than forced morality. Rationalism is the highest moral attitude.

It is not by fighting that we will gain our ends but by being tolerant.

Reason should be also the thing that governs the politics of the world. Rationalism has no direct bearing on politics. Rationalism is political in the sense that it may effect the existing political schools of thought. It undoubtedly effects the political situation of a country because if the new generation grows up with the ideals of Rationalism i e. Reason and Tolerance then there will be no difference between a Hindu, a Mahomedan and a Christian. The greatest bond of unity between humans beings is Reason.

The speaker during his lecture incidentally referred to the propaganda that was being carried on by some wicked persons who tried to connect the Rationalist Association of India with Moscow. He emphatically refuted the allegation and declared that the Rationalist Association of India and the Rationalist Youth League had no connection whatsoever with any political party inside or outside India as mentioned in the last clause of the constitution of the Rationalist Youth League. The Association consisted of members belonging to altogether different political schools of thought.

After the lecture the lecturer invited any questions which the audience might like to ask. Some questions were asked and answered by the lecturer although they had no direct bearing on the subject of the lecture.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF
THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, The Editor "Reason," 3. Morland Road, Byculla, Bombay. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India. 41, Queen's Road, Bombay 2.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

Some time ago, a little boy named Ryan, aged 10 years, appeared as a witness before Judge Foster in Melbourne, Australia. After the administration of the oath, the usual question was put to the child:—"Do you know what will happen to you if you tell a lie?" "I shall go to Hell," replied the boy. The Judge said that he did not like such a question to be put to the child. Addressing the child, he said: "Hell does not exist, my boy, you must not be frightened of that, you must speak the truth as a good and truthful boy." The Judge further remarked that children should not be frightened with the threat of Hell

as it was a pernicious doctrine; he, himself, never teaches his children about Hell and he was glad to say they were well-behaved children.

As soon as this was published, there was immediately a hue and cry from bishops, priests and parsons. They denounced this plain speaking Judge everywhere and said that Australia would soon become a den of iniquity if the fear of Hell was removed from the people. Nothing could be a better proof that priests depend on Fear to keep people in religion—a most despicable method, to say the least against it.

One is glad to note, according to the Australian paper, that many sensible people cordially agreed with the Judge and condemned the teaching of Hell. According to "The Star," an Australian paper, the mother of the boy agreed with the views of the Judge. "I think the Judge was right", she said. "I do not believe in hell myself and I have never talked of it to my children. I want my children to grow up Christians and decent citizens, but they can be all that without having ideas put in their heads that fill them with fear."

Dr. R. S. Ellery, a well-known Australian psychologist, also strongly condemned the teaching of Hell to children and quite agreed with the Judge. "It was psychologically wrong," said Dr. Ellery, "to plant the seeds of fear in the mind of a child whether to induce good conduct or not." Dr. Ellery rightly said that credulity was a main characteristic of the child mind, and much happiness depended on security and love given by parents to whom the child looked for truth. "A child," said Dr. Ellery, "might be put to sleep by threats which produced fear, but the effects later in life might produce neurotic disorders. These ailments, including the various phobias, fear of open or closed spaces, and so on—could be traced often to such causes."

It is also the opinion of many eminent scientists that fear tends to disorganize the nervous system. Yet, it is on Fear that most religious teachers depend to make people moral! Who can doubt that the many wretched specimens of Humanity one sees about are not the victims of individuals besotted and demoralized by such teaching as eternal punishment.

It is also the opinion of many thinkers that Fear makes people religious and this is the reason why religion does not teach self-reliance, independance, manliness, courage and self-defence. Religion tends to make people abject and grovel in the dust. In the threat of Hell and the torments of Purgatory, the priest has not only a powerful weapon to cow down people, but an inexhaustible bank from which he can draw as he likes. The Church of Rome, for instance, became financially very strong the moment it discovered the doctrine of Purgatory. Consider what this doctrine means to that Church. Thousands of the faithful are daily in pitiful dread of the fate of their dear departed ones. Priests assure these credulous people that their dear ones must undergo the torments of unquenchable fire in Purgatory before they are admitted in Paradise. Prayers and Masses (which must be paid for) are indispensable to hasten their delivery from such a place. These deluded people gladly pay for these masses which are said in thousands daily all over the world! If people were to disbelieve this infamous, heartless, and horrible doctrine tomorrow, that Church would suddenly be deprived of its greatest source of revenue. It is

easy to understand why the Church of Rome insists on that doctrine. The average Catholic is always haunted by the fear of death. Small wonder! The dread of the Devil and the fires of Purgatory seldom make his last moment a serene and tranquil one.

* * *

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the poet, a hundred years ago said: —"Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in a thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist." This was said a hundred years ago when an Atheist was looked upon as more than a criminal. Even today, in benighted quarters, people think it is an awful thing to be an Atheist. It matters not whether you believe in Jehovah as a God or Jesus, Allah, Ahura-Mazda, Vishnu, Shiva, Mulungu, Atanatoo, Dharamooloon and what not, they say that belief in some imaginary ruler of the universe is better than no belief at all. The priest and the politician between themselves have conspired to make men believe in some invisible ruler so that they may have a greater hold on the masses. It is written that man will always be the dupe of his own stupidity.

* * *

When three fools are gathered together a charlatan is sure to be in the midst of them. True to the tradition of the priestly caste, which is always hostile to modern ways, the Mahomedan priests of South Africa during the last Ramzan festival objected to the notification of the appearance of the new moon by telephone or telegraph. The papers say:—"At the beginning of January, true believers in Durban anxiously scanned the sky for the slim crescent which betokened the end of the month's fast, but the sky was overcast. It would appear that the moon was seen at Johannesburg and the telephone lines soon buzzed and the telegraphs clicked with the good news, but the priests declined to accept such news and the Durban Muslims had to continue their fast another day while their co-religionists in Johannesburg were able to accept the testimony of a clear sky."

To make their authority on such a subject more binding and sacred, a conference was immediately held during which the opinion of Mahomedans from India was quoted, the priests decreed that a person must communicate the news personally after seeing the moon with his own eyes and bring a reliable witness with him. These worthly Mahomedan priests evidently still believe that the moon, after all, may play false and may not appear when it is due! They must see it to believe that it is still in the sky! The faithful, of course, will bow down to this solemn decree, for how can ordinary mortals question the wisdom of sacred priests who are in daily contact with the Ruler of the universe?

* * *

A Belgian Commercial Court has decided against a well-known religious order named "The Trappists" which trades in Beer. It would appear that a brewer adopted the trade mark "Trappist" and the religious order immediately sought an injunction to restrain the rival brewery from adopting such a well-known mark. The Court decided that the Trappists were an associate body not for purposes of profit, and that their ideal was to live according to the precepts of St. Benedict (to scorn money and to live a life of poverty), to do charitable work, etc. The Trappists were ordered to pay the cost of the action as they were not traders, and could not object to or complain of competition. Most of the religi-

ous orders on the Continent have become powerfully rich in liquor or spirit trade —Benedictine and Chartreuse, for instance, are manufactured by monks—The Benedictine monks also trade in a well-known Dentifrice known as "Dentifrice du Dr. Pierre." In popular beliefs, monks are considered to be very poor people whose aim in life is to do charitable work while they themselves must beg for their living while they are limping towards heaven.

* * *

An English parson was very sarcastic about the enterprise of the British Broadcasting Company to broadcast religion. (The B. B. C., in effect, is making a powerful propaganda in favour of religion much to the disgust of very many in England). "You cannot broadcast a soul," said the Rev. Dr. Dixon. "Neither can you broadcast a soul's highest aspiration—and that is prayer." He assures his people that "though words of prayer may be spoken into a microphone, yet the Almighty God is not to be regarded as listen-in to the loud speaker. Neither can one imagine him as a humble eavesdropper, curious to hear what a speaker says to the microphone." If God has ears he must surely hear prayers whether these are addressed as litanies, or sung as "God save the King." He may not care for a microphone which is, of course, a modern invention, but to all appearance he must be terribly interested in the bleating voice of the parson when his prayer for the congregation soars heavenwards. Has Dr. Dixon a faint suspicion that God has suddenly become deaf?

* * *

Another miracle in India! After the bleeding Bull of Travancore, a bleeding idol has been discovered as Jandialla Sherkhan, a village near Sheikhupara. The wonder of it is that the idol was located in the trunk of a pepul tree belonging to a Brahmin named Gulab Dass. This pious man of God was in want of money and he sold the tree to a Muslim for Rs. 22. As soon as the latter cut down the tree, the idol suddenly dropped out to the great consternation of all present. It had a blood-red stain on its neck and had also a tilak mark on the forehead. The Brahmin is stricken with grief over this and is repentant of his awful sin for having sold that sacred tree. The Muslim is also in trouble. His son who cut down the tree is down with high fever and he now fears the worst calamity. It is now a question of appeasing the offended goddess and surely a poor goat in the corner will lose its life over the dreadful affair!

* * *

Our readers who have to go down by the Hornby Vellard at night had better be careful. The Evening News of India announced some time ago that the place is haunted. It relates the story of one of its correspondents who had a weird experience with a ghost there. "Recently" writes the correspondent, "I was driving into Bombay after midnight, when it seemed that an ice-cold wave enveloped me and though I am not a hyper-sensitive person, and view all occult matters with suspended judgment, (which means that already the correspondent must have had experience of "occult matters") I must confess I felt a pair of ice-cold, invisible hands grip my wrists and deliberately turn the steering-wheel of my car towards the footpath. What is more, I had blue bruise (sic) marks on my wrists next morning."

The correspondent goes on to relate that he had great difficulty in keeping the

car from mounting the footpath. He said that he had the same experience on two previous occasions at the same spot, and it would appear that some of his friends went through the same experience at the same place.

One wonders what these unfortunate people must have done to this ghost who is evidently determined to pick a bone with them. One also wonders whether these people are Catholics of Bandra. If they are, they ought not to be afraid of a ghost who plays such silly pranks, or, as a matter of that, a crowd of any kind of ghosts. After all, it is a spiritual privilege to live in Bandra which is a hallowed place on this side of India. Its residents must, indeed, be under the special protection of all the saints of heaven, even of the "King of Kings" himself. If they cannot trust so many celestial protectors, the present writer would suggest a potent remedy. Carry a flask of fresh Holy Water especially consecrated in one of the Holy Churches of Bandra, and vigorously sprinkle the ghost with the same as soon as it makes its appearance. The effect of Holy Water on ghosts is really marvelous. They shriek and bolt away as if a regiment of cuirassiers were after them. For Mohomedans there is a *taviz* sold at Mahim which is also very efficacious.

* * *

It is really distressing to hear the constant lamentations of the East Indians of Salsette in the newspapers. They attribute all their shortcomings, ignorance and backwardness to ignorant priests who hold sway over them, and to remedy this they clamour for more priests, nuns and seminaries! It is possible to become besotted for various reasons but this really is the extreme limit. Little wonder that Bandra, the capital of Salsette, is proclaimed as the most pious town in India.

DOES GOD LISTEN TO PRAYER?

The Revd. Dr. Dixon, an English clergyman, recently made a strong protest against the religious propaganda of the British Broadcasting Company which, it would appear, insists on fostering religious discourses on an unwilling public, much to take the disgust of many who rightly disapprove of such a thing.

"You cannot broadcast a prayer", said derisively the Revd. Dr. Dixon, (see "Notes and Happenings" in this issue). He does not believe that God is an eavesdropper listening to prayers much like a servant girl would listen to conversation behind the door. Dr. Dixon particularly dislikes the micro-phone-

The Revd, Dr. must have caused a good deal of indignation and surprise in the religious world for the Devil knows what he was driving at. If he believes that God is a living person, there is no reason why he should hold that he does not listen to petitions addressed to him. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to understand how God can answer prayers if he does not listen to them. Perhaps Dr. Dixon attaches a different meaning to the word "prayer" than is universally understood. Prayer, according to the dictionary, is a solemn petition addressed to God or any object of worship. It may take the form of a prescribed for-

mula, as is laid down in most prayer books, as for instance the 'Pater Noster' or the obligatory prayer which every Moslem is expected to repeat five times a day. It may be also an improvised composition recited loudly or silently. A prayer may be said mentally or sung; but in whatever form it is said, it is always a petition which is addressed to God. Even when done mechanically as when the Thibetian monk unrolls his prayer wheel, he mentally thinks of the long prayer which he expects the Almighty to hear. Similarly does a Brahamin when he repeats his interminably long Mantra. Even the repetion of the word "Om" a thousand times is a sort of praise which is believed to be very pleasing to the ear of the Almighty.

To judge by the enormous volume of prayers addressed to God daily, it is reasonable to expect that a good deal of his time is occupied in listening to the prayers of his people and adjudicate according to their merit. It is true that certain creeds in the performance of their rites and ceremonies do give one the impression that they believe their god to be deaf; hence they beat big drums, ring bells and beat cymbals in a manner to drive people, who are not used to such noises, temporarily insane. But the very fact of making such dreadful noises implies that they are meant to attract the attention of God in case he may be engaged on some other business. He is, therefore, presumed to hear what is said to him.

If Dr. Dixon is right that God does not listen to prayer as is popularly believed, believers would think it a waste of time addressing any petition to him. But Dr. Dixon is wrong. All creeds teach that God does hear prayer and grant the request of those that he thinks are worthy of his grace and favours. All priests insist that it is so. When Christ and other religious founders taught the people to pray and exhorted them to do so as the most profitable thing that they can do, they certainly believed that God listens attentively to the prayers addresed to him. Christ distinctly said:— "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you." In the Lord's prayer, for instance, the import is clear. After paying the usual compliment to God and uttering the usual praise which evidently God insists from every creature, the petitioner asks for certain favours.—He asks to be provided with his daily bread which God who is the Dispenser of all things is most likely to withhold unless asked for; he asks God to save him from the temptation of the Evil One and to forgive his sins. If Dr. Dixon is right, all this is pure waste of time.

The pictures of heaven given by different creeds all show that the principal occupation in heaven is to hear prayers and to grant or refuse the favours asked for, as the case may be. The Angels and the Saints round the Throne of God are constantly praying for the salvation and happiness of those of their favourites on Earth and those who are undergoing purification by fire in Purgatory. Petitions from here are incessantly arriving and graces and favours dispatched by return post, and, doubtless, the celestial telegraph office has a tremendous lot of business to cope with daily. The Christian pictures of Heaven are very suggestive. Though the scenes presented by the Protestant sects differ somewhat from the picturesque ones given by Catholics, (pictures of heaven can be seen in many Catholic homes) all of them agree that

in the Court of Heaven, God is very keen on the prayers of his people and that he is terribly offended when they neglect this important duty. (Priests, as a matter of fact, always attribute all the calamities we experience in this world to our sinful neglect of praying and putting all our faith in God). This is the reason why the Protestants, like the Catholics, in fact all believers in God believe in the efficacy of prayer. The Protestants, generally, address their prayers directly to God, often through his Son, but they do not trust this important duty to the Virgin and the Saints as the Catholics mostly do. Whatever may be the channel through which the prayers of the Protestants are directed, it is certain that God must be receiving a considerable volume of the same from those quarters. If we were to believe the Catholics, God may not be so busy. The Catholics, in effect, assert that God does not bother himself with the prayer of anybody except the Catholics. He simply ignores the prayers of those who do not belong to the true Church—which is the Roman Catholic Church—and there is an end to it. Be that as it may. The Catholics alone, if their contention is true, must be keeping heaven terribly busy, and one wonders whether God can attend to anything else except giving his best attention to their petitions. Let us imagine for a moment what, according to the Catholic notion of Heaven, must be the scene up there. God the Father is seated very sedately on a throne of ivory and gold, looking very grave and rather worried. On his right hand is seated his only Son, co-eternal with him. On his left hand is that Mysterious Being—The Holy Ghost—also co-eternal with the Father and the Son. The Three form the Court of Heaven. Behind the divine throne is a colossal cross resplendent with glory and scintillating with countless precious gems. The glory of God is reflected as pure dazzling white clouds and the shining light is too overpowering for mortal eyes to contemplate. Numberless Cherubims and Seraphims hover round, many of them carrying crowns and festoons of beautiful flowers—roses and lilies are in profusion. Archangels are in close attendance and many well known Popes and Saints bask in the divine effulgence. The Virgin Mary is seated at the foot of the throne. Her smile is gracious and on her countenance shines kindness itself. The twelve Apostles are provided with seats of honour; the solemnity of the scene is most impressive. The Saints take precedence according to their rank and sanctity. All are in the attitude of the deepest reverence and respect. Some well-known Saints—St. Peter, St. Francis Xavier, St. George, St. Patrick and St. Iago are not found near the divine throne. Their duties call them elsewhere. St. Peter is at the gates of Heaven, the keys of which he holds. He must be there to keenly scrutinize the new arrivals who are constantly pouring in. St. Francis Xavier is busy at the celestial India Office where he spends anxious times. It is said in heaven that he is very dissatisfied with the paucity of converts in India. He cannot get over his sorrows that Old Goa is now in ruins. St. Iago is in tears over the apostasy of Spain. Other Saints also attend to various duties. But the busiest person in heaven is really the Holy Virgin to whom the bulk of the prayers and petitions are addressed. Just imagine the crushing duties of the Holy Mother of God. She must appeal constantly to God on behalf of her children on Earth and also for the souls in Purgatory. She is often ques-

tioned about the favours she asks for and at times she has to plead hard in favour of her proteges. To her also is allotted the task of watching over the last moment of the faithful, and together, with all her other duties she has hardly time to do anything else but to intercede and pray for all who repose their confidence in her. God the Son also receive many petitions, but the only one who has an easy time in Heaven is the Holy Ghost. His services are only required to enlighten the Pope and to guide the Militant Church in times of trouble. After this, it is simply ridiculous to say that God does not listen to prayers. Praying is indeed the constant occupation of the inmates of heaven. Some think that there is also plenty of recreation. Possibly so. The elect must surely sing the praise of the Almighty with the accompaniment of the harp and other amenities must have been devised to spend ETERNITY pleasantly. They say that souls do not and cannot suffer from ennui in heaven. We must, however, strongly discourage the belief of some sensual and simple-minded people that there are plenty of material comforts there. Heaven is essentially a spiritual place. There are certainly no mountains of Vindaloo, rivers of beer or lakes of George Alfred brandy up there. Other creeds also are emphatic on the necessity of prayer. The Muslim assure us that Allah insists on it. Praying five times a day, as we all know, is a religious obligation with the Muslims. In Heaven the Mahomedan Saints, like the Catholic, spend their time in praying for the faithful on Earth, and for the glory of Islam. Allah, they say, though very stern, is always merciful. They do not think that the Mahomedan heaven is a dull place as some Christians assert. It is true that there is no harp playing and no singing in that heaven. Allah dislikes music, but the Mahomedan Paradise has been described by many as a most pleasant place. Everywhere are cool and shady places. Rivers of sparkling water, milk and sherbet flow in all directions. Trees bearing delicious fruits and gardens full of sweet flowers, are plentiful and the happy souls have a glorious time all round.

The Zorastrians also say that their Heaven is an abode of prayer. Ahura-Mazda, surrounded by Farishtas, longs to hear the beautiful prayers which, said in that archaic language, soften his heart. Those who were charitable on earth, who did good work, performed good deeds and uttered good thoughts, have a grand time in heaven. They and the Farishtas often have grand concerts, the sweet music of which is of a kind that can only be heard in heaven. Is it necessary to multiply the cases of the universal belief in prayer? Dr. Dixon is refuted by all the known creeds. We think his sneer is due not to his belief that God does not listen to prayer, but to his inveterate dislike of that new modern invention—the microphone. Just as the Muslims of South Africa dislike the telephone and the telegraph and will have none of them, the Revd. Dixon abhors the microphone, hence his apparent heresy.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

EVOLUTION AND THE CREEDS.

History repeats itself, and the cycles of its rotation are no less true in religious than on the political side of civilised life. The attitude of the Fundamentalist States of America towards the teaching of the Darwinian Theory is merely illustrative of the deeper problem involved in questioning the hard realities of biological existence. A few years ago, a school-master of the Dayton School, Tennesse, was penalised for making his pupils acquainted with the law of Evolution. Modern science, has however placed the principle on a firm footing, and it is unlikely, that attempts will be made in more advanced countries, e. g., in Europe to controvert the main outlines of the theory, although palæontological finds since the publication of the "Origin of Species" (1857) and the improved technique of scientific investigation may have filled in some of the gaps, explained a still larger number of facts, and helped in the main to reach a more comprehensive truth. The reproach that there are several theories of evolution is thus ill-founded, when it is only remembered that scientific truth is rather in the nature of an ever-expanding *process* than an accomplished fact of religious certitude, to be believed in implicitly on pain of losing one's soul on default. It is curious that the myriad-tongued faiths once delivered unto our fathers should seek to point at the differences among scientists as proof of the assailability of the Laws of Science. Natural law is no more than the mere generalised statement of the phenomena of nature, and as such the scientist is entitled to examine at each step the statement of the Law, and improve its expression so as to accord better with further discovery and research. He is not concerned with maintaining any theory and putting it forth for truth at all cost. The modifications of scientific principles are in fact the strength, rather than the weak-point in the history of the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

The vested interests of the historical religions of the world, on the other hand, oblige their votaries to seal their brains against all conflicting doctrines. They tell the masses that the ills of the world are illusory. There are balances drawn on their accounts in an unseen world hereafter. Recompense in an after-life for the deeds of this one. Consolations resting on perverted psychologies, and ample rewards promised freely for no merit greater than mere conformity, this in general may be said to be the method of action of the creeds.

And to help to distract attention from the things of the world, what may better be expected to accomplish than the mystical, idealist stand illustrated in the Vedanta. "We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep" wrote Shakespeare. "Avyaktadini bhutani, vyakta madhyani Bharata, Avyakta nidhananyeva tatraka paridevana" so sings the Gita (II, 28): Beings are indistinguishable in origin, and alike in their dissolution, but are manifested in the middle state, why then lament, O, Bharata? On the principle that nothing can be conceived as having an existence, which is non-existent in the beginning and the end, Shankara reasons out the non-existence (Asat) of the material universe from the very circumstance of its being 'rounded with

sleep' in its beginning and in the end. As there may be nothing which may come out of nothing and revert to nothing in the end, the universe dissolves itself into an unreality. Brahman is the one reality, and all else is Vivarta, mere illusion. The logic is incontrovertible, and the conclusion is irresistible that emancipation consists in the acquisition of knowledge, that dispells the Maya, the enveloping ignorance, that is the root cause of the idea of seperateness, of distinction apart from the all-pervading Paramatma, the Supreme Brahman.

The process of this emancipation is mainly individualistic, depending upon the competency achieved by each being, the fitness (adhikara) resulting from appropriate successive stages of spiritual experience and exercise (Sadhana). In the West, the poetry of Shelly and Wordsworth, and the teaching of Carlyle and Emerson are the brilliant petals in the flower of Idealism. Plato had constructed for ancient Greece an Ideal Universe. and the philosophies of Leibnitz and Kant maintain the position. The categories are themselves immutable, and duty is supra-rational for Kant as much as it is emphasized in the Bhagavad-Gita (Dharma). A stern disregard for the actualities of life, a turning away from its forces of attraction and repulsion, (Raga and Dvesha) characterises the illusionist school that in successive centuries, and under diverse skies. has been advocating consistently the removal of the human foot from off the ground. The fight in the air is yet to be successfully accomplished.

There is something in the very idea of evolution which is opposed to the dramphilosophy of idealsim. Evolution takes up the universe as a fact to be understood, subject-matter to grapple with, not to be brushed aside as Vivarta (illusion) as Shankara did. It is a reality awaiting explanation and more full of promise of human emancipation provided we understand its forces aright and marshal them to advantage. The division is thus seen to be sharp and fundamental, and it depends upon whether we recognise the world as a force for good and evil, or whether we close our eyes upon it and are satisfied that it is *Asat*, unreality, an illusion, and a dream. Religions have often tried to soothe the suffering humanity by preaching Vairagya (dispassion) and meekly did the race turn its face away from the splendours of religious privilege in the hope that magnificient cathedrals and soft-cushioned armchairs are awaiting their arrival elsewhere. The monk and the Sannyasi, and the performer of the Yegna (sacrifice) and austerities rejoice in the hope that the ultimate home in the heaven is peopled with celestial nymphs and ambrosial dainties. It is the psychology of personal satisfaction all the same.

I am aware of another branch of the Vedanta-philosophy which does not rest its oars on illusion, which in fact follows up the principle of Evolution (parinama-vada). Ramanuja had developed this system based upon the pre-existing commentaries of Bodhayana of the original Brahma Sutras of Vyasa or Badarayana. It rests on the supposition that the universe is an *amsa* (fraction) of the *Sat*, the Real, Suprema, Narayana. An attempt at practical sociological regeneration seems to have been seriously made since the time of Sankara, and we may understand the teaching of Ramanuj in that light. If anything, the emphasis laid on devotion, religious and social, and

the extension of the right to spiritual knowledge to women and the lower orders of society, and the collectivisation and equidistribution of rations in the temple-centres and Mutts, point to the practical, temporal attention that religious life permitted itself since his time. In their traditions, (Sampradaya) the followers of Ramanuja, the Shri Vaishnavaites, do not take offence in having included Tiruppani Alwar, (who was said to have been born, a Pariah, outcaste) among their twelve apostles. Again that Bandit—saint (Tirumangai Alwar) that waylaid the rich in order to feed the poor is also among the twelve, a symbol perhaps that ordinary notions of robbery and property are relative to existing orders of society. The tradition associated with his name is suggestive of the latest experiments in economic readjustment. Linked to those Dravidian seers, Ramanuja developed the sociological faith in the equality of all castes for spiritual redemption, and the possibility of lifting up human life amid the stern realities of the world of mixed good and evil.

Although the school of Ramanuja did not wipe out physical existence as an illusion, and although the principle of evolution (Purinama) is expressly relied on, it cannot be supposed that the tendencies of modern scientific thought are fully comprised in the credal forms of the earlier centuries. True, an admission of a reality of the world is to some extent traceable in the Visistadwaita system. But it would be boldness to assert that any form of religion turns the face completely away from the other world. No prophet or preacher of faith may afford to remain a secular sociologist. The attempt at the well-ordering of society may be there but it is never unmixed with the religious background. Ramanuja may be a good Religio-Sociologist and a benefactor of the community during his day, but the usual fossilisation of all credal forms did not stay its hand among his followers. It is the curse of all dogma that it carries within it the seed of its own corruption. And religion as the upholder of dogma may never free itself from the taint. Religious history the world over attests the truth. To rely upon the prospect of betterment in the life-beyond, as the mainspring for human morality, is the all-too-common practice among the creeds ever designed for man. An ultra-mundane motive for Ethicism is the common feature of all cults except perhaps the rationalist teaching of the Buddha.

There is something in the Vaishnava scheme of redemption comparable to the Christian conception of final Beatitude. The soul evolves to divine altitudes, and approaches very nearly the Godhead, has all the insignia, in every respect resembling God, but not completely merged in it. This state of final release, Moksha, is an eschatological invention, superimposed upon the known processes of evolution through fertile imagination. To the scientific mind, to envisage a *final state* for evolution would be incomprehensible. Evolution is simply a process, which can neither be understood in terms of the beginning, nor the end, the final stage. It is our Moha or imagination that would project either on to it. Given the final-perfected state, as a preconceived or conceivable end, the whole gamut of evolution fades out into the simple slavish march to the destined goal. The existence of diverse values, of varied instances, and of relative perfection through exercise and experiment,

all these will have been totally excluded, were we to presume the shaping of the world to a predetermined plan. Modern science has demonstrated the weakness of the teleological argument, and Paley's watch is seldom relied upon in contemporary philosophy. If there is a plan, why not work it out even now? And if the plan was worked out already, why did not the universe come to an end? Further, it is derogatory to omnipotence to think that there are ideals and plans to work out. The existence of failures, of evil, of suffering, and of nature that is red in tooth and claw, points to the probable absence of preconceived design.

Evolution attempts the naturalistic explanation of the order revealed in the disordered world, and the creeds that seek to chain human faith to an after-world will have found their occupation gone when it comes to be universally acted upon. It is no accident, therefore, that religion in whatever form sees the enemy in the theory started by Darwin.

Cocanada, 15-1-1935.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

SCIENCE AND GOD.

One does not like to say very hard things about Sir Ambrose Fleming. He is a very old man (born 1840) with a mental make-up that was already old-fashioned when he was a youth. But he has for many years been the ideal scientist of such bodies as the Christian Evidence Society and that type of religious believer whose avidity for the incredible can be satisfied only because of his tremendous lack of appreciation of the possible. Sir Ambrose Fleming is known, I think, on account of his work in physics (although he is not in the front rank of physicists) but this is not the cause of popularity with Christians. The thing that endears him to the Daytonville type of believer is that every now and again he breaks forth into a statement of religious beliefs of which most educated Christians are now ashamed. And about this there is one thing worth noting. These pitiable outbursts make news. They are good copy. Newspapers ever ready to sacrifice to the great God Circulation, find that there are a sufficient number of people to whom such things are taken as scientific because they are uttered by a man who is called a scientist. Bernard Shaw is fond of saying that scientific men form another kind of priesthood, and like so many of the things that Mr. Shaw says, the saying is striking rather than profound. Scientists make no priestly pretensions; but because the mass of the people have not outgrown the religious stage, they are inclined to transfer to the scientist the qualities which have become discredited when attached to the priest. So, to masses of people, anything that is said by a man in the name of science becomes a part of science, whether it is scientific or not. The utterances of Sir Lodge on a future life is quoted as "what science says" on that

subject. The hopelessly unscientific statements of Sir James Jeans on the significance of certain scientific hypothesis is the "testimony of science to the truth of religion"; and so on, in instance after instance. The fact is that the proportion of the population which, while repudiating many or all of the specific dogmas of Christianity are still hopelessly religious in their mental make-up, is much larger than is generally believed.

Evolution or Nothing.

The newspaper followed their usual rule in giving prominence to the speech of Sir Ambrose Fleming at the Victoria Institute. But it is a pity that Professor Elliot Smith and Sir Arthur Keith treated the speech as seriously as they did. It leads uninformed people to imagine that the hypothesis of evolution is in doubt in scientific circles, or that anything is to be said in favour of the super-naturalism of Sir Ambrose Fleming. The latter spoke as though there was any theory to prefer in contradiction to the hypothesis that the human organism is a development from the general world of animal life. If the latter assumption is not likely to be true, what other theory is? Can any one seriously imagine that man came into the world fully formed, springing from nothing and with no relation to what had gone before? Yet that is the only possible alternative to evolution. But, presumably it is the former theory that Sir Ambrose has in mind when he says "The origin of man is to be looked for in the creative power of a self-conscious Creator, and Supreme Intelligence and Will," if such a conglomeration of words could mean anything at all. Lacking a definite meaning, consider what it implies. Countless forms of animal life existed, but not man. And then, suddenly, without the slightest warning or preparation, or connexion with anything that had gone before, man, fully formed, came into existence, instantaneously manufactured by a "self-conscious," etc. etc., Reduce the statement of Sir Ambrose to plain terms, show it in its undisguised unintelligibility, and its absurdity should be clear to any brain above the moronic index. Sir Ambrose says, with the air of one announcing a discovery to an astonished and an admiring world, that "evolution" explains nothing. No one but a fool ever thought that the world, by itself, did. Neither does gravitation, as a mere word explain the movements of particles of matter. It is what the word stands for, the descriptive formula of which the word is an index that is important. Evolution is built upon the fact that this world is a world of constant change, just as the world of matter was a world of motion before Galileo and Newton. And just as Newton gave a demonstration of the way in which particles of matter behaved, and so was able to formulate a law of gravitation, so in a world of living beings evolution tries to formulate a law that will describe the changes that take place in that world and the organic relationship existing between all the members of the group. The fact of evolution, that is, a relation between living forms of different species, is unmistakable. The fact that varieties can be created, is no longer a question of theory, but a knowledge of fact, since man has created and can create many varieties. Whether the Darwinian theory which was never more than an endeavour to explain an accepted fact, or some other theory, or Darwinism plus some other theory will provide the material for a "law" to be framed, are questions that have no bearing whatever on the fact of

evolution. As Huxley said, long ago, the facts of embryology alone are enough to demonstrate the fact that evolution is a fact. There is no other hypothesis in the field. Prior to the conception of evolution, men really had no theory of the origin of man and animals. Men were then like so many Fetish worshippers mouthing theosophical litanies before the object of their obfuscation.

Perfection in Folly.

But as in the Bible the Lord created everything perfect after its kind, so this speech of Sir Ambrose Fleming might be taken as an illustration of perfect fooling on a scientific topic. Consider the following. "We cannot" he says "dismiss the belief in Jesus creating instantly shoals of fish in a lake where no fish were found just before," or his ability to "create bread and fish instantly to feed large multitudes," or to "create wine out of water." Why must we not refuse to believe things? Why, because Jesus raised himself from the dead! I do not know a finer passage in the whole history of humorous literature. I agree that if anyone can swallow the story that Jesus raised himself from the dead, then there is no reason why he should not be able to eat the fish that were created in shoals in a fishless lake, and wash them down with the finest wine that had been made from the purest water - and nothing else. The truth of the Jesuine miracles is shown by the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Well, a man who rose from the dead should be able to create wine out of water, and bread and fishes out of nothing at all. The evidence is devastating in its sweep.

From chemical and fishy marvels we advance to a criticism of scientific beliefs. We cannot, says this "eminent scientist," "believe in the great antiquity of man because if we allowed only a doubling of the population in 300 years, and if man had existed 9000 years ago, the progeny of a single pair would have multiplied into 1,000,000,000 pairs of human beings. The human race would by now have filled up the whole world," given the scientific estimate of the antiquity of man. We suggest to Sir Ambrose that he should tackle the problem of explaining why the herring, which with its possible capacity for breeding could pack the Atlantic solid in a century or two, does not do so. It is also interesting to be told that, as we can initiate and create things, there is "nothing incredible in the idea that the Supreme intelligence and Will of Diety.....should be able to create, not merely atomic matter and energy, but also living matter in organic forms." Again, devastating! If man can create things from existing materials, why cannot an array of capital letters create things from nothing at all? I am not surprised to find that Sir Ambrose met with an "enthusiastic reception" from the audience, which the Daily Telegraph notes contained many clergymen and students—probably of the theological variety. Outside the Institute a brother in the spirit to Sir Ambrose was found in the person of Father Vincent MacNab, who remarked that "The theory of evolution in biological matters is of some practical utility for purposes of classification. As an explanation of origins it has never been more than a glorious guess." Bless the man! The theory of evolution uses classifications, and if accepted determines some classifications, but it cannot be used for classifications unless it is first accepted, at least provisionally. A classification determined by evolution, involves an

acceptance of evolution. Father MacNab is; apparently, willing to accept evolution as true while denouncing it as false. But that position should not be puzzling to a Roman Catholic priest.

Agreeing with Both Sides.

It is curious to find a paper such as the Church Times expressing regrets that Sir Ambrose should have "suggested that the doctrine of evolution is inconsistent with the Christian Faith."—But that in the one point on which Sir Ambrose Fleming is right. The Church Times backs up its regrets by saying that "The great majority of English Catholics accept evolution as the divine method." This evidence against Sir Ambrose is unconvincing. Large numbers of Christians are now ready to accept anything, and they have become so accustomed to reject anything, that they are prepared to accept everything that they once rejected—so long as the same phrases are used. But if we are to believe in a God who can create everything by a mere fiat, what need is there of evolution? Development exists, not because it is, even conceivably, the best way of achievement, but because it is the only way. But what is the use or the wisdom of development, if the desired end can be reached without it. Where could be the wisdom of going through all the stages that have given us the motor-car or the aeroplane if the perfect motor-car and aeroplane could be made without all these intermediate steps? Evolution or no evolution man can be seen, as a species, working his way slowly from stage to stage, each stage marked by a number of blunders and cruelties and stupidities. What is the wisdom or the good of all this, if God can make shoals of fishes out of nothing, and can create whatever he wishes by a mere exercise of his power? It cannot be for the benefit of those who have suffered and fallen by the way, for each generation trends its own path, reaps the penalties of its own blunders, and leaves it as an experience from which a succeeding generation may benefit; and the next generation commits blunders of its own for which it has to pay a price similar to that paid by its predecessor. If the Christian God exists, then all this weary, painful process is absolutely unnecessary. Perfection might have been achieved at the outset. But it was not. Like some omnipotent vivisector God preferred experiments, and experiments that were not forced upon him because of the necessity for finding out, so that the benefits of the acquired knowledge could be passed on to others, but from sheer love of seeing his helpless victims squirm and struggle and die with their work unfinished, and their desires unrealized.

I think Sir Ambrose Fleming is right. You cannot reconcile Christianity with evolution. But I also think that the Church Times is right. A large number of Christians do profess belief in both God and evolution. But that is because a great number of Christians nowadays are not quite sure what they believe. They quite believe that a rose, call it what you may, will smell as sweet as ever. But somehow they have confused this with a belief that you have only to call a shunk a rose-bush, and the animal will fill its vicinity with the loveliest of perfumes.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

in the Freethinker.

THE BREEDING OF MEN,

"Of all the variety of possible human relationships there is one which we all experience at least from one side — the relationship of parent and child. While this relationship has in literature been treated for a considerable period in terms of sentimentality or disgust according to the intimate circumstances of the writer, it is only rather lately that it has been treated in a numerical way. It may be of interest, therefore, to consider in quite general terms some of the notions which come to people who think about this relation in this way." So writes, Paul G. Espinance, in the Nineteenth Century. "People thus engaged are in a particularly happy situation if they enjoy trouble, as they can be practically certain of offending somebody's ideas of propriety every time they open their mouths. For genetics, whatever may be its shortcomings, at least makes two suggestions about men and women. It inevitably irritates the more sloppy of theorists by remarking that all men are not equal, and proceeds to enrage people of the opposite turn of mind by suggesting that their inequalities are perhaps in kind, and certainly in distribution, by no means all that their ideal could wish. One of the inequalities which engages the attention of the inquiring geneticist when contemplating mankind is an inequality in fertility. It is difficult to observe the generation of living things without noticing that, on the whole, the relation between parent and child is one of similarity. Not least among the achievements of the last fifty years has been the perception that while this similarity is often masked it is none the less real; that such things as the colour of one's hair behave through a series of generations as genetic particulars whose identity may be hidden but whose persistence is the persistence of life.

It is this conception of genetic particulars, this particulate theory of heredity, which has superseded the older idea of an heredity whose mechanism permitted the blending of the inherited factors as the mechanism of environment permits a blending of their expression in an animal, a plant or a man. When pink flowers are produced by crossing red and white strains, the blend is the result of modified expression of two factors, red and white, which keep their integrity and which can be recovered as good as new to give successive generations of flowers as red and as white as their ancestors. The degree of our fertility can be profitably considered as a characteristic dependent upon genetic particulars just as can the colour of our eyes or the colour of a flower. The number of children which each of us will have before we die depends at this moment upon may things, but one of these things is the set of genetic peculiarities which we have physically received from our parents. Time and chance happeneth to all men, but all men do not present time and chance with the same stuff to fashion.

This fact of the heritable nature of fertility has most curious and interesting consequences among us, because man has adopted one of at least two possible methods of forming a closely-knit society. There are in Nature two chief kinds of community, two great plans upon which a society of individuals can work. One large and very successful group of animals (the insects) have adopted one plan and we have adopted the other. The

difference between these two plans is a difference between the kinds of provision they make for the relation between parent and child. In the insects — for instance, among the bees and ants — parenthood has been commonly divorced from other activities and concentrated in a few individuals while the rest of the work of the community is done by the remainder. In most other gregarious animals — for instance, in man — this has not been done and everybody has a chance of both jobs. It is just this distinction which seems to have escaped the sociologist who addressed to people of a less objectionable metabolic tempo than his own the advice: 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise'. He does not seem to have realised that a great many of the activities of an ant in a society where sexual processes are concentrated in a special caste are quite inappropriate to a reformed sluggard in a society where they are not. In the case of the ant the amount of work she does or the amount of luck she has, and the resulting respect of destination in which she is held in the community, will have no effect whatever on the contribution she will make to the genetic composition of future generations of the community. Whatever happens she will make none. In man, on the contrary, the more reformed the sluggard, the more sterile he becomes.

The civilisation of the bees, therefore so long as the reproductive caste remains sufficiently fertile to replace wastage, is potentially stable. The civilisation of man, so long as what that civilisation holds up as virtues are accompanied by infertility, is not. While it is by no means clear that the stability of man's civilisation is the greatest possible good on any cosmic sort of scale, yet as we are all men and rather civilised it may be of interest to inquire further about the nature of this instability. In a society where individual effort is rewarded by individual gain, and which has the institution of hereditary wealth, successful persons very soon find that they can have a better time themselves and give their children a better time and a better start in life if those children are few than if they are many. This will be less pressing a matter in the world which is rapidly expanding, as was the world of the last century, than in a world which is rapidly shutting up, as is our world to-day. It is perfectly obvious that infertility is at this moment in England very closely associated indeed with a safe position and a high degree of comfort. In cold fact, people from the skilled artisan classes upward have fewer children than the quite unskilled. This may easily be seen by looking at such figures, for instance as those given by Carr Saunders, at the World Population Conference at Geneva in 1927. He cites the position in the railway community. Here, within this single industry, is a microcosm showing just this tendency. If a standard of fertility be taken as 100, then it is found that officials and clerks have a fertility of 78; enginedrivers, guards and signalmen 91 to 98; pointsmen, 98: gangers, labourers and porters, 101 to 109.

These figures show very clearly the relation between a good position and low fertility. There is not nearly such good evidence that a poorer social position is always related so closely with a very high degree of fertility. This is very important to remember. It was usual not so long ago to suggest that humanity or at least Western civilisation, was sliding headlong to destruction and was being swallowed up in a mass of physical and mental inferiority. These

THE BREEDING OF MEN,

"Of all the variety of possible human relationships there is one which we all experience at least from one side — the relationship of parent and child. While this relationship has in literature been treated for a considerable period in terms of sentimentality or disgust according to the intimate circumstances of the writer, it is only rather lately that it has been treated in a numerical way. It may be of interest, therefore, to consider in quite general terms some of the notions which come to people who think about this relation in this way." So writes, Paul G. Espinance, in the Nineteenth Century. "People thus engaged are in a particularly happy situation if they enjoy trouble, as they can be practically certain of offending somebody's ideas of propriety every time they open their mouths. For genetics, whatever may be its shortcomings, at least makes two suggestions about men and women. It inevitably irritates the more sloppy of theorists by remarking that all men are not equal, and proceeds to enrage people of the opposite turn of mind by suggesting that their inequalities are perhaps in kind, and certainly in distribution, by no means all that their ideal could wish. One of the inequalities which engages the attention of the inquiring geneticist when contemplating mankind is an inequality in fertility. It is difficult to observe the generation of living things without noticing that, on the whole, the relation between parent and child is one of similarity. Not least among the achievements of the last fifty years has been the perception that while this similarity is often masked it is none the less real; that such things as the colour of one's hair behave through a series of generations as genetic particulars whose identity may be hidden but whose persistence is the persistence of life.

It is this conception of genetic particulars, this particulate theory of heredity, which has superseded the older idea of an heredity whose mechanism permitted the blending of the inherited factors as the mechanism of environment permits a blending of their expression in an animal, a plant or a man. When pink flowers are produced by crossing red and white strains, the blend is the result of modified expression of two factors, red and white, which keep their integrity and which can be recovered as good as new to give successive generations of flowers as red and as white as their ancestors. The degree of our fertility can be profitably considered as a characteristic dependent upon genetic particulars just as can the colour of our eyes or the colour of a flower. The number of children which each of us will have before we die depends at this moment upon may things, but one of these things is the set of genetic peculiarities which we have physically received from our parents, Time and chance happeneth to all men, but all men do not present time and chance with the same stuff to fashion.

This fact of the heritable nature of fertility has most curious and interesting consequences among us, because man has adopted one of at least two possible methods of forming a closely-knit society. There are in Nature two chief kinds of community, two great plans upon which a society of individuals can work. One large and very successful group of animals (the insects) have adopted one plan and we have adopted the other. The

difference between these two plans is a difference between the kinds of provision they make for the relation between parent and child. In the insects — for instance, among the bees and ants — parenthood has been commonly divorced from other activities and concentrated in a few individuals while the rest of the work of the community is done by the remainder. In most other gregarious animals — for instance, in man — this has not been done and everybody has a chance of both jobs. It is just this distinction which seems to have escaped the sociologist who addressed to people of a less objectionable metabolic tempo than his own the advice: 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise'. He does not seem to have realised that a great many of the activities of an ant in a society where sexual processes are concentrated in a special caste are quite inappropriate to a reformed sluggard in a society where they are not. In the case of the ant the amount of work she does or the amount of luck she has, and the resulting respect of destination in which she is held in the community, will have no effect whatever on the contribution she will make to the genetic composition of future generations of the community. Whatever happens she will make none. In man, on the contrary, the more reformed the sluggard, the more sterile he becomes.

The civilisation of the bees, therefore so long as the reproductive caste remains sufficiently fertile to replace wastage, is potentially stable. The civilisation of man, so long as what that civilisation holds up as virtues are accompanied by infertility, is not. While it is by no means clear that the stability of man's civilisation is the greatest possible good on any cosmic sort of scale, yet as we are all men and rather civilised it may be of interest to inquire further about the nature of this instability. In a society where individual effort is rewarded by individual gain, and which has the institution of hereditary wealth, successful persons very soon find that they can have a better time themselves and give their children a better time and a better start in life if those children are few than if they are many. This will be less pressing a matter in the world which is rapidly expanding, as was the world of the last century, than in a world which is rapidly shutting up, as is our world to-day. It is perfectly obvious that infertility is at this moment in England very closely associated indeed with a safe position and a high degree of comfort. In cold fact, people from the skilled artisan classes upward have fewer children than the quite unskilled. This may easily be seen by looking at such figures, for instance as those given by Carr Saunders, at the World Population Conference at Geneva in 1927. He cites the position in the railway community. Here, within this single industry, is a microcosm showing just this tendency. If a standard of fertility be taken as 100, then it is found that officials and clerks have a fertility of 78; enginedrivers, guards and signalmen 91 to 98; pointsmen, 98: gangers, labourers and porters, 101 to 109.

These figures show very clearly the relation between a good position and low fertility. There is not nearly such good evidence that a poorer social position is always related so closely with a very high degree of fertility. This is very important to remember. It was usual not so long ago to suggest that humanity or at least Western civilisation, was sliding headlong to destruction and was being swallowed up in a mass of physical and mental inferiority. These

mournful prognostications should be taken with reserve. Some of them, at least, were based upon statistics whose significance was not properly understood. Having avoided the pitfalls which beset the path of the scaremonger, we are, however, left with the inescapable conclusion that a good position is linked with low fertility.

Now this seems to come about in two distinct modes; either as an immediate concomitant of these people's physiological make-up or by the design of normally fertile people. For the geneticist the difference between these two alternative modes is much less important than might be thought at first glance. As an example of the first mode we may remark on what happens when a man marries an heiress. This is one of the quickest and safest ways up the social ladder in western Europe and America. But what are its biological consequences? Simply that this man (and incidentally the sense that made him marry the girl) is removed from large-scale parenthood. The heiress comes of an infertile family. If she has brothers and sisters she would not be an heiress. She will have few children, and any she has will tend to be infertile. This strikingly simple point was first made by Franics Galton in 1892. He noticed that though the average age at which the judges in England married was very late, yet they had quite large families. From this he concluded that their potential fertility must be very high. Nevertheless, it could easily be shown that those judges who attained to the peerage did not confer any degree of immortality on the lines they founded. It was here that the heiress appeared. As the judge's daughter-in-law, she brought money to support the title and sterility to bring it to an end.

In the second mode a man may deliberately avoid children from fear, from dislike of the inconveniences entailed, from a lack of faith in the future, or because he is unwilling to sacrifice his motor car or the pictures on Saturday night. It is fashionable to call this selfishness; the idea, apparently, being that the unselfish man would consider the desire of the unborn to be born before the desire of the born to be removed from reality on cinemas or from life in collisions. People of this turn of mind will have few children, any that they do have will be, on the whole, like them. This is what is meant by saying that society is always dying away at the top.

Since the continuance of any society depends upon a constant supply of recruits to replace the wastage of death, it is obvious that the character of the population of the future depends upon the character of that part of the present population which will be the parents of the future. In the case of man the future population is not produced by a small insulated caste as it is in bees, and neither is it produced by that section of community which displays those peculiarities which the community, rightly or wrongly, holds out as admirable. It will be produced by the great mass of wholly undistinguished people—by 'the unassuming cuss in the corner of the 'bus' and not by you and me. It is because of this inconsistency between those peculiarities which society holds out as admirable, and those which genetically it encourages, that society is unstable. It cannot indefinitely survive unchanged the constant procession through itself of the peculiarities which it rewards, up to the top and out into oblivion.

Having seen, then, that the future lies with the children of the great mass at present young, let us examine their character. Now, the character of this mass has changed. It has changed very perceptibly indeed during the last century or so an exceedingly short time, to the geneticist. To understand the nature and extent and meaning of these change it may be well to glance for a moment at the kind mechanism which seems to keep many animal populations more or less stable.

Animal populations are often kept to a reasonable size, and within their food supply, not by the direct action of starvation, but by the operation of disease and enemies. Suppose you put two healthy rabbits on a small island and let them breed, they will go on increasing until one rabbit eats the last blade of grass, and then they will all die. If, on the other hand, the original pair were infected with tape-worm (as nearly all rabbits are) as the rabbit population goes up so will go up the chances of any tape-worm egg finding itself on the blade of grass eaten by a rabbit. Therefore the tape-worm population will go up too. When the rabbit population gets very thick, but not so thick that there is no grass for either rabbit or tape-worm, the tape-worm population will be so large that older rabbits will be so heavily infected that they will begin to die. As the rabbit population thus falls, the changes of any tape-worm egg surviving will fall with it, and the tape-worms will get fewer. This will send the rabbit population up, so equilibrium will be reached. A population depends upon its enemies, its diseases, and its parasites to keep it within its food supply. While there is free competition for mates and food these factors will ensure that the population consists of individuals adequate to deal with them-reasonably immune to disease and reasonably good at evading enemies or beating them.

During the last century competition has not been free within man's society. To an ever-increasing extent the operation of disease and the efforts of enemies have been diverted. The automatic check on the reproduction of types not able to fend for themselves has been removed. The mechanism which keeps a society stable has been thrown completly out of gear. The result seems certain ; a period of change will follow. While this much seems clear, it is by no means so easy to be sure of the nature of that change. Human breeding is so slow that many years must elapse before the full results of any experiment such as Western civilisation can be read. However, a few general tendencies can be seen even now.

Of the undesirable characteristic which have been thought likely to rise in incidence as a result of the removal of the checks perhaps mental deficiency has been the most thoroughly canvassed. At various times it has been suggested that the rise in this set of conditions might be so great as to threaten our very existence. A Committee has recently reported upon this, and their Report provides material for a good deal of sobering reflection. Incidentally, it may serve very well as an example to show how careful it is necessary to be in interpreting statistics. Various investigators have reported that of mental defectives only perhaps about 5 per cent. have defective parents. The opponents of all forms of sterilisation at once took this as proof that mental deficiency was not inherited to

any considerable degree. Not so the Committee. On attacking the problem from the other end, and determinging the proportion of the children of defectives who were themselves defective (much more easily done, as the parents were known and the children too young to escape), the following important observations were made:

Excluding the cases classified as 'unascertained', i. e., about whom no definite information was available, there were 1802 children between seven and thirteen, of whom 30-5, or 16-9 per cent., were classified as defective and 423, or 23.5 per cent., as retarded. Only 21. or 1-2 per cent., were superior. In the second group, children over thirteen, out of a total of 1848 the number of defectives were 599, or 32.4 per cent., and of retarded, 240, or 13 per cent. Only 10, or .5 per cent., were superior. The higher proportion of defectives as compared with retarded children in this group seven to thirteen who were classed as retarded will later be found to be defective. Taking the two classes together, we find that in the first group 40.4 per cent. of the children still living were mentally subnormal, and in the other thirteen group the percentage had risen to 45.5 per cent. When it is remembered that 22.5 per cent. had already died and that these percentages apply to the survivors, the figures indicate that here we have a social problem calling urgently for some practical preventive measure.

This is the reasoned, careful conclusion of a Committee of competent people who had studied the whole question. They have succeeded in bringing some measure of clarity into a situation clouded by every kind of prejudice. They received reports and memoranda from all the sources likely to be of help, and heard in evidence everybody who had knowledge to place before them. The difficulties they met with are well shown by their statement that four local authorities reported to them that they had no record of any mental defective having had a child! It is to be hoped that the publicity given to this will have its effect. The Committee, as is well known, recommended that, with all possible precautions, sterilisation should be carried out by consent upon certain classes of mental deficients, upon sufferers from certain diseases, and upon those persons, normal themselves, whose children were extremely likely to show these conditions.

This recommendation is of the greatest importance. It recognises that from the point of view of the race the evil of a social disability resides largely in its heritability. Mental disability is a social disability, and some forms of it are certainly inherited. Racially this disability can be robbed of its evil power if its inheritance can be checked. Mental deficiency without fertility ceases to be a racial evil. And intelligence and a sense of responsibility without fertility cease to be a racial good. Fertility can be separated from mental deficiency by sterilisation. It remains to restore fertility to intelligence. While selection can be dodged within a community, selection is not mocked. It simply changes the unit on which it operates. Within a community all the virtues can be practise but if their practice changes the character of the future members of the community in such a way as to destroy their power of combating the common enemies, then that civilisation is doomed in competition with rival structures. The golden rule 'Do as you would be done by' can only

be practised within a ring kept by its non-observance.

The tragedy of our civilisation, then, seems to lie in this—that as at present constituted it allows Nature to take vengeance on it in the future for those acts of its members in the present which it thinks worthy of reward. One may perhaps ask if this must be so. It has been so in the past, it is so now; but must it be so in the future? Very little can be said about this, for very little is known. Our interest in it is purely academic—we are going to die before it matters. As an academic subject it may perhaps be worth while trying to imagine a society which would not contain the inherent instability of ours. The problem resolves itself into this: Can inadequacy and fertility be separated, and can adequacy and infertility be separated? The fatalistic view that they cannot seems to rest on one doubtful assumption and to overlook one possibility.

Ths possibility is that we may gain a degree of conscious control over the consequences of our sexual processes which would completely change the situation. It is probable that within the next ten years, and nearly certain that within the next hundred years, the production of children will be almost at will, and that the exercise of that will will not be at the cost, in money, in convenience, or in happiness which is its price to-day. Real knowledge of the physiology of the menstrual cycle will almost certainly bring with it a degree of possible control which will make the realisation of pregnancy voluntary. This knowledge is being gained in the face of great opposition. This branch of biology has been held back for years by the conscious and unconscious acts of organisations which see their monopoly threatened and their position endangered. When the knowledge is won its application will be bitterly opposed by the same interests, and only then will the real battle between superstition and knowledge begin. Unlike the conflict between the knowledge of Galileo and the superstition of his world, this battle will be fought, not in the remote spheres of astronomy, but in the intimate things of human conduct. It will be fought, not by priests and schoolmen, but by men and women fighting for their children.

This is the possibility which perhaps the pessimists sometimes overlook. The doubtful assumption is this—that the poorest, living in misery, have many children because they want to, and that, even if pregnancy is made really voluntary, the successful will remain sterile and the unsuccessful fertile. This is not a necessary belief. It is incredible that any considerable number of people who know that if they have children those children will be unhappy, through hereditary defect or through the conditions into which they will be born, will deliberately produce them. The mentally defective are perhaps to be considered separately in this from all other groups to the community. Whatever methods science may provide in the future for the control by the individual of his own fertility will hardly be applicable to these. The very characteristics which ought to be divorced from fertility make the mentally afflicted unfitted to use them. For them sterilisation as an an adjunct to segregation seems the only way of preventing fertility. But apart from these there remain all the great mass of ordinary men and women, neither very good, nor very bad. It is to these that science may be able to give the power of control.

How this power is to be used science cannot say. It will be fought over, but it will come, and its coming could bring security and tranquility to replace the endless tortures of doubt and fear which today wreck the homes of so many. It is difficult for securely established middle-class citizens to remember the strain put on the human relations of a husband and wife whose unemployment pay will not allow them even the clumsy contraceptives which they can use. These methods will in all probability be superseded before very many years by a real control; but will this knowledge when won be given freely to the people who want it? It will if enlightened thoughtful men and women, prepared to put humanity before prejudice, and equipped with knowledge of the real conditions of the world, will stand firm in support of this freedom.

The ordinary men and women of England are good enough to be trusted. To say otherwise is to say that our civilisation, our family life, and our homes are founded upon the misery of ignorance. If they are, they can go. They are not. Freedom to control fertility will not bring destruction. It will not bring the end of the race. Is it likely that one of the strongest of all human instincts, the instinct to have children who shall be happy, is suddenly going to be killed by the power to avoid having children who are not? The power to control fertility is not going to destroy the family, because people like the family as a unit, and will continue to do so. But the control of fertility is going to destroy the power of the family to degrade and kill women.

The present instability of society caused by the differential fertility can be robbed of much of its danger by the simplest of means. For less will be heard of the differential birth rate when all classes really have an equal chance to exercise a conscious control of fertility. One who has faith in our race need ask for nothing more than freedom for all sections of our society, to replace the quack and the unskilled abortionist who rule over the greater part of it today.

Freedom of this kind will probably produce quite a new type of society. That is why the secure are afraid of it. The drift upwards to death will be changed. Humanity need hardly be despaired of if for it there should be substituted a drift upwards to life. Perhaps a society will arise in which fertility shall be a prize, instead of a pitfall. Perhaps that world would seem strange to us, but we shall not be called upon to live in it. We might however, let our children try it. They would form a society which would differ from ours in its ideals, in its kinetics, and in its structure. It seems likely that one of two things will happen. Either there will grow a classless society with perfect fluidity enabling any child to earn its living in any way for which it finds itself suited, or else there will arise a society sharply divided into classes, whose classes will be based upon the kind of difference between men about which biologists can talk. Which of these two possibilities will be realised appears to be a subject for pure speculation.

PAUL G. ESPINASSE.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF
THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the people of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, The Editor "Reason," 3. Morland Road, Byculla, Bombay. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India. 41, Queen's Road, Bombay 2.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

The daily papers, some days ago, announced that a Hindu cobbler living at Mazagon, Bombay, who was suffering from fever sought the services of a sorcerer to rid him of his disease which he believed was caused by a demon. The sorcerer willingly attended him as desired and immediately began to administer his remedy which consisted in vigourously flogging the evil spirit with a good Malacca cane. The remedy proved a bit too drastic for the poor wretch who soon collapsed under it. He was hastily removed to Hospital and the magician was arrested by the Police. The flogging of patients by exorcists to rid them of evil

spirits is a common superstition in India, Africa and elsewhere. Thousands in this country are mercilessly flogged in this manner under the belief that only such strong measures can drive demons out of the bodies of people who are believed to be under their spell. (See below some cases of this nature reported by a qualified Ahmedabad Doctor).

* * *

The present writer was once urgently called to attend an educated Christian who had fallen into a swoon. The man who was suffering from an acute orchitis was persuaded to get himself treated by a Sadhu who would drive the evil spirit out of him. The Sadhu tied the feet of the patient and suspended him head downward from the ceiling while a segree full of dried chillies and incense was kept burning under his nose. While in that position he was severely flogged by the Sadhu until he fainted. Alarmed at his condition, his friends cut down the rope and rescued him from that dangerous predicament. When the writer arrived the patient was just recovering his senses!

* * *

The belief that diseases were caused by evil spirits was once universal. Before Medical Science enlightened people on the causes of diseases, the exorcists were always in great demand to cure people. The Christian Bible is full of such examples and believers in Evil possession had that Book for authority. As we all know, one of the activities of Jesus Christ during his short mission on earth was to cast out Evil Spirits from the bodies of sick people who sought relief from him. Even now, many in Europe believe in evil possession. Charms and ammulets are worn against that and priests are frequently requested to perform exorcism to drive away the evil spirits which trouble patients. The present writer, in his young days, frequently assisted priests in that ceremony which was frequently done particularly in cases of sick children suffering from various ailments.

* * *

It is a mistake to think that this belief is now confined to ignorant villagers. Many people who lay claim to certain intellectual culture believe in the reality of evil possession. The present writer, not very long ago, had an argument with a cultured Italian gentleman who strongly believed in this. That man was a B.A. and D.Sc. of the Royal University of Naples! A qualified Ahmedabad doctor, in the Magazine of the Ahmedabad Medical School for October 1934, relates three cases which he believes were due to evil possession. Dr. Jacob Solomn, L. M. & S., in effect, tells us that some time ago he treated a young girl of 8 who suffered from an eczema, which resisted all his treatment. As he scented evil possession, he advised to consult a Christian Sorcerer of his acquaintance to deal with the case. This was done. The Christian sorcerer made passes and administered "Magnetized water" (What is that?) with the best of results. It was subsequently learnt on careful enquiries that the poor girl was the victim of sorcery caused by her jealous relatives!

* * *

The second case related by Dr. Salomon is that of a man who suffered from intermittent pulse and palpitation. When the disease proved obstinate and resisted the treatment of the worthy doctor, he detected evil possession and advised to call in a magician who soon cured the patient. Such a disease as extra systole and palpitation often found in neurotic individuals suffering from dyspepsia, is harmless enough though causing uneasi-

ness. In the case of Dr. Salomon's patient the trouble, it would appear, was caused by "five entities and sorcery which selected the heart for their nefarious work." This selection is, indeed, curious. Why such a small organ as the heart when the five entities could safely and comfortably lodge themselves in more spacious places—the intestines for instance—to play their mischief? But the ways of evil spirits as those of God are evidently mysterious and we must not ask the reason why. Any how, these five entities proved to be very obstinate devils. Dr. Salomon says that they were determind not to depart easily and voluntarily—sharp measures were necessary and they were adopted. These consisted in solemn incantations, exhortations and frequent floggings. He took ten days to dislodge them after which they reluctantly left the patient alone.

* * *

The third case of Dr. Salomon is even more interesting. It was that of a Mahomedan Hakim, a friend of the Doctor, who unwillingly stumbled against an "Ootaria" placed in the crossing of four roads—(It must be explained that an "Ootaria" is made of three sticks tied as a triangle on which the earthen pot containing the fire for the funeral pyre of a Hindu is carried) This object after the ceremony, for occult reasons, is always left at the crossing of four roads. It was against such an innocent object that the unfortunate Hakim accidentally stumbled against. The effect, however, was tragic and serious. The poor Mohomedan became immediately possessed and began to behave strange y and violently. According to Dr. Salomon he showed signs of double personality. At one time he kept shouting that he was one Chimanlal and at other times he was a Mahomedan. On the advice of the doctor, an exorcist was sent for and thanks to his ministration the evil spirit left the poor Hakim. The treatment consisted of catching the patient's hair with one hand and with the other he was slapped on the cheeks are hard as possible while Arabic words were being pronounced. Under this assault the wicked "Discarnate spirit" had no choice but to disclose his identity and announced his decision to leave the patient alone. He was cautioned under pains of a severe hiding not to return. Before departing he announced that he was one Chimanlal Mochi who had committed suicide a few days previouly and that it was his determination to kill the unfortunate Hakim because he had insulted him by kicking his "Ootoria." Dr. Salomon is sorry that for want of space he could not relate more cases of this nature. We would suggest him to get into communication with Dr. Alexander Cotton, M .D., M. R. C. P. etc. London, who writes books on these occult subjects, he, himself, being a great believer in them.

* * *

On the 5th of March last, Mrs. E. How-Martyn, M Sc. (London), the Hony. Director, Birth Control International Centre, a well-known Social Worker who had been touring India in the cause of the Birth Control Movement, delivered an interesting lecture at the Blavatsky Lodge on the Progress of Birth Control. Though the lecture was under the auspices of Our Association, few Rationalists were present. The Hall, however, was packed with an eager audience and great interest was taken in the lecture. Mrs. Hon. Martyn emphasized the good that the Birth Control Movement was doing

in the West as the necessity for it is being more and more recognized by all thoughtful people. She said that Birth Control should especially be taught to the Working Classes as their prolificity was their own enemy. She thought that every organization working for the good of Humanity should be interested in this movement. She reminded the audience that the world was getting overpopulated through the removal of natural checks which formerly operated strongly in keeping the balance level. Unless measures were taken to control the birth rates of people who cannot afford to rear many offsprings poverty was bound to increase. She discussed the advantages of Birth Control, and the erroneous ideas of those who opposed it. She advocated the establishment of clinics in as many places as possible and the teaching of Birth Control in colleges, etc. She gave more lectures on the subject before other Associations in Bombay and in other cities in India.

* * *

To show to what extent the Birth Control movement is gaining ground in England, it is only necessary to recall that sixty years ago it was a criminal offence to print or publish any advice regarding birth control in England. Now, even the privileged classes are anxious to proclaim their sympathy with it. We read in the London Times of December 19:—

"LIMITATION OF POPULATIONS"

"The Limitation of Population dinner was held at Claridge's last night. Lady Maureen Stanley presided, and the speakers also included Lord Horder, the Countess of Limerick, Sir Patrick Hastings K. C, and Mr. Frederick Lonsdale. Among those who took tickets were:— Earl de La Warr, Lady Milbanke, Viscount Castlereagh, Captain Cazalet, M.P.,Miss Thelma Cazalet, M.P., Mr.Duff Cooper, M. P., and Lady Diana Cooper, Ethel Lady Buchanan-Jardine, Lord Ivor Spencer-Churchill, Lady North Lady Fulton, Mrs. Michael Balcon, Mrs. Israel Sieff, Lady (Herbert) Cohen, Mrs. Robert Fleming, Dr. Scott Williamson, Viscountess Hambleden, Lord Willough by de Eresby, Viscount Borodale, Lady Deuman, Sir James Purves-Stewart, Dr. H. Beckett-Overy, Mr. H. E. Molson, M. P., Mr. C. U. Peat, M. P., Lady Askwith, Sir Samuel Rosbotham, Mrs. Sacher, Mrs. Edward Hunter, Mrs. Norman Laski, Mr. C. Waterhouse, Mr. Cedric Lane Roberts, Mrs. Hugh Jackson, Mrs. Robert Dundas, Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, Mrs. Sydney Fran-kenburg, Mr. J. H. Skinner, Dr. Henry J. Nelson, Mrs. Sebborne, Mr Robert Behar and Mrs. Goodenday."

* * *

The "Daily Herald" of January 4th says:—

"Clergy and Churchmen of many denominations, doctors, and prominent Social Workers have joined forces in an attempt to induce the Birmingham City Council to establish a clinic for the teaching of birth control. They have signed a manifesto calling on citizens to use their influence to persuade the council to rescued its decision not to set up a clinic. Among the signatories are:— Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, Canon T. Guy Rogers, Rector of St. Martin's Birmingham, Dr. A Cohen, Chief Rabbi in the city, and Dr. H. F. Humphoeys."

* * *

One is glad to note that the Birmingham City Council has since decided to establish a clinic.

Here, in India, we also will make progress in this movement despite the opposition of bigoted people, especially some Roman Catholics, who recently made a lot of noise in Southern India and in Kurrachee against this movement. As most of our readers will remember, a German Jesuit in Madras actually had the temerity to say that all who advocated Birth Control were filthy, wicked and demoralized people!

* * *

The Journal of The Young Men's Parsi Association for January 1935 contains an article:—"Some Parsi Customs—How they are observed" by K. D. U., which is very interesting.

The author of that article rightly complains that though the Parsis are credited with being the most progressive community in India, they still retain in their religious and social customs many features that are incongruous and out of date. That writer went so far as to describe them as absurd and ridiculous. He particularly refers to the Navjote or initiation ceremony, the marriage and funeral ceremonies. He objects to the use of "Nirang" or Cow's Urine as an abultion to purify the aspirants. It would appear that as soon as a Parsi dies a dog is brought to view the corpse in order to dispel the evil spirits that may be lurking about, and before the final disposal of the corpse at the Tower of Silence it is again viewed by a dog.

* * *

It is no doubt a pity that the conservative element in the Parsi community is so strong that those who are anxious for a thorough reform of all these archaic customs find it very difficult to press their views. A good deal of this conservative spirit is certainly due to the fact that the Parsi being a small community is in danger of being swallowed by the larger communities which surround it. Consequntly they feel that the customs and practices which are characteristic of the Parsi Community must not be abandoned. Old stars die one by one and probably with the rising of new ones the desired reform will set in without causing much bitterness.

* * *

On the 14th of February last Our Association held its general meeting at Mongini's and it was followed by a dinner at the same place. Owing to the increasing apathy and indifference of many of our members there was a poor response which was most depressing for those who made it a point to be present. It is a pity that in India enthusiasm generally burns for a little while and gradually dies out. Fortunately among the members here there are some who are as keen as ever to work for the cause of Rationalism in India.

RATIONALISM AND THE BHAGVAD-GITA. (IX)

(The relativity of Ethical Values.)

Moral agency rests upon freedom. An individual or society that has no choice is incapable of action that may be named conduct. It is no doubt impossible to remain totally inactive even for a minute.

Nahi kaschit kshanamapi jatu
tisthatyakarmakrit
Karyateh yavasah karma sarvah
prakritjairgunaih.
(Gita, III, 5)

(None can remain really actionless even for a moment.)

An act which cannot be helped does not afford basis for judgment. As with individuals, so in regard to communities and nations, ethical value attaches to such actions as are the result of free choice. A downtrodden community that reacts to the spur of pricking iniquity has no moral responsibility more than the horse that chafes under an irritating saddle. The kick is but an impulse stimulated by the sore skin. It is even a virtual deception to attribute agency for deeds.

Prakriteh kriya manani gunaih
karmani sarvasah
Ahamkara vimudhatma karta
ahamiti manyate (Gita III, 27)

(Deeds are the outcome of the qualities of nature. The fool deluded by egoism thinks "I am the door.")

The ways of nature are inexorable, human wisdom, notwithstanding. It is futile to think of overriding to dictates. How we act, feel, and think is determined by the setting into which we had been carried by the current of evolution.

Sadrisam cheshtate svasyah
prakritergnanavanapi
Prakritim yanti bhutani nigrahah
kim karishyati? (Gita, III, 33)

(Even the wise man behaves in confirmity with his own nature, all beings follow its evolution, and restraints avails not.)

An effort to stem the tide of natural processes is not merely doomed to failure, but is often fraught with danger. The path of reform is none too smooth. Very few, indeed, may detach themselves from their environmental trappings, and overcome the fear involved in the breaking away from the familiar ground of Swadharma.

Sreyan swadharmo vigunah
paradharmat swanishthitat
Swadharmo nidhanam sreyah
paradharmo bhayavahah
(Gita, III, 35)

(One's natural action, devoid of merit, is to be preferred to the duty of another, well performed. Even death in doing one's duty is higher. Another's duty is fraught with fear.)

This is the confirmation of the path of action relatively to one's own position. Those that whould sustain the conservative ground on the basis of pronouncements in the Gita must be prepared when the Gita declares such attachment itself to be the outcome of Moha, or illusion. Elsewhere, in diverse contexts, the discourse turns upon the cutting off of the conventional relationships. (Cf, Gita XV, 3: Asanga sastrena drudhena chittva: cutting down by the weapon of non-attachment.) The tendency to identify oneself with events is condemned in unmistakeable terms, and the spirit of Yoga, the capacity to retain the detached view of life, the life of Sakshi (disinterested witness) sitting

indifferentetly (udasinavad asina) is is enjoined. And it is claimed that such an effort at Yoga will result, even if faintly commenced, in the emancipation from great fear. (Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahote bhayat, II, 40.) In the face of the dynamic activity that the Gita ordains, it would be futile to seek support in its teachings for the reactionary position which the stabilising sociologists wish to maintain. Those that would chain human action for ever, in the illusory faith that the final word was already said, the final deed was already done, and the final shape was already given to human society forget the fundamental truth regarding life, viz, the central doctrine of the relativity of human values.

In the article "Coloured Vision" by Prof. H. Levy of the London University (see R. P. A. Annual 1934 pp. 21 to 26) the tendency to leave out of account the most important element, the creative man, from the consideration of the world's economic, scientific, political, and social problems is brought out. Even in philosophising, man tends to isolate his concepts much as the chemist would isolate the phenomena for his experiment in the laboratory. 'One of the consequences of the stratification of the society he builds up is to provide the unsuspecting victim who is born and bred in these classes with sets of values, dogmas, and interlookiug forms of behaviour. While out of these he may erect a set of principles signifying something fixed and permanent to him, fof which if necessary he will fight or accept martyrdom, they are effectively rationalisations with a class and individual colouring. Of absolutes there are none in nature, other than the fact of the existence of objective nature itself. Our pictures of the world are only approximate, their accuracy being relative to the state of scientific knowledge of the times. Our values again are certainly relative, borrowing their tints from the social strata from which we are drawn, and from these features of the world that have specially stirred us in our encounter with them." (Ibid, p. 25) This tendency towards over-stressed abstraction is responsible for the confusion at the basis of all calculation. The reflective account given by Prof. Levy brings to mind the peculiar fallacy attributed to the disciples of a philosopher, named Parmanandaih. They were nine in number, but when the revered Guru wanted each one to count them, he would give out only eight, forgetful of himself. It is the fallacy of the forgetful self. "Even science that prides itself on the fact that it stands above race, class and creed, is not immune from this relativity of values." It strips all human values from the world, leaving man completely out of its calculations. The industrialist condemns science that carries on as if he did not exist. It discovers new methods of production too fast to cope with. The very machinery becomes obsolete during erection. "What has science done for us" "chimes in the worker" except give us rationalisation, and with it unemployment, so that we are robbed of the very fruits it offers us." (ibid p. 26).

While science ignores man and ignores society, philosophy loses itself in the speculation of the problems of the mind seperated from matter. The worker and the industrialist change the face of the earth and create forms of society. He who is able to realise the relativity of

these values is one who has thrown away the coloured spectacles.

Adhyatma gnana nityatvam tatvagnanardha darsanam.

Ftat gnanam iti proktam agnanam yadatonyadha (gita, XIII, 12).

(Constancy in knowing the real nature of the self, the realisation of the true essence, that is wisdom. All else is ignorance.)

The recognition of the fact that experiments carried on under laboratory conditions convey imperfect truth, that codes of morals formulated under conditions differing widely from our own have to be accepted with caution, that the so-called "permanent and fundamental principles" are to unconsciously rationalised from the particular society within which we have been cradled ' is the true beginning of emancipation through knowledge, Moksha attained by Gnana. He who has realised this relativity reaches the ideal, and is not left hankering after fresh pursuits, whatever his mode of life.

Ya snam votti purusham prakritimcha gunaissaha.

Sarvadha vartamanopi na sa bhuyoabhi jayate. (Gita, XIII, 24)

(He who thus knoweth life, with the limitations inherent in its settings, whatever be his condition, has nothing left to return for.)

It is emanicipation in itself to be aware of the relativity of such values. To return to the philosephical paradox of *dvandva*, the recognition of relativity in human values is the attainment of absolute truth, the whole truth and nothing but truth.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

INTERESTING ITEMS

In the "Le Jour" of Paris of the 12th February last, the Presiding Judge of the Seine Assizes Court is reported to have said:—"The French Criminal Courts were nowadays engaged in trying mostly foreigners, generally Italians." Out of ten murder cases in France said the Judge eight were committed by Italians. So it is in America. The Italians are the most religious people of Europe. Is this the fruit of their religious up bringing?

The French papers are full of accounts of crimes of violence which are daily committed in that country by foreigners. It is true that there are many foreigners in France in these days and it would appear that the worst characters of Italy and Czecho-Slovakia have emigrated to France.

* * *

A representative of the same journal says that he has visited a number of establishments conducted by Fortune tellers in France and from what he has seen he is firmiy of opinion that the belief in occultism and necromamy was increasing in France. In Paris alone there are hundreds of Saloons kept by these people who make a thriving business. He says that the sight of the large number of dupes who patiently wait in those rooms is most depressing. "To have seen the number of elegant women

with scared faces, men with anxious mien, young men on tenter hooks, hundreds of degenerates who are tortured with an intolerable and unhealthy curiosity to peep in to the future. thousands who are attracted towards mysticism, and the lure of secret forces ; when one has seen this large crowd of beings all under the influence of a morbid mysticism, all determined to wrest the secrets of the future and to escape at whatever cost the blind fatality of existence, one feels sad and depressed at the stupidity of humanity."

English and American writers say that the same thing obtains in England and America. For us there is nothing surprising in this. As we have already said in these columns, there is a serious intellectual set back in the West since the last war. Many writers have drawn attention to this. In a remarkable book "The Search for Truth" by Prof. Eric Temple Bell (George Allen and Unwin) this question is thoroughly discussed.

Prof. Bell says that the new outlook that science has acquired during the present century has certain very undesirable consequences. It has, in the hands of certain expositors encouraged various forms of " mysticism " and given rise to a great deal of muddled and shoddy thinking. (A shaft, no doubt, at the mysticism of such men like Sir James Jeans, Sir Arthur Eddington and some other eminent scientists). This wave of mysticism, says Prof. Bell, has invaded even some of the lofty heights of science itself. There are certain modern scientific speculations the Professor thinks, which really belong to fairy land. Indeed, he says, there is no department of thought which is immune from the wave of irrationality which is sweeping the world.

* * *

Professor Bell feels very gloomy about this. " Exact thought ", he says, " may flourish for a few years yet, but we have almost reach the end." He thinks that in a short time we shall enter on a period of almost complete stagnation which may last for eight or ten centuries. Faith in science and reason, he says, was lost in the war. Now vast mass of civilized mankind every where hates and distrusts science and reason.

" Rational thought, says Prof. Bell, has always had difficulties in maintaining itself against irrationality and mysticism. "

The cause of this is not for to seek. As long as education will remain in the hands of the clergy, mysticism and irrationality will flourish in the world. Russia is now making a great experiment in the education of its subjects and the world may soon learn a good deal from this before very long.

* * *

Dr. Owen Berkley Hill. I.M S (Retd.) in an interesting article in the Illustrated Weekly Times of Bombay among other things says :—" There is to begin with, far too much religion in India, too much talk about India's spirituality. A college devoted to the inculcation of an uncompromising Atheism is what is most urgently wanted in this country. Some day, perhaps, a wealthy and patriotic Indian will found one. Its foundation will mark the beginning of an Indian Renaissance such as took place in Europe five hundred years ago. "

It would, indeed, be glorious if the intellectual world were to be rescued by India. While the West is fast sinking

in an intellectual stupor, (one of the inevitable effects of the Last War) India may yet hold the torch of Reason and guide the intellect in its true path. Rationalism has a great future in this country if only the thoughtful here could seriously realize its potentialities. The Rationalist Association of India has been founded for this purpose. It only awaits the support of influential people to push it along.

* * *

One feels that Sir Arthur Keith, the eminent English Anthropologist, wasted his time in replying to a die hard like the aged Sir Ambrose Flemming who recently in a lecture in England upheld the Special Creation Theory of the Bible against the theory of Evolution. Sir Arthur Keith,of course, had no difficulty in smashing that antiquated electrician into smithereens. Sir Ambrose Fleming who is now 86 years old is well known as an eminent scientist in the field of electricity. When he left that field to make an excursion into that of biology, he made a laughing stock of himself. Sir Arthur Keith and Sir Elliot Smith took his divagation too seriously. One does not kill a fly on the wheel or smash a bettle with a sledge-hammer.

* * *

Nothing is more amusing than to read the report of an interview given by Miss Evangeline Booth to some newspapers here. According to that lady that brand of Christianity, known as the Salvation Army, is so successful that already it can afford to laugh at Science. This noisy branch of Christianity justly christened "Corybantic Christianity" by the late Prof. T. H. Huxley, owes its temporary success to its social work and certainly not the "spiritual verities" it preaches. While it imagines that it is feeding hungry and restless souls in their search for God, it is really filling the bellies of some unfortunate wretches who have no choice but to listen to its medievalism. To imagine that the Salvation Army is a spiritual force likely to convert the world is a piece of folly that only those who are infatuated with its absurdities can entertain. It must not imagine that because it has a certain following that it is already a great success in the World. Many sects have risen and disappeared during the long history of Christianity. Even Christian Science with its ridiculous doctrine has a large following. Spiritualism has enlisted a large number. In the present intellectual state of the West any mysticism can flourish. But does this mean that they all will triumph in the end? A Jesuit must have his own opinion about them.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE FREEING OF THE SLAVES.

Humanity's "Dreadful Curse."

The following letters appeared in the Cape Times of South Africa and are published with the author's permission.

From the celebration in the churches of the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in South Africa the general public, white and coloured, are left with the impression that this abolition was due, in some measure at least, to the efforts of the Churches in Christendom. I cannot believe that it is right from any point of view that people should remain so grossly misinformed. By the time of Christ, slavery had assumed enormous proportions. At Rome there were 900,000 slaves in a population of 1,610,000. The markets were filled with the most unscrupulous traders, much in the same way as they were all over Christendom in the seventeenth century of the Christian era. Not a word was spoken in condemnation of this cruel institution either by Christ or St. Paul or by any apostle or by any Father of the Church. It is an historical fact, supported by the most positive evidence, that slavery in the Roman Empire was mitigated by the noble philosophy of the Stoics and not by the teaching of the Church Fathers, who never thought of recommending the abolition of slavery. Later in the first few centuries of Christian power there were more slaves than there had been under the pagans, and even Milman admits that the Church gave no blessing to slave "marriage" until the ninth century.

Coming now to the terrible recrudescence of slavery in the Christian colonies in the fifteenth century, "the African slave trade", says Mr. Brace, a Christian apologist, "was the most dreadful curse that has perhaps ever afflicted humanity", and he admits, with a most rare generosity, that "the guilt of this great crime rests on the Christian Church as an organised body." ("Gesta Christ," p. 365). It was, of course, just because William Wilberforce found himself opposed by the Churches and by those of his fellow-Christians who had vested interests in the upkeep of slavery that his task was so difficult, and that he stands out as the man who secured the abolition of slavery. Even were it otherwise and the Church had at long last come to the assistance of Wilberforce, I do not see that this action would entirely redeem the circumstances of its having looked on the awful traffic with at least indifference for 200 years. It is a relative blessing for a man to desist from a criminal course; but the fact of his at length desisting does not erase his misdeeds from our memory.

In America it was the Quakers who began to protest, and it was chiefly Unitarians and Humanitarians who lit up the North with moral indignation. It was Wilberforce himself who said of the American Episcopal Church: "She raises no voice against the predominant evil; she palliates it in theory and in practice she shares in it." Many of its Southern bishops held slaves, and it was calculated that Baptists owned 225,000 and Methodists 250,000. It was left for anti-Christian, revolutionary France to set the example to the rest of Europe by being the first to decree the freedom of the

slaves in its colonies. (In his day, Voltaire estimated that the church held between 50,000 and 60,000 slaves.)

In the hundred years ending 1776, the English carried into the Spanish, French and English colonies three million slaves. Large numbers were required to keep up the supply owing to the many who died during the passage. They were crammed together like herrings in a barrel and contracted putrid and fatal disorders. Exclusive of the slaves who died before leaving Africa (Rohlfs informs us that "anyone who didn't know the way by which the caravans pass would only have to follow the bones that lie right and left of the track), not more than fifty out of every hundred lived to work on the plantations. And when there ? It is calculated that although between 1690 and 1820 and fewer than 800,000 negros had been imported to Jamaica, yet, at the latter date, only 340,000 were on the island ! Could anything connected with Roman slavery compare with this ? Remember, too, that the very irons used by the native chiefs for shackling the prisoners when handing them over to the Christian traders were made in Birmingham, and the greatest horrors of slavery have been exhibited only under the rule of the Christian slave-owner.

Personally I am confident that the rise and influence of humanism will continue its good work, imbuing the churches more and more with its spirit. This religion of humanism (as part and parcel) of the Christian and every religion and on its own) cannot spread too widely or too quickly for it may will be even now that it is on this that the fate of the whole world depends. Another world war and who can say whether humanism or anything else of value to the human race will continue to exist. The voice crying then that all quarrels between nations should and can be settled by arbitration instead of by senseless carnage, will be a voice crying in a wilderness.

THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

Christianity's unfortunate attitude towards slavery and especially in the near past regarding negro slavery-introduced, remember, by Christians themselves, supported by their Churches and their Governments—deserves our careful consideration in that it is a glaring example of the extent to which all the supernatural religions of the world have inevitably been from time to time a bar to the progress of human happiness. Nor must we overlook the complete change nowadays for the better in the attitude towards slavery. It justifies the harbouring of some little hope that the rising tide of humanism may sweep away all the barriers which still remain before it is too late.

On the other hand, when we think of such things as the iniquity of human sacrifices, for ages the practice in all these religions, north, south, east and west of this planet; of the sanguinary religious wars and massacres; of the wicked lives in the days gone by of many of the Popes in the age of faith and the depths of human

degradation and misery at that time; of religious persecution and the Holy Office for the suppression of heresy; of the terror introduced all these centuries into the lives of innocent children by the doctrine of hell and eternal torture; of. comparatively lately, the witch-burning (as late as 1768 we find Wesley stating that to give up the belief in witchcraft was in effect giving up the Bible), and the condemnation of the use of anaesthetics, etc.—when we think of all these fatal errors as past and gone, never to return, we trust, how far shall we be wise in lessening our efforts for the removal of all the other barriers erected by harmful superstitions and still hindering progress? Are we wise to expect this to come about soon enough by itself?

Birth Control.

Take the matter of birth control as an example. Birth control is perhaps the most important discovery of our time. Is it being put to its full and proper use among the teeming millions of the struggling poor to be found in almost every country in the world? And if not, why not? I notice in last Saturday's intaglio that my friend, Mrs. Edith How Martyn is leaving for the Far East to further the cause of birth control in co-operation with the workers of India. She will find fierce opposition to her humane work not only from Hindu and Mussulman, but from the Roman Catholic Church in India. So, again, with regard to the grave warning by Dr. E. G. Malherbe, Director of the National Bureau of Education, given at the annual meeting of the Pretoria Mother's Clinic at Polley's Hotel recently. He pleads for the use of birth control as the weapon to check the advance of poor whiteism and he shows how white South Africa is in danger through the truly disgenic feature of unbalanced fertility amongst the weaker and poorer classes. But how is the inertia of public opinion and of law to be moved so long as the Church of Rome in South Africa is up in arms against Birth Control? In my humble opinion birth control is the most important question of our day. Disregard it and wars are indeed as inevitable as the most confirmed militarist would have them to be.

The whole subject to which I have now briefly referred is, I strongly feel, of such incalculable importance that I have decided to give some useful, if startling, information concerning it in a pamphlet which will be duly advertised when printed. It will be in this pamphlet that your correspondents, Dr. John Colgan, the Rev. L. S. Creed, and Admiral Woolly will obtain my full reply to their strictures and I shall see to it that they duly receive a copy. Meanwhile I append the following for observations:

Definite Condemnation.

When Dr. Colgan refers to one of my statements as "simply not true", he omits to mention that I was quoting Dean Milman: Dr. Colgan also informs your readers that I must be grossly ignorant of the history of Christian civilisation. Presumably the Reverend Dr. must consider that Dean Milman is also grossly ignorant when he writes (see "History of Latin Christianity," vol. II, p. 14) The abrogation of slavery was not contemplated even as a remote possibility. A general enfranchisement seems never to have dawned on the wisest and best of the Christian writers".

With respect to Dr. Colgan's attempted explanation of there being no definite

condemnation of slavery either by Christ or by St. Paul or by any of the Apostles, I must admit my inability to follow his argument. We may agree for the nonce with Dr. Colgan that Christ championed the dignity of labour. Was it Martha the worker or Mary, who refused to help her, who received his praise?—Is this not an additional reason for expecting a definite condemnation of the indignity, not to mention inhumanity, of slavery? St. Paul's teaching is clean and explicit. Slaves are to be obedient to their masters and, adding practice to precept, he sent the runaway slave Onesimus back to his master. As a matter of fact there is a perfectly legitimate explanation, at least, so it seems to me, for a failure to condemn slavery at that particular period and spot, and this is that the treatment of slaves, especially by the Jews, was on the whole humane. This may be verified by turning to the article on slavery in the Encyclopaedia Biblica. The slave who was a co-religionst and fellow-worshipper was usually treated with kindness and even with fatherly care "just as today, in Islam, slaves as fellow-believers are treated with all humaneness. The brotherhood in the faith in Islam now, as in Islam of old, is not, as unfortunately as it has come to be in the Christian world, a mere empty phrase, but a very real force". (Enc. Bib. vol. Iv, p. 4,658.)

Dr. Colgan's brief reference to the main question we are considering of negro slavery consists of an assertion that he could fill a column with the protestations of Popes. Considering the still stupendous power of the Church of Rome during those hundreds of years when negro slavery flourished, it seems surprising that these protestations should have had no effect whatever in the removal of this blot all these years on our Christian civilisation. A possible explanation might be that these protestations were so hedged round with qualifications as to become useless. An instance of this may be observed by a study of the Encyclical Letter to the Bishops of Brazil from Pope Leo XII, dated May, 1888.

Upheaval.

Dr. Colgan wishes us to believe that the Church of Rome, herself a possessor of slaves to the last, held her hand in attacking slavery for fear of an upheaval "the clash would have been inevitable and terrible". Well! All I can say is that 1,800 years should constitute a record for the policy of "wait and see."

Dr. Colgan tells us, "To say that the Church countenanced slavery in the Middle Ages is another of Mr. Phelips' mistakes. In the Middle Ages slavery had disappeared in Catholic countries". He admits, of course, the subsequent revivals. Also in his reply to Mr. Silke, he mentions that Lecky, an anti Catholic, speaks of "softening slavery into serfdom" and also of Christianity's assistance in this development. The point is: Was serfdom such an improvement on slavery or was it in many respects just as bad? Dr. Colgan seems never to have read "Six Centuries of Work and Wages", by Professor Thorold Rogers, writing about the twelfth and following century, or other later authoritative works bearing on Christianity and labour. The unfortunate serf was tied down in countless ways and, amongst other degradations, his daughter could not marry without the consent of the lord, who frequently demanded payment for permission; or, worse still, the infamous "right of the first night".

My notes on Dr. Colgan's explanation of the silence of Christ will apply also to Mr. Creed's argument based on "the teaching of Jesus Christ on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." However, I shall have more to say on this vexed question in my pamphlet. It is a pity perhaps that I ever touched upon such a controversial matter is my letter, as I notice now that it has diverted the attention of my critics from the most important point for our contemplation—negro slavery.

Position of Women.

Mr. Creed holds that "Christ's teaching about women has given her rightful place". What about the teaching of St. Paul and the Fathers of the Church? This interesting matter of the position of women formerly and how far Christianity has indeed been her best friend, has been closely investigated by me in section 2 p. p. 198-204 of my work, "The Churches and Modern Thought." I shall be happy to present Mr. Creed with a copy (or he can peruse it in the public libraries or obtain it - its price is nominal from the Cape Town book-sellers).

I must apologise to Mr. Creed for such curt replies to his most courteous and interesting letter, but I cannot expect an ever-so-generously-minded editor to grant me any more space. I shall take care that Mr. Creed has an adequate reply in my proposed pamphlet. I shall send the latter, too, to Admiral Woolly.

When he has read it he will, I think, at least agree that I am not amusing myself "throwing stones". Also, referring to his letter on Monday commenting on Mr. F. R. W. Silke's informative letter of last Friday, I trust he will realise that what Mr. Silke is saying and what I am saying is no "idle chatter best left alone," but a genuine statement of facts, the widespread knowledge and understanding of which is necessary if civilition is not to retrogress.

VIVIAN PHELIPS.

POPULATION CONTROL IN INDIA

The need for Population control in India has been often emphasized, Within the country itself, large sections of the public, both professional and lay, favour the widespread use of contraceptive measures, but pronounced personal views against birth-control are also prevalent. The opponents belong to the so-called educated classes, and base their attitude on religious prejudices so familiar to birth-control workers that they need not be considered here.

Opposition To Birth-Control

Apart from religious and private objections, certain economists feel that birth-control is neither necessary nor feasible in India. Thus, G. S. Ghurye and S. R. Deshpande, who made an economic survey of 2,053 immigrant labourers from Konkan to Bombay a few years ago, felt that their inquiry did not support the need for restricting the birth-rate in India. They found that female reproductivity ceased at twenty-eight years, the

average age of mothers at the first birth being 18.5 years. The interval between births averaged 2.8 years, and the number of children per marriage was 4·4. These figures may be accepted as more or less representative for the labouring classes throughout the country, and provide an apparent case against the practice of contraception. But it does not stand close analysis. For one thing, the incidence of abortions was not considered; nor was adequate importance given to the relief which contraception gives to the family. And Ghurye and Deshpande's survey itself shows how urgent is the need for such amelioration. The sample studied lived almost entirely in one-room tenements under conditions which can be readily imagined. Among the women, 23.8 per cent. belonged to the age-group 21-25 years, the proportion falling to 11·3 per cent. after 30 years, owing to the fact that the older women returned to their homes permanently incapacitated by illness. That this condition could not be wholly ascribed to environmental factors is partly shown from the information that mothers belonging to the age-groups 9-13 and 14-18 years contributed 4-9 and 51-3 respectively of the briths. Even on the basis of this inquiry it must be concluded, therefore, that restriction of the birth-rate is necessary in India. Wider studies emphasize this need further.

According to Dr. C. V. Natarajan of the Mysore Health Department, and other workers, the masses, to whom primitive methods are already known, take readily to suggestions for restricting parenthood. The average labourer is certainly capable of assimilating and using simple instruction in the vernacular, and in this connection it is interesting to note that the members of the Statutory commission (1930) commented on "the shrewdness which often resides in the illiterate peasantry." There is no basis, therefore, for the popular belief that the Indian masses are too ignorant to understand simple contraceptive technique, nor is there any reason to suppose that unsurmountable difficulties prevent wide distribution of this knowledge. It is said that almost every village has its health visitor, and the cost of effective methods can be so greatly reduced as to place them within universal reach, particularly if modest State aid is given. This has been partly proved in Mysore.

The Official Attitude

Neither the Indian Government nor welfare and other ameliorative agencies have given serious consideration to the problem of population control. Apathetic officialdom in India has yet to learn that "it is incompatible with sound public health administration that any Government worthy of the name should allow itself to be deterred against its better judgment from including in the national health services clinics for advice on birth—control."

In some Provinces, however, evidence of interest in the problem is not wanting among those theoretically concerned with the administration. In the Madras Legislative Council, Mr. Shetty's efforts during the last five years have resulted in the inclusion, against a storm of opposition in which Roman Catholics played a dominant part, of birth—control in the maternal welfare activities of the Presidency. It may also be stated that a few years ago the Government of Bombay made a noteworthy decision in repealing the ban imposed by the Board of Censors on a film, issued by the National

Baby and Health Week Committee of Bombay, entitled *If She Only Knew*, which was a propaganda film for birth-control, inasmuch as it illustrated the relationship between frequent pregnancies and tuberculosis.

In certain Indian States the position is more advanced than it is in British India. The Government of Mysore State was, I believe, the first in the world to open (in 1930) official birth—control clinics at its principal hospitals, but between the recognition of the principle and the fruition of its objects there has unfortunately been a wide gap. Visiting one of these clinics in 1932, I was informed by the doctor in charge that she had only had about ten cases, and that conditions were not much better at the other clinics in the State. This was not surprising, since she was opposed to the widespread practice of contraception, relating with pride her discouragement of "women with only three or four children" who had approached her for advice. In other Indian States such as Baroda, Travancore, Cooch Behar, Rajkote, Pittapur and Jaipur, the rulers are also interested in the birth-control movement, but little has been done, except in Travancore, outside the sphere of avowed sympathy.

Unofficial Endeavour

Private activity has resulted in the formation of a few propagandist societies and birthcontrol centres. The former, however, live on the verge of extinction; and the latter are largely associated with the sale of literature and proprietary goods of very doubtful value. The only organizaion deserving notice is the Madras Neo-Malthusian League, of which Sir Vepa Ramesam, a judge of the Presidency High Court, is the moving spirit, with the Maharajahs of Pittapur and Jaipur as patrons. It has done valuable propagandic work, and publishes authoritative pamphlets in addition to a useful journal.

To such activities the medical profession has made practically no contribution, though recognizing their need. The Indian Medical Association, however, showed some interest in the subject by requesting a survey of contraceptive technique, and Dr. A. P. Pillay, who has frequently emphasized the bearing of contraceptive knowledge on welfare work conducts "The Eugenic Clinic" at Bombay, where advice is given without restrictive conditions. This clinic is largely confined to the more prosperous classes, but Dr. Pillay hopes to expand his services if he has sufficient support.

Propaganda alone, based on Western experience and a few economic generalizations, will not establish the birth-control movement in a country where contraceptive practice requires a special approach. Methods for the masses require particular attention, the investigation of indigenous products offering a rich field for the combined efforts of laboratory and social workers. One of the main problems of population control in India is of finding a really cheap contraceptive which will ensure a high degree of safety, even if it does not furnish the complete security which combined methods offer to more fortunate persons.

Indian Literature On Contraception

Like most countries, India produces a large volume of contraceptive literature of poor quality. I know of no work published in India that attains the standard of a thorough modern study, but several "popular" works are at least earnest in

purpose. In this category are those by N. S. Phadke and Mercia Heynes-Wood, and the publications of the Madras Neo-Malthusian League. Vernacular pamphlets are also numerous, but there is much scope for brief and reliable information in the vernaculars, such as that supplied in Prof. R. D. Karve's Marathi monthly, *Samaaswasthya*. Meanwhile, there are moderately useful works in Hindi, Bengali, Gujaratih, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu.

Organization

Research and propaganda need to be supplemented by adequate organization, if the birth-control movement in India is to be productive. Broadly speaking, the existing machinery of medical administration should be utilized by (1) making contraceptive information available, without restrictive considerations, at all general and maternity hospitals and welfare centres; (2) including birth control on the programme of all departments and associations concerned with public health; (3) instituting short courses on contraception in medical and health schools, and (4) enforcing legislation against quackery and profiteering in connection with the sale of contraceptive literature and products. The formation of an All-India Birth-Control League, which is being stimulated by the efforts of the Birth-Control International Information Centre in co-operation with local groups, supported by provincial branches, would help to secure official action which it would support and extend. With co-operative organization of this nature, information on birth-control could be made available to the most rural populations, since it is said that every village has its health visitor, whose services can be utilized for this purpose.

Finally, it must be emphasized that contraception alone will not suffice for productive population control in India. The need for sterilization and legalized abortion is imperative in a country where the increasing incidence of such diseases as leprosy and insanity has not proved susceptible to treatment and research, and where abortion is already prevalent and the failures of contraceptive technique are likely to be relatively higher than they are in the West. The sponsors of the birth-control movement must realize that the success of their efforts is charged with danger if concession to illiberal sentiment excludes sterilization, segregation and abortion from the public health programme.

—CEDRIC DOVER

CATHOLICISM versus SCIENCE.

The following appeared in The Hindu of 21-2-1935.

Sir A. Krishnaswami Aiyar and the Catholic Clergy.

Sir,—It is reported in "The Hindu" of the 15th instant that Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar observed that every scientific discovery in the past had met with opposition from the clergy and it was not surprising that the Roman Catholic Church should oppose it (i. e. Birth-Control).

If Sir Alladi would take the trouble to turn over the pages of the Catholic Encyclopaedia—which is a store house of accurate learning—he would find there a

galaxy of scientists, devout sons of the Catholic Church, who pursued their investigations without let or hindrance. It is true that Friar Roger Bacon and Galileo were put under restraint, not for their scientific investigatigations but for indulging in bitter controversies and "disturbing the peace" just as any civil Government would put under restraint any citizens, however eminent, who "disturbed the peace."

My professor Mr. (afterwards Sir) J.C. G. used to tell us that while in Paris he had occasion to read some French historians who had recorded French victories over the English which were not alluded to by the English historians he had studied at Oxford.

Certain Rationalists might fulminate against the Catholic Church but we should hear the other side. *Audi alteram partem.* Eminent Catholic philosophers and scientists have proved that *there is no conflict between real science and the Catholic religion. The Catholic Church has no doubt opposed the unwarranted assumptions and inferences of scientists like Haeckel and others.*

Space forbids long quotations. I will refer to only three or four illustrious Catholic Savants. Dr. Brownson one of the greatest philosophers any age has produced says: "I have as a Catholic felt and enjoyed a mental freedom which I never conceived possible while I was a non-Catholic." Similar testimony is borne by Abbe Moigno of Paris, who according to M. Dumas, Secretary of the French Academy of Sciences "had for fifty years marched at the head of the scientific movement," and the immortal Canchy, one of the most eminent mathematicians of modern times who had the honour of continuing, the work of Laplace of solving some of the most difficult problems in modern transcendental analysis and of founding, to the glory of France, a new school of mathematical science. Nor need we forget that the great Indian scientist of whose achievements we are so proud. was a pupil of a Catholic priest, the late Father Lafont S.J., an eminent science professor of St Xavier's College, Calcutta.

The proposition that the Catholic Church is hostile to science is quite untenable.

As regards birth-control it is not only the Catholic clergy that has opposed it but also medical men and others of international reputation including Mahatma Gandhi, India's greatest Social Reformer.

—F. REBELLO.

Science in Church-light.

F. Rebello of Reyapuram is satisfied that there is no conflict between *real science* and the Catholic religion. "The Catholic Church has no doubt opposed the unwarranted assumptions and inferences of scientists like Heackel and others," says the defender of the case for the 'other side' against whom certain Rationalist might fulminate. As Rationalism is defined as the mental attitude that unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all *arbitrary assumptions* and authority, the Catholic Clergy will certainly out-Herod Herod if they really oppose the unwarranted assumption of scientists. But there is no assumption more unwarranted than that science will countenanee an unwarranted assumption. We fail to understand how any Catholic philosopher can cease to believe that the creation was begun six

thousand years ago, and was made in six days by God that rested on the seventh. If Geology taught better truth, F. Rebello must either keep it close in another pocket, untouched by the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament, which he is bound to carry in the usual place. Eminent catholic philosophers and scientists have been trying hard to prove that Geology is false knowledge, and that the Bible is *real* science. The proof of the absence of conflict, in their case, is by means of excluding the entrance of the natural sciences into their horizon.

Catholic History leads any right-thinking individual to the conclusion summarised by Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer that 'every scientific discovery in the past had met with opposition from the Clergy,' and if this premise is sound it is not faulty logic of the Advocate-General when he said that it was not surprising that the Roman Catholic Church should oppose Birth-Control. The Catholic priests taught that disease is the visitation if God's wrath on humanity, and opposed the administering of drugs and anesthetics to alleviate pain and remove suffering. True Catholic Faith required that this mortal frame should least be attended to, and Piety and Godliness, and Saintliness were measured in the inverse rate of physical cleanliness. Every advance in human knowledge, and every application thereof to human safety and well-being had its opposition at the hands of the Clergy. Chemistry was condemned as black-magic designed by Satan to tempt man away from the claims of religion. Surgery and anatomy were banned as they did not rest on the faith-cure basis. Eugenics woud be an infringment of Gods plan's of creation, and poverty is ordained by faith as against a wiser rule of Economics. We have authentic records of Church History in such well-documented wroks like Lea's "History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Roman Church", citing from the Pope's Bulls and Encyclicals and other official Church-records in several centuries, which throw light on the problem of the eternal conflict between Catholic Faith and scientific pursuit of knowledge. The Catholic Encyclopedia itself bears testimony to several such instances of the scientific mind labouring under the weight of traditional dogma, and religious prejudice. Where the conflict is not driven to the surface, it was accomplished at the expense of science by a sort of compromise effected to the prejudice of independent thought. If Science predominated in certain Catholic minds, it was in spite of their religious training but not on account of it. To rely on the fact that certain eminent scientists were pupils of Catholic Priests is no better than to say that some Rationalists are descened from Catholic ancestors. Indeed Rationalist Reactions spring mostly from Clerical domination, and the Catholic disregard for human sentiment and scientific truth. The fight against Evolution is the latest phase of Catholic History. Biology is opposed by the Church whose faith in the creation of the species by the fiat of an Almighty God would thereby be impaired. Darwin is the most modern enemy of Rome. The Fundamentalist States of America prohibit the teaching of evolution in schools and punished a teacher in Dayton (Tennesse) for the sin of giving instruction to his pupils. Is it any wonder that Birth Control should be warred against by the body of believers who would avoid the use of Chloroform, and modern surgical applia-

nces on the ground that such innovations are offensive to their notions of peity?

Not merely in relation to the physical and biological sciences, but even in respect to sociological matters, the Church would for ever remain behind. Divorce is not recognised at all by the Catholic faith, for the saying. is "Whom God hath united, let no man cut asunder." And the device in case of mismating is resorted to of declaring the marriage a nullity. It is a rigid, close system whose rigours have recently earned for Sir Thomas More the status of Saint for services rendered during the reign of Henry VIII. Marriage law reform in England and other countries has ever to reckon with the weight of Cathelic opinion, ranged againt it.

History, real History, may not have been availabls to Sir J. C. G. in Paris or Oxford, but none will agree with F. Rebello's conclusion (see the Hindu d. 21-2-1935, p 7) that the Catholic Church is not hostile to science, unless his *real Science* were to be Catholic Science, supported by the authority of the Biblical Texts.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI,
(R.P.A. Secretary for Madras Presidency)

[Our esteemed contributor, Mr. M. V. V. K. Rangachari of Cocanada, the learned Honorary Secretary of the R. P. A. in South India, sends us some cuttings of "The Hindu" of Madras dealing with a recent controversy on the question of the Roman Catholic Church opposition to science. A Catholic writer, one Mr. F. Rebello, evidently a diligent pupil of semi-educated priests, who, in this country, fill the minds of their innocent alumni with all kinds of fantastic ideas about Science and Religion, stood up for his Church. He was effectively replied by Mr. Rangachari who had not much difficulty in disposing of his erroneous views on the subject. It is remarkable that here, in India, Indian Catholics with Portuguese names always rush forward to defend well founded atacks on their Church, and in doing so they usually display a colossol ignorance of the case. In fact all their knowledge of the question seems to be what they have heard from priests or read in Catholic publications.

We have only space to publish the first letter of that Catholic writer and Mr. Rangachari's smashing rejoinder. Mr. Rebello's in a second letter attempted to parry the blows Mr. Rangachari rained on him, but in doing so could only trot out the familiar arguments of Catholic priests when they find it necessary to deny the strong indictment laid against their Church. The very fact that these poor deluded people sincerely believe all the ridiculous arguments of Catholic apologists so as to embolden them to write in defence of their Church which has been rightly condemned by all right-thinking people, shows the depth of their ignorance and their peculiar mental attitude. For instance, they only accept Catholic History and the Catholic version of any fact as the only reliable one. They view with suspicion any other source of information. All the same, we feel that Mr. Rangachari has wasted his time in bandying words with an opponent of this class. Just imagine the audacity of the man in making reckless assertions. He would

have us believed that Friar Roger Bacon and Galileo were persecuted, not on account of their scientific discoveries which perturbed the Church very much, but because they were dangerous citizens! Was this alone the reason why they burnt Bruno at the stakes and imprisoned Vesalius, while Copernicus was obliged to remain beyond their reach in the Netherlands? One wonders what Mr. Rebello would have to say in defence of the Papal Bull, issued on the 16th of March 1616 against the Copernician doctrine, prohibiting its teaching under penalty. That Bull distinctly says that the Church opposed that teaching as it was against the Scriptures and against Catholic doctrine. How innocent the Church has been all along! Now, it want to pose as the patron of *real* Science. Real science, it must be understood, is any thing that does not clash with Catholic dogmas. To say that the aged Galileo and Roger Bacon were dangerous citizens is not only a reckless and ridiculous statement, but is a wicked and shameless one, fit only to be uttersd by ignorant fanatics, blind to any code of decency and honour.

As is usual with Catholic writers, Mr. Rebello could not fail to drag in Professor Haeckel. Every Catholic who pretends to a smattering of education is full of the story that Haeckel was convicted of frauds and forgeries in misrepresenting his embroyological pictures. His opponents, the priests, did try to make such an absurd accusation and they were, in the end, sharply taken to task by thirtysix of the most eminent German biologists who found no fault with Haeckel's pictures. Half educated Catholics know a lot about the accusation, but they do not appear to have ever heard of the sharp rebuke of the German biologists and the contempt of the scientific world for such a stupid accusation. To show the abysmal ignorance of that Indian Catholic with a Portuguese name, it it only necessary to recall what he knows about the question of "Spontaneous generation!" According to him, Haeckel believed and taught that. As a matter of fact, Haeckel never advocated the popular theory about "Spontaneous generation" which was ably exploded by Pasteur and Tyndall, namely, that living organisms suddenly developed in hay infusion, putried water, rotten clothes, etc. What Haeckel understood and taught by spontaneous generation is well explained by him in his "Wonders of Life." He calls this theory "Abiogenesis" namely, that life must have begun in a natural way, by the synthesis of natural gases as no other scientific explanation of the Origin of Life is possible. To day, there is not a scientist who does not accept this view. Mr. Rebello does not appear to know even this, and yet he imagines he is competent enough to ward off the well merited attacks directed against his Church.

ED. REASON.]

"WHAT DOES THE KORAN TEACH?"

In Our January issue there appears an article sent by a contributor under the heading "What does the Koran teach". Several Mahomedan friends of ours have seen us regarding the article in question and they complain that the quotations given are not correct and that they may mislead any one, not conversant with the Koran, into the belief that their Sacred book contains so many passages that are repugnant to modern ideas. A Mahomedan gentleman who is well acquanited with that book has promised to send us an article to refute the one we published. Up to the time of going to press we have not received his article. Should he send it, we shall gladly publish the same in our April issue.

EDITOR REASON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Chicago, January 15, 1934.

Editor of Reason.

On January 16, 1935 at Chicago Illinois there was organized the Humanist Press Association, for the purpose of advancing educational all ideas and causes related to the enhancement of human life into here and man.

Officers elected were as follows President, Curtis W. Reese, Dean of Abraham Lincoln Center; Vice-President, A. E. Haydon, Professor of the History of Religions, University of Chicago: Secretary-Treasurer, Edwin H. Wilson, Managing Editor of the New Humanist Magazine. Executive Committee, the foregoing and Burdette, Backus, leader of the Chicago Humanist Society; R. Lester Modale, Unitarian Minister at Evanston, Illinois; Raymond B. Bragg, Editor of the new Humanist.

In view of the advocacy by many members of the R. P. A. of England that the Rationalist movement advance to Humanism as its constructive phase, the organization of this group in America should be of interest to readers of *Reason*. John A. Hobson, in his book "Rationalism and Humanism" sounded the call to the British Rationalists in a Conway Memorial lecture in 1933. saying "I therefore issue an earnest invitation to Rationlists to count themselves as Humanists.....Do convinced Rationalists doubt the value of the service that they could render by a fearless application to the backward areas of human thought and conduct of that unfettered reason which has made such progress in the demolition of theology ?. G. P. Gooch, noted historian in his preface to Professor Hoson's book says, "Our surest guide is "*reason in the service of humanity*" Also that "reason is the great builder rather than the destroyer." This we recoganize as Humanism.

Because they believe that the Rationalists of India will find that they have a community of interest with the American Humanists and that neither should let a mere label stand between them and sympathetic fellowship and the exchange of ideas, the Secretary of the Humanist Press Association hereby sends his greetings to the readers of *Reason* and the Rationalist Association of India.

Subscription to the New Humanist, Official journal of the H. P. A. is 1.50 annually. It is published at 3'30 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois U.S.A. Sample copies will be sent only on receipt of twenty-five cents.

Cordially and respectfully,

EDWIN H. WILSON.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the people of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, The Editor "Reason," 3. Morland Road, Byculla, Bombay. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India. 41, Queen's Road, Bombay 2.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

The need for inculcating tolerance was stressed the other day by Sir Fazli-i Hussein, Pro-Chancellor of the Delhi University. Speaking at the 13th Convocation of that University in March last, he said: "Much of life's acerbity will be sweetened if we study the past and view the present and the future with a desire to understand rather than misunderstand the acts and opinions of others."

Nothing fosters intolerance more than religion especially those narrow creeds based on the dogma of exclusive salvation. In India, it is the cause of much misunderstanding among communities, and it is one of the aims and objects of Rationalism to teach the stupidity of this. Few, perhaps, realize that priests, parsons, moulvis, dasturs and swamis can only flourish by preaching intolerance and for

this reason they all look upon Rationalism as their greatest enemy.

* * *

One is glad to note that some influential and thoughtful people in India are just beginning to realize the baneful effect of intolerance and are advising people to cultivate a tolerant attitude. Among these is Justice Kanwar Dalip Sing who like Sir Fazli-i-Hussein, some weeks ago, addressed the students of the Forman Christian College on the subject. Justice Kanwar DalipSingh exhorted them to give religion its proper place, and get no more than its proper place in social life. He would like them to regard universal Justice as even higher than religion and he reminded them that tolerance of criticism was essential for progress. Although Justice Kanwar Dalip Sing must of course, be aware of the existence of Section 295A in the Indian Penal Code, yet he told the students: "No advance in civic life was possible without the greatest freedom being given to criticism of all beliefs, always provided that the primary intention was not to offend."

* * *

Not only on account of that Section which makes it very risky for any one to critisize freely the religious beliefs of the people of this country, but the intolerant attitude of the people makes it even more difficult. Their religious feelings, especially those of the Mahomedans and Christians get deeply wounded by almost anything that may be said against their creeds, and it is evident that many of these people are not yet enlightened enough to understand that honest criticism of creeds is essential to purify them from gross errors and absurdities, and that truth is not afraid of criticism.

It is this extreme intolerance and morbid sensitiveness which have made some fanatics in India perform murderous acts under the plea that their religious feelings were deeply wounded. All this is due to false teaching and erroneous ideas about religion. A strange belief prevails among the ignorant in this country that by dying for their religion they go straight to heaven. They are greatly encouraged in this belief and when any one them forfeits his life in the cause of his religion, he is at once proclaimed as a Martyr!

* * *

Sir Nasarvanji Choksy, M.D. deserves the thanks of those who are organizing the Birth Control movement in this country for the fine moral support he gave them in the Legislative Assembly last month. Sir Nasarvanji is a medical man who has had a very wide experience of diseases in a large city like Bombay. Like most medical men he has witnessed the tragedies of life due to the evils of over population——overcrowding, filth, starvation. diseases, degeneracy, vice and crimes—to mention but a few of those evils. He has seen all this in their ugliness and repulsiveness and is therefore more qualified to speak on the subject than those who have had no real acquaintance with those evils. We are deeply convinced that only those who are unfamiliar with such realities of life; only those who are blinded by ridiculous religious and social prejudices can oppose such a desirable measure as the control of over population. Common Sense, itself, commends it to every right thinking person,

* * *

In its leading article of the 6th April last, The Times of India attempted to discuss the question in the light of the

discussion on the subject in the Legislative Assembly. We were not impressed by its specious argument. It is evident that that article was written by a person who knows nothing about the subject. We are in effect, told that it was not over population which is at the bottom of many of the evils attributed to it. It is over production! "Mal adjustments in the economic machine," says The Times of India, "was responsible for this."

* * *

As regards India, The Times of India sought to prove on the authority of Major General Sprawson and Prof. P. J. Thomas of Madras that India was not over populated though the population since 1881 has increased by about 40% and only an increase of 10½ per cent during the decade ending 1930. This is said to be based on the number the country could sustain if its agricultural development was fully exhausted. It is sought to prove that such an agricultural development is in progress and therefore the question of over population does not arise! So much for theories based on statistics. It is nonetheless an undisputed fact that despite the alleged agricultural development and a high death rate millions in India are starving, poverty increasing, and unemployment more widespread. It is precisely the prolificity of the classes which cannot and should not rear many children which is a danger to the country. How is it possible to form a self-respecting and virile nation with the teeming millions who live under the appalling conditions they are living at present?

* * *

The papers announced that quite recently the Arch Bishop of Canterbury was burnt in effigy in some part of England and his picture was pelted with rotten vegetables and eggs before being committed to the flame. Fancy this happening in priest-ridden England! The trouble, it would appear, arose over the question of tithes, which has exercised the minds of people there very much of late. There is no reason to believe that the worthy Arch-Bishop is much perturbed over this. Like Henry IV of France Sur le Pont Neuf, he is keeping the best of health and is seeking every opportunity to announce that he is much alive and to justify his eminent position as the Head of the Church of England as by Law established. He is, in effect, very much in communication with God at present. He is offering prayers for the welfare of India, to have rains, to have peace, to guide Parliament in the right path and by and bye he will bear the brunt of the celebrations in connection with the Silver Jubilee of their Majesties. The poor hard-working man!

* * *

The Presidental Address of Dr. David Forsyth to the Section of Psychiatry of Royal Society of Medicine of London, has caused a stir in England. The subject was Psychiatry and Religion. The excitement against it was caused by the Times giving full publicity to it, and letters of protest followed (as is usually the case when Religion is attacked in England).

Dr. Forsyth quite rightly maintained that the so-called new spirit of toleration between Science and Religion, which led some people to believe that there was no inherent conflict between the two, was not supported by modern psychology. (We also have always maintained this). Psychology, he said, shows their incompatibility more than ever. Psycho analytic research, says Dr. Forsyth traces many religious ideas back to unexpected

sources in childhood. (This is especially true with Indians). Children learn their religious ideas about God, conscience and so forth from their parents. He said that belief in a soul and the hope of immortality was taken by Christians from primitive religions. Belief in a soul was general among savages and arose from dreams in which the dead were seen. Sexual feeling entered into some aspects of religion, and religious conversion represented a disorder of sexuality; in adolescents the new tide of sexual feelings, being checked in its usual course, was deflected into religion (See Havelock Ellis' Psychology of Sex). In it the readers of Reason will have a good idea why many girls become nuns and many boys become priests. All due to sexual disorders.

* * *

The most distinctive characteristic of religion, says Dr. Forsyth, was beliefs in the supernatural which Science had fail to discover. It was claimed that religion detected the supernatural world by mystical method which alone were suitable for things spiritual. If the Sensory world know to Science was real, why, it might be asked should not the spiritual world, known to religion, be real also? The reply of psychology was that all processes of thinking were of two kinds—pleasure thinking and reality thinking. Pleasure thinking was well known under the name of "imagination" and showed itself in dreams and day dreams. It was employed in all creative artistic work, but psychology allocated it to the world of fantasy, where the writ of nature did not run. The mysterious business of Gods and spirits was an example of childish projection (imagination) on a colossal scale.

It is announced that the Pope of Rome received the Maharaja of Patiala some time ago and conferred on him the Grand Cross of the Order of Gregory the Great. Who will say after this that Catholicism is not moving along? To confer a most exclusive Catholic Order on a Hindu is certainly a most unusual proceeding. It is to be hoped that the Maharaja will not take into his head some day to decorate the neck of the God Shiva with that showy decoration.

* * *

Just at the moment of going to press we notice that the Government of Bombay has issued a communique explaining clearly why it was necessary to adopt stern measures in Karachi against a fanatical Muslim mob bent on mischief. The circumstances which led to the firing are now well known, and every fair-minded person, not blinded by communal and religious prejudices, will admit that the authorities had to face a dangerous situtation, the outcome of which could only result in appalling disaster. For weeks before the tragic episode, the fanatical passions of the mob had been inflamed by propagandists who generally exploit such occasions for their own ends. Bitter criticism has been directed against the Government for doing its duty; but no body has has come forward to condemn the religious fanaticism responsible for this deplorable affair. The Government, in our opinion, did right in quelling such a fanatical demonstration. No civilized Government, determined to maintain Law and Order, could tolerate what took place in Karachi. Religious bigotry and intolerance are on the increase in India and unless stern measures are taken against this tendency the menace will soon grow out of control. The socalled leaders of communities must not be encouraged to foster the same.

INGERSOLL AFTER ONE HUNDRED YEARS.

The one hundredth anniversary in 1933 of the birth of Robert, G. Ingersoll is of interest to religious liberals. In his rejection of many specific elements of the Christian tradition, including a hell of terror, a cruel and vengeful God, the inerrancy of the Bible as a divine revelation, and the virgin birth, Ingersoll was doing exactly the thing that has consumed much of the time and energy of liberal ministers during the past century.

In many of our free churches there are laymen, and occasionally ministers, whose first break with orthodoxy came with the reading or hearing of his speeches. Yet, however widely read and appreciated by individual, Unitarians, Universalists, and other religious liberals, Robert Ingersoll has been praised and discussed by few publicly.

The reasons for the reluctance of the free-churchmen to recognize and openly acknowledge in Ingersoll a kindred spirit seems obvious. Ingersoll had both a constructive and a destructive side to his thought. But it was his fate to become known to the world at large chiefly for his negations. Controversy over his views simply drove him into preoccupation with the inconsistencies and myths of the Bible and of orthodox liberals. Moreover, those liberals were unprepared institutionally for a sympathetic understanding of his position in regard to the ideas of God, immortality, and the human soul. It was not then as generally recognized as it is now, that there can be religion without belief in God or heaven. It was precisely because Ingersoll went further in his critical examination of the materials of Christianity than did other liberals, and maintained an agnostic position on these ideas to which the liberal theists found it necessary to cling, that he gained added ill-repute among the fundamentalist hordes. And the liberal churches had enough public disapproval to combat without taking on the added onus of any association with the name of Ingersoll. This status of Ingersoll as a man who out-heresied the heretics is well expressed in a story told recently by the editor of an urban paper in Illinois. The editor's mother was a devout Methodist of the old school, but his father had free-thought leanings and occasionaly might be seen with a volume of " The Mistakes of Moses ". On such occasion the good wife would exclaim with manifest disgust : " Oh, John. You and that old Ingersoll ! Why, you are worse than a Universalist ! "

Not a few of the rationalist admirers of Ingersoll seem also to have misunderstood him. These free-thought disciples have tried to present him as virtually an atheist. Yet nothing could be more explicit in all of Ingersoll's words than his discrimination between the vindictive God of Calvinism on the one hand, and on the other the God of evolutionary theism which the religious liberals of his time affirmed, and in regard to which he was agnostic, not atheistic. Thus he declared : " Let me say, once and for all, that when I speak of God, I mean the being describe by Moses.....the Jehovah of the Jews. There may be, for aught I know, somewhere in the shoreless vast, some being whose dreams are constellations and within whose thoughts the infinite exists. About this being, if such a one exists, I have nothing to say." This does not mean that Robert Ingersoll

affirmed or even admitted the probability of desirability of such a God. He stated that apparently the world is self-existing, that nature appears to be non-purposive and non-intelligent. But he spoke only of appearances, and in the end his answers to the claims of modern theism and his conviction concerning the ultimate nature of the world was neither an affirmation nor a denial; it was simply, "I do not know."

This agnosticism of Ingersoll's is essentially akin to the scientific method and temper which looks for facts with suspended judgment and an open mind. It did not admit the validity of the speculative or intuitive method by which the theists sought to rationalize their faith. Moreover, Ingersoll was consistent in his agnosticism in his views on immortality, saying, "We do not know, we cannot say, whether death is a wall or a door..." Likewise he readily admitted the lack of facts in his day in regard to personality. "We do not understand," he said, "the action of the brain. No one knows the origin of a thought. No one knows how he thinks or why he thinks, any more than he knows how or why his heart beats...." It may be that were he now alive the research of the last quarter century would let him speak a little more factually on these questions of physiology and psychology, but where mystery existed, he would still be ready to admit to lack of knowledge. The significant thing is that he did not allow himself to be swept by the exigencies of debate into negations where the facts did not permit negation. This position not only made him, as courageous as his more inconclastic admirers would like to have him, but it also made him more discriminating than they have often been in their interpretation of his theology.

Half-hearted Liberalism.

In another respect the friends of Ingersoll have failed to do him justice. Nothing is more frequently encountered in the ranks of anti-religious who claim Ingersoll as a hero than a combination of theological radicalism and economic and political reaction. These disciples lost sight of the whole man, and presented Ingersoll in as conservative economic garb as they themselves wore. There is a certain type of mind, not uncommon even in free-church circles, in which there seems to be a process of compensation taking place. Such thinkers apparently try to make up for their conservative position on things material by being quite heroic about things "spiritual." A curious acceptance of the dualism of the orthodoxy they pretend to reject is involved in this confining of their liberality and rationality to one but compartment of thought. It is economic and political thought and action which count most today, and no one, even though he calls himself a rationalist, can reasonably pretend to be liberal or rational who has not reasoned his way to a liberal position in these fields.

When we examine the attitude of a third group, we find that, as with the theists and rationalists, Ingersoll has not been fairly evaluated. This group is the humanist wing of religious liberalism, which might be expected to find in Ingersoll a forerunner, since it has most in common with him. Some of the older humanists, whose life and work has overlapped with his, have indeed spoken and have written enthusiastically about Ingersoll, but their stress was upon his place as a scourge of orthodoxy. And the younger humanists have expressed a marked disinterest in him.

For such reasons no more appropriate recognition of Ingersoll could be made in this year of his anniversary than to examine the constructive phase of his thought, which persons in all groups seem to have failed either to grasp or understand in discriminating manner.

A Republican, but a servant to no party.

In the case of the younger humanists, as early as I can determine, the impression that Ingersoll in politics and economics was unprogressive, has been gained largely from the conservatism of some of his anti-religious followers. Moreover, for several of these humanists the fact that Ingersoll was a Republican has of late been sufficient condemnation. They have let that label alienate them without apparently observing that a Republican, let us say, of 1932 and a Republican of fifty or more years ago were quite different persons. They should not forget that the same label has been worn by men as different as were the elder Robert M. LaFollette and Henry Cabot Lodge. Moreover, Ingersoll's party loyalties were always subordinate to his conviction. If they had not been he would never have let his theological radicalism wreck his chances of high political office. A satirical editor of an Ohio paper wrote, a year or two ago, a subtle editorial purporting to give high praise for party loyalty to the senior Senator from his state, who was then the national chairman of the Republican Party. The Senator, he said, had followed his party loyally wherever it went. He had gone to the heights with it. And when it went down into the mire had had with canine fidelity, followed it there. When, for example, his party was for the World Court, he had been for it. But when his party obstructed American adherence thereto, he also was against it. Such loyalty, the editorial declared, is rare and deserves recognition. And the editor, a Democratic partisan, chuckled over several letters from friends of the Senator, commenting the editorial.

There was none of institutional servility in Ingersoll. He was independent in spirit and placed conviction above all else, as in these words which remind one of Channing: "So far as I am concerned, I have made up my mind that no organization, secular or religious, shall be my master. I have made up my mind that no necessity of bread, or raiment, or roof shall ever put a padlock upon my lips. I have made up my mind that no hope of preferment, no honour, no wealth, shall ever make for one moment swerve from what I really believe." Ingersoll applied this attitude to his political affiliation, declaring that he was with the Republican Party only so long as it was going his way, and that if it ceased to go his way, he would leave it.

Ingersoll's starting point in his social, economic, and political views was the very one which unites all religious liberals, theist or humanist, today, namely, faith in human nature. The most important thing about Ingersoll, as of any other man, is not his political affiliation. Political parties can grow old. They can have their day and outlive their usefulness. But one's attitude toward life is basic. The attitude of religious liberalism that human nature is sacred, that life is worth living, and that the fearless and free pursuit of truth is the way to the abundant life for man, is a perennially inspiring conviction that bears fruit in different ways in different decades

This attitude Ingersoll shared and affirmed. It is written in every line of his creed of science; it is found throughout all his published speeches. And it determined his attitute on social questions. His position is well illustrated by the following excerpt:—

> Your views upon all such questions, will depend upon which side of human nature you stand,.....whether you are a believer in total depravity, or whether you think there is a little virtue in human nature. If you judge from the side of human depravity you can torture any act, whatever it is, into guilt. But you may judge from the other side and say that men as a rule are decent; that they would rather do a kind act than a mean thing; that they would rather tell the truth than tell a lie. I tell you today that there is an immensity of good in human nature.

Believed in gradual evolutionary progress.

It is, of course, purely a matter of conjecture as to what formal political affiliations Ingersoll would have made in the light of the events of the last few years. His measure of institutions certainly would have kept him moving forward in his views. We are less optimistic than was he in regard to the possibilities of gradual evolutionary progress. And he too would probably have distinguished more clearly between the ideas of evolution and progress. He was not a socialist. Three things, he said, would keep America from accepting extreme socialist views: freedom by which he meant the owing of a home and a job by the common man. What would he say to the record of continued repression of civil liberties in the last few years? What would he say to the dispossession of homes and farms throughout the country? What would he say to unemployment on the part of millions? If some of us believe today that some form of socialization is necessary, it is precisely because we feel that the *laissez-faire* system of the past, or even the various proposals of the present for modifying and controlling the profit system, have failed and must necessarily continue to fail to maintain those three forms of freedom which Ingersoll believed to be enduring realities of our national life. If the process of gradual evolutionary progress which Ingersoll believed in has not come, it has been because freedom of speech and press have not been genuinely free, because progress won't just happen but must be planned for with the good of all as goal, and because economic security has broken down due to weaknesses inherent in an individualistic and profit-motivated society. Liberals who are reaching this conclusion today are doing so on the basis of experience in America since the war, whereas Ingersoll died before the turn of the century.

If Ingersoll was conservative, what manner of conservative would ask as he did: "Why should not the laborers unite for the purpose of controlling the executive, legislative and judicial departments of the Government? Will they never find out how powerful that are?" Capital, he pointed out, always claims the right to combine. "They call that changing ideas," he said, "but when labor tries to combine, they call it conspiracy. Manufacturers meet in clubs. The workers have to meet in empty lots and on the streets and then are attacked for sedition." Friendly towards the aspira-

tions of the workers and farmers and believing in their organization for their own good, Ingersoll saw and denounced the injustice of such class privileges. Justice was a religion to him. "Justice," he said, "is the only worship." And this worship of justice made him a foe of all slavery. He sought equal rights for the Negroes. He was against punishment of all kinds on the ground that it degrades and hardens and does no good. He believed in equal pay for women. Ignorance was to him a form of slavery, and he believed in education for all, education both for making a living and for living a life.

Ingersoll's sense of justice and his sympathy for the workers led him to recognize that the source of wealth is in labor and not in profits. He realized the injustice of human exploitation through which one man lives upon the labor of another, one class upon another class. Particularly, he decried exploitation through the ownership of tenements and of land. "A man should have no more land than he can use," was his position. The traffic in miserable tenements, he believed, put "a few in castles and many in prisons. Greed, he felt, knows no bounds, and the profit motive often leads to the most serious injustices and abuses. "Don't you know," he said, "that people would bottle the air if they could and allow millions to die for want of breath if they couldn't pay for it?" he believed in profit sharing, one of the panaceas advanced in his day, so that the worker would "mingle a little June with the December of his life."

Ingersoll was a searching critic of the very rich as well as a friend of the worker. He had a definite sense of both the uses and the limitations of wealth. He said of the rich that we have a right to ask how they got their money and what they do with it. He saw that property owners were often owned body and soul by their property. "It is an insanity," he declared, "to get more than you want." The love of gold, he pointed out elsewhere, leaves nothing but sagebrush in the heart. "Why wear oneself out trying to get rich? Imagine a man getting up in the morning and owning a million suits, socks, neckties. What can he do with his surplus? Can he eat it? No. Can he make friends with it? No. Can he purchase flattery and lies? Yes. Can he let it torment him with worry? Yes. And he caricatures, with the same sardonic wit he used in tearing the Biblical myths to pieces, the rich man dying of apoplexy for fear he would not have enough neckties to last him through.

Ingersoll himself had little desire to be rich, and gave generously to many people and to many causes. He died with an estate of not over 10,000, in spite of his talents, which, if they had been used intensively for money-making, would surely have made him rich.

Ingersoll's social liberalism was not provincial. Despite his own army commission he was surprisingly broad in his international views. With all his eloquent praise of the soldier, he advocated disarmament and an international court. It may be said also of Ingersoll's social views, that they lack that type of radical class consciousness which indiscriminately finds everything and anything the rich do to be bad, and everything and anything the poor do to be good. It is apparent from an examination of his attitude toward labor, capital, wealth, and civil liberties that, for his own time, Ingersoll was as liberal in his social-economic views as any humanist should desire.

"Investigate, not follow"

Asked in the course of his lectures, "What do you give in place of what you tear down?" Ingersoll would give some such simple answer as, "Well, in the first place I propose good fellowship.....good friends all around. No matter what we believe, shake hands and let it go." But as we have seen, his positive beliefs went further than tolerance and fellowship. Beyond the social views of Ingersoll is to be found a set of values corresponding to the values of most religious liberals. They will agree with him that religion is a way of life and not a creed. They will be inspired by his wish to find joy here instead of yearning for heaven hereafter. They will agree with him that character-building is a supremely desirable end and a life work for the individual; that happiness is the result of sane living: that the measure of right and wrong is in whether an act helps men to live happily here and now. His admonition, "Investigate, not follow; Do not be cringers and crawlers," his warning, "Do not throw away your reason to save your soul; you will lose it, you will become an intellectual serf" these have their counterpart in the temper of our free religious fellowship.

If the writer of this article is at all critical of Ingersoll and finds his usefullness limited, it is because of limitations inherent in the piece of work he was doing, and the century in which he lived. At times his style seems over-ornate and the content somewhat unsubstantial. But one must remember that Ingersoll's collected works are chiefly transcripts of his public talks. In those talks he was speaking to the people at large in a tongue they could understand. We should not, therefore, go to him for all the nuance of critical scholarship. But we can go to him and learn a great deal as to how to bring the liberal message to the masses. What is surprising is that so much of what he said was beautifully polished, clear and simple, yet musical and balanced in style, and that at the same time his assumptions and reservations, in the light of subsequent scholarship, have proved to be sound.

Ingersoll, the theological iconoclast, the world knows. The old errors needed and still need to be destroyed before a new structure of faith can be erected. The work of the wrecking crew is not yet completed. But what negative task is being done powerfully by the forces of research, by the regular classroom instruction of the great universities, by the press and other agencies of popular education which are making the results of research available to all who will think and read. The task before religious liberals today is the more constructive one of stimulating people to think synthetically, and of guiding their thoughts into patterns and toward values that will give life its needed purpose and zest.

Religious liberals have many reasons for honoring Ingersoll for his intellectual honesty and his fearless destructiveness where destruction was needed. But even more they should appreciate and make known to the world the constructive Ingersoll. This less-known side of the great orator was buried beneath the avalanche of protest which was released by his denial of beliefs almost universally held. It was hidden by misrepresentations which never succeeded in touching the personal integrity of life and motive that was his. This Ingersoll,

the lover of freedom, of justice, of humanity, and of progress. the man who found within the boundaries of the here and now ample reason for faith and joy in living merits high place among the heroes of religious liberalism. The constructive faith of Ingersoll has been summed up in sentences gleaned from his talks as follows:

Justice if the only worship.
Love is the only priest.
Ignorance is the only slavery.
Happiness is the only good.
The time to be happy is now.
The place to be happy is here.
The way to be happy is to make other people so.

VIVIAN PHELIPS.

DID JESUS EVER LIVE?

Between those who stoutly maintain that the figure of Jesus as we read of him in the Gospels and Epistles is a reality that cannot be disputed, and those who, on the strength of careful researches, totally deny that such a person ever existed at all, there is a very large number of people who take a middle view of it.

We are all familiar with the picture of Jesus drawn for us by many of his staunch followers—bishops, priests, parsons and other pious writers—who in their numerous works depict his life and teaching with a wealth of detail as if they, themselves, were his contemporaries. All these people derive their knowledge of him from the Gospels and Epistles alone as there is no other source of evidence about him.

Most of us have, probably, come across those country padres and their like who pour scorn on those who doubt the story of Jesus and their unwillingness to rely completely on the authencity of the Gospels, their inspiration and so forth. For these people, of course, more zealous than intelligent, the existence of Jesus can be proved as easily as that of Napoleon or King Henry VIII. They wither with their contempt those who timidly assert that the story is full of legends and may not be true in all its detail, and that the sacred writings have been probably manipulated to make it appear so. We are not concerned in this article with such witnesses. They are misleading as far as the earnest seeker after truth is concerned.

Nobody can arrive at a reasonable opinion on any subject unless both sides of the question have been carefully sifted, and this is precisely what the religious enthusiast never do. In the case of the Gospels, those who have studied it carefully with an open mind admit that complete reliance cannot be placed on them. It is evident that they were written long after the events they record and by people who certainly were not eye witnesses of what is recorded. At must, they were written by people who may have known some of the disciples of Jesus and at whose dictation they wrote. Even this is extremely doubtful.

However that may be, it is on this ground alone that many, while admitting that most of events recorded in these

Gospels are legendary and finely embroidered, there are others, they say, which strike one as being original and true and could not have been invented by the writers whoever they may have been. On this ground they are inclined to believe that such a person as Jesus existed, though they do not think he was a God. They believe that he was a religious reformer far in advance of his time and that it is quite possible that he met with a violent death at the hands of the orthodoxy of those days. It must be admitted that the question of originality has not now the force it once had. It is pointed out with a good deal of force that assuming that Jesus was a man. however gifted, it is only a logical proposition to say that if it was possible for him to have propounded certain doctrines, it is humanly possible for some other men to have propounded them in his name. It is simply idle to insist, as his followers generlly do, that his disciples were all ignorant men.

Those who contend that the Gospels might have been written by clever people well versed in the ethical and moral teachings of their times point out that there is nothing unique in the teaching of Jesus. His ethical doctrines were no higher than those of Epictetus, Socrates, Gautoma Bhudda or Confucius, and the character of his person could easily be drawn from such persons as Zoraster, Rabbi Hillel, Apollonius of Tyana and hundreds of other religious teachers who preached lofty ethical doctrines long before Jesus.

It must, indeed, be admitted that there is nothing original in the teaching of Jesus as even the phrases and sentiments he is reported to have expressed were common to the priests of Isis, Serapis, Apollo, Mithra, Ahura-Mazda and Jahaveh. It is to day common knowledge that the Golden Rule was enunciated by Confucius centuries before Christ. Mr. Hippolyte Rodrigues, as many others also have done, seventy years ago told us in his "*Les Origines du Sermon de la Montagne*" that the Sermon of the Mount is almost completely anticipated in Jewish Literature and many scholars have affirmed that even the Lord Prayer is also Jewish and Pro-Christian in origin.

Those who maintain that there is no certainty about what Jesus actually said or not, point to the contradictory nature of his alleged utterances.

It is hard to think that such sentiments as the following were expressed by the same person:—

"Who soever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire."

"Ye fools and blind" "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

"I say unto you, Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you."

"Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city" (A city which would refuse to hear his disciple and would persecute them.")

"Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans" (The Samaritans were the Harijans of those days).

"It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs".

"Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations".

At one time he told his disciples that whosoever lives by the sword shall perish by it and before the beginning of his passion ordered his disciples to carry swords as they would meet with resistance!

To the Samaritan woman at the well he declared that it was not necessary to go to the temple at Jerusalem to pray nor to the mountains or any where, but anyone could pray to God in his heart. At another time he is said to have founded a Church. Such contradictions abound in the Gospels.

Those eminent scholars like Drews, Smith, Schmeidel, Robertson, Couchoud, Dujardin, Rylands, to mention but a few who deny that Jesus ever existed point to the significant silence of the existence of Jesus in contemporary writers. They also contend that the Jesus cult was known and practised long before the advent of Christianity. This, as a matter of fact, can be traced in the mysteries and mysticism of such creeds as Gnosticism, Mithraism, Judaism and others which prevailed in Asia Minor long before Christianity came into existence. All scholars dwell on the legendary nature of the Gospel narratives regarding the birth and resurrection of Jesus. Mr. J. M. Robertson in his "A Short Story of Christianity, Watts, & Co., pages 12 and 13 draws attention to the manner the vigil, arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus as narrated in the Gospels. Mr. Robertson says that this is evidently not a narrative of real events which actually took place but a dramatic description of a mystery-play. Says Mr. Robertson :—"Anyone who will attentively follow the account of the Last Supper and its sequelae in the first gospel will see it reproduces a series of closely-continuous dramatic scenes, with no room given to such considerations as would naturally occur to a narrator of real events, and no sign of perception of the extreme improbability of the huddled sequence set forth.....Jesus is made to take the Passover after dark; then to go forth in the night for no reason given with his disciples, who sleeps while he prays; then to be captured in the darkness by a multitude; then to be taken straight to the high priest 'where the scribes and elders were gathered together.' These now proceed, in the dead of the night, 'to seek false witnesses' and 'many false witnesses' come, to no purpose, till 'afterward' come two who testify to this words about destroying the temple; whereupon he is judged and buffeted, and the night's history ends with the episode of Peter's denial. No hint is ever given of anything said or done or felt by Jesus on the way from the Supper to the Mount, or in the interval between the Jewish and the Roman trials."

Readers who are interested in the subject would do well to read Mr. L. Gordon Rylands "Did Jesus Ever Live", Watts & Co. Mr. Rylands in a small work of 117 pages discusses the problem in a masterly manner. He stoutly maintains that Jesus never existed. One of the most interesting chapters of his book is No. vi "Jesus in relation to Evil Demons".

Mr. Rylands tells us that the prevailing beliefs before the time of Jesus were the activities of demons. They were believed to waylay the souls in their passage from Earth to Heaven and few or no soul escaped them. Jesus is believed to have vanquished them. Would this explain the intense joy of Christians

about Jesus? All their hymns and prayers express great jubilation at the mighty work of Jesus against the Devil and he is hailed as the Saviour of Mankind. Simple atonement for the so-called Original Sin would hardly cause such Joy. It is remarkable that the object of Baptism, as "Louis Coulange" (who was a Roman Catholic priest) tells us in his "Life of the Devil" is to exorcise the Devil.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

"THE KORAN—WHAT DOES IT TEACH?"

In its issue for January 1935, *Reason* publishes an article entitled "The Koran —what does it teach?" by Ima Rebel. That it could have found access in the pages of any journal, much less *Reason*, is significant of the lack of requisite knowledge of the Koran. On reading the article one comes to the conclusion that it is more the product of an incoherent and spasmodic study of the pages of the Koran than of wilful misrepresentation of facts. Or it might as well be a mere reflection, a re-hast of the writings of European Orientalists with the exception that they express themselves in more dignified language.

A Muslim does not deny any one the right to criticise the teachings of the Koran. What he does not like is when criticism degenerates into flippant ridicule.

The main faults, besides the minor ones mentioned casually, which the writer of the article under discussion has enuciated, can be briefly stated as follows:—

1. That the Koran enjoins upon its followers to kill non-Muslims if they refuse to accept Islam.

2. That the Islamic conception of Paradise is sensual and that Hell, according to the Koran is a place of torment and torture.

3. That the Koran is full of inconsistencies.

4. That the Koran does not accord equality of rights to both the sexes and that it "sanctions slavery, polygamy and concubinage."

Because of lack of space at my disposal, I cannot deal adequately with all the misconceptions with which the article bristles. I cannot for the same self-reason go into the causes of those misconceptions either. I would, therefore, refer the reader for a further fuller study of the teachings of the Koran to "The Translation of the Holy Koran by Mahomed Ali, Lahore, 1934. Even so, there is one grave mistake which all the adverse critics of the Koran make. They get a warped conception of its teaching because they never study its various verses in their proper setting; because they tear them from their context. It is easy to understand what harm can be done by such a practice. The writer of the article in "Reason" is no exception to this.

Let us take his objections one by one.

The Koran enuciates a principle in Chap. 2 V. 256. It reads:—

"There is no compulsion in religion." It is full of statements showing that belief

in this or that religion is a person's own concern. We read: "We have shown him the way, he may be thankful or unthankful" (76:3 ; "If you do good, you will do good for your own souls: and if you do evil, it shall be for them" (17.7).

These verses should suffice to convince my readers that the teachings of the Koran champion freedom of thought. No doubt there have been wars in Islamic history. Why were they waged? Not to compel the unbelievers, non-Muslims to accept Islam or the Koran at the point of the sword. They were urged as a close study of wars of the Prophet and his successors would show, to establish religious freedom, to stop all religious persecution, to protect the houses of worship of all religions, synagogues, temples and mosques. The Koran expresses this idea in the following words:- "And had there not been God's repelling some people by others, there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which God's name is much remembered (22:40)" It was in self-defence, after having been mercilessly persecuted by their compatriots for over a period of 13 years, that theProphet and his companions unseathed their sword. It is to this that the Quran refers in "Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and God is well able to assist them; those who have been expelled from their houses without a just cause except that they say, Our Lord is God (22:39 and 40). And fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, and do not exceed; for God does not love those who exceed limits (2:190)".

In the Koran fighting is only allowed either in self defence or to save a persecuted community form powerful oppressors or against religious persecution. It has to be stopped as soon as any of the three conditions ceases to exist. The Koran says: "But if they desist, then God is Forgiving, Merciful. And fight with them until there is no persecution (2: 192 and 193)." The Koran also fosters peace even at the risk of being deceived by the enemy. It says:—"And if they incline to peace, do those incline to it and trust in God.....and if they intend to deceive thee, then surely God is sufficient for thee (8: 61-62)."

The waging of wars on unbelievers is a myth pure and simple. The condition which governed the decision for fighting by the Muslim is explicitly embodied in the words of the Koran: "and fight with those who fight with you (2: 190)." From the above remarks it should, I believe, be possible for my readers to understand that a spasmodic study of the Koran can do more harm than good. I would now show how distorted the judgment of Mr. Ima Rebel has become simply because he has isolated two verses from the context. He refers to Chapter 9, V. S. which reads: "And when sacred months are passed, kill those who join other Gods with God whereon you shall find them and seize them, beseige them and lie in wait for them in any ambush; but if they *repent* and keep up prayer and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way." I have underlined the word "repent" because the correspondent of "Reason" has for it "convert" which word is not to be found in the original text. As is evident, the sense conveyed by "repent" is contradistinct from "convert." As a matter of fact, it is in the word "Repent" that the key to an understanding of this verse lies. Just substitute "convert" for "repent

and the entire sense of the verse is changed.

Besides, he has missed the point of the verse because he has torn the verse from its context. If this verse was to be read along with the preceeding and succeeding ones, it would be clear as the barn-door that the persons spoken in this verse are those who repeatedly violated their agreements and inflicted severe losses on Muslims by treachery. This verse, as Ima Rebel would have us believe, is not to be applied against all unbelievers.

If the Muslims or any other nation for that matter wants to exist, it has to punish such offenders.

The Koran, it will interest my readers to know, encourages peaceful relations with non-Muslims. It says "God does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of your religion and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly...(60 : 8)."

As to the Koranic conceptions of Paradise and Hell, it is strange to find what grotesque views are regnant about them. It is mostly because their knowledge is based on hearsay and because they have failed to remember that the things of the life here-after can only be described to us in language of the concept formed by us. A thing which We have not seen can be visualised by us through the help of such concepts as may resemble it. The Koran knew that people would make and as a matter of fact had been making the mistake of taking the description of the life here-after literally. It was for this reason that it remarked "A parable of the garden which the righteous are promised: there are rivers of water (49-15)." Thus the description of paradise as a garden with rivers flowing in it is only a parable.

It makes it clear when it says that the blessings of paradise cannot be conceived in this life and are not, therefore, things of this world, in the verse "No soul knows what is hidden for it of that which will refresh the eyes (32 : 17)."

The Prophet Mahammad is reported to have said. "God says, I have prepared for my righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard and what the mind of man has not conceived."

The truth of the matter is that ideas of bliss and happiness could only be conveyed to us through the help of ideas familiar to us. One can never form the real conception of the Islamic paradise if one took literally all the words used to portray it. The Islamic paradise is not sensual.

As to hell, the Koran says that it is a place of correction, not of torture; it is a place of purification, not of revengeful torment. It is a place where those who did not utilize the opportunities afforded them in their earthly life are made fit for spiritual advancement. It is for this reason that the Koran describes hell as "Maula" meaning friend (57. 15), as "Umm" meaning mother (101. 9). I need not emphasize the functions of a friend and a mother in the life of an individual.

In order to appreciate the real significance of the words describing life in hell of those who wasted their opportunities in this life, we have to remember the inevitable law under which every one tastes of what he has done. The words used by Quaran to describe are no more terrible

and painful than the knife of a surgeon who has to ampulate a leg to save the life of his patient. With all the fearfulness conveyed to us by various expressions on the idea of hell, God says that all men have been created for mercy. He says "Except those on whom thy Lord has Mercy and for this did he create them (11 : 119)."

Another fault which is formed by its adverse critics with the Koran is that it is full of inconsistencies and is "an incongruous patch work." H. Herschfield in his "New Researches" says "The Koran is unapproachable as regards convincing power, eloquence and even composition. "Has ever" an incongruous patch work" in the history of mankind succeeded, to quote again from Hischfield's "New Researches", in leading a people more rapidly to civilization than was the Arabs through Islam"? The following quotations from Dr. Steingass's article contributed to the Dictionary of Islam by Hughes should come as a rude shock to "Ima Rebel."

"But if we consider the variety and heterogenousness of the topics on which the Koran touches, uniformity of style and diction can scarcely be expected; on the contrary, it would appear to be strangely out of place. Let us not forget that in this book, there is given a complete code of creeds and morals as well as of the law based thereform. There are also the foundations laid for every institution of an extensive common wealth, for instruction, for the administration of Justice. for military organization, for the finances for a most careful legislation for the poor, all built up on the belief in the one God who holds man's destinies in His hand. When so many important objects are concerned the standard of excellence by which we have to gauge the composition of the Koran as a whole must needs vary with the matter treated upon in each particular case. Sublime and chaste, when the supreme truth of God's unity is to be proclaimed; appealing in high-pitched strains to the imagination of a practically gifted people whom the eternal consequences of man's submission to God's holy will, or of rebellion against it are pictured. Touching in its simple, almost crude, earnestness when it seeks again and again encouragement or consolation for God's messanger and a solemn warning to those to whom he has been sent in the histories of the old. The language of the Koran adopts itself to the exigencies of every day life when this every day life in its private and public bearings, is to be brought in harmony with the fundamentals of the new dispensation.

The last but not the least concerns with the evergreen objection that the Koran sanctions slavery, polygamy and concubinage and also that it does not give equal rights to both the sexes. Here, again "Ima Rebel" is to producing the views of European Orientalists. To say that the Koran sanctions polygamy is to state a half-truth. It does sanction it, but where and when? Besides it is a sanction, not an obligation. It sanctions it, but does not encourage it. Monogamy is the norm in Islam. In every society there do crop up exigencies, for instance as a result of war which decimates the male population, as a result of unexpected illness developing into an incurable disease of the wife that the law of polygamy is enuciated by the Koran comes into existence for the protection of widows and children in the one case, and for maintaining a high standard of morality in the other.

As to the equality of rights, the Koran says "women have rights similar to those against them in a just manner (2 : 228)." This verse establishes clearly the rights of women against their husbands to be similar to those the husbands have against their wives. It is wrong to say that Islam gives no right of divorce to the wife. No where in the Quran wife is described as "pollution" as Mr. Ima Rebel would have us believe. He has mistranslated the words, should I say? to suit his purpose. The word in the verse is AZAN meaning harmful and not pollution.

The Koran makes no difference between man and woman in the bestowal of reward of the good he or she does. It says: "I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other (3 ; 144)." Both can rise to the same eminence morally and spiritually. It says "God has prepared for them (men and women) forgiveness and a mighty reward (33 : 35)." On the material side, too, we find no difference except what nature requires for its own ends, A woman can earn, inherit and own property and does of it just as a man can,

The Koran does not sanction slavery or concubinage. Ima rebel has confused ownership of war with slavery. As to concubinage I find no verse in the Koran sanctioning it. Mr. Ima Rebel would excuse me if I say that he, as before, is making the grave mistake of regarding mistake of regarding the practices of some palaces in India or outside as based on the verses in the Koran.

ABDUL MAJID. M. A. B. T.

[We are sure that our readers will feel grateful to Mr. Abdul Majid for giving us an insight into some of the most interesting verses in the Koran. It is a pity that, except to learned Mahomedans, this book is little read and much less understood by the general public.]

ED. REASON.

IF WE SAW GOD!

An article in a recent issue of the *Methodist Recorder* asks, "have we ever thought what would happen if men saw God?" Well, what, in the Christian view, ought to happen? Christians are all the time singing of their desire to be at home with God, they invite the public to come to a revival meeting to spend an hour with God, they talk of eventually dwelling with God, they say they see the finger of God, or the hand of God in particular events, and then a leading religious journal asks what would happen if we ever met him, and doesn't appear to be overjoyed at the prospect! What are they alarmed about? If I were a Christian and believed all I said—(but perhaps in that case I should not believe half what I said) I should look forward to the meeting with considerable joy, I should regard it as realization of all I had longed for. I should think it would be the end of my troubles, and the beginning of an existence made up of complete happiness. But the Christian does not seem quite so certain about it. He wants to put off that meeting as long as he can; and if a doctor to tell him that

he would soon be meeting his God, he would probably suggest to his medical man that a specialist should be called in to see if the two of them could not put off the meeting indifinitely. No insolvent debtor dreads facing his creditor so much as the Christian—all his hymns and expressed desire to the contrary—fears meeting his God. He has even a verse in the Bible to back up his reluctance. for that tells him that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Dead ones are harmless enough.

* * *

Gods And Ghosts.

Now I cannot understand, in the absence of certain condititions (I will name them presently), why anyone should dread meeting either a God or a ghost. Even when I was young I was anxious to meet a ghost. They seemed interesting things, and quite harmless. In fact one could see through them. At least I could see through them; but I noticed that it was just those who could not see through ghosts who were afraid of meeting them. But for myself I would just as soon spend an hour with a real ghost chatting about things, swapping experiences, and enquiring after departed friends as I would with an ordinary solid human being. And I have a strong conviction that any normal ghost would be much happier in my company, where he would be treated with ordinary decency, instead of being relegated to a dark room, draughty passage-ways and ruined houses, as is the custom. I do not wonder that ghosts are such infrequent visitors. They should be smiled, not shivered at They should be given the most comfortable arm-chairs and not confined to gliding up and down passage-ways, or making spasmodic appearances n dark rooms.

And as to Gods, why should any person be afraid of meeting one? If he is our father what reason has a man to fear meeting his father—that is if the father is decent, and the son has done nothing to be ashamed of? Of course, there are fathers who are ashamed to face their children, and their are children who are afraid to face their parents. But, other things equal, I see no greater justification to fear meeting gods than there is justification for the silly fear of meeting ghosts. And in this matter I feel convinced that both gods and ghosts are treated unjustly. For ghosts evidently like human company; they seek it. A ghost with no audience to watch its capers would soon give up manifesting itself. Ghosts are most companionable; even those who shunned human company while alive, have shown an eagerness for it when dead. And as to Gods their dependence upon human company is complete. Hundreds and hundreds of Gods have vanished altogether because no one has tried to meet them, had no desire to live with them, and never invited a God to spend an hour with then.

* * *

Slandering God.

I think I can discern why a Christan should wonder what happen to him if he met God. The believer has a deal to answer for, and even the patience of God must have come near to breaking point when he considers what has been said. The believer and I are on diffrent grounds. He has said lots of things about God and I have not. He has said things about God which I said about an ordinary man would have exposed him to an action for slander. The believer wrote a book that was filled with bad science, atrocious ethics, and fabulous history, and then attributed its author-

ship to God. He said that God sent the European War because the people had forgotten him. He told the mother who was weeping over a dead child, or the wife who had lost her mate that God had taken child and husband from them. He calmly declared that earthquakes and epidemics, and death-dealing storms, were acts of God, and he had the impudence to actually insert this slander in legal codes He said that God moved people not to travel in a certain ship, but that God also left the other people to drown. It was the Christian, not the Atheist, who said these things of one whom he at the same time declared was the father of us all. All the Atheist asked for was some evidence that God had acted in the fashion described; he said that the principle of assuming an accused person to be innocent until he was proved guilty ought to apply to Gods as well as to men, and that the onus of proof rested with those who brought the accusation. The Atheist believes that even a God should have a "square deal." But when I look back at what the Christian has said about God, I am not surprised at his wondering what will happen if ever he and God meet. I do not know whether the Christian will ever see the hand of God, but if he does I shall not be surprised if soon after he feels his boot. The Christian has good grounds for thinking that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The Atheist can face the possibility without fear and with a considerable degree of curiosity. He would have a number of questions to ask, question which he has put time after time to those who claim to represent God, but which have never yet been answered. And if these were answered as Christians say they will be answered, by sending the questioner to hell, then a self-respecting Atheist might well reply that between heaven and hell the difference is entirely one of geographical location.

* * *

What might happen.

But it is just possible that, if there is a God, he might meet these questions in a more manly way than Christians think he would. He would probably recognize that the Atheist is only using the intelligence that God had given him as best he could, and that if he did not use that intelligence in the right way, then it was Gods own fault that he did not give the Atheist a more satisfactory mental outfit. After all, the Atheist might say to God, "I am, oh Lord, as you made me. If you intended me to be different from what I am the fault is yours that I am what I am. You must either have intended me, or you have bungled me; and in either case the responsibility rests with you. If heaven is peopled with your successes hell is filled with your failures, and the question of 'why, if you wanted a better world, you did not make a better one, is a perfectly relevant one, and one that men in all the civilized ages of the world have asked without receiving an answer.'"

But it is likeiy that if God is up to the level of some of our best men, he may act differently from that pictured by the Christian. I can then imagine him saying:—

My son, you have asked me questions and I cannot answer them now. But it is within your right to ask, and one day you may hear the reply. For the present I ask to believe that in all things I acted for the best, and if I have made mistakes they were not made deliberately.

Meanwhile, of all my earthly children you are the most welcome here. You and your kind have given me the least trouble. have asked for nothing, and if you have not beslavered me with fulsome praise, you have not loaded with undeserved blame. You have denied that I did anything, which relieved me of the responsibility for everything. You have withheld your praise for the same reason that you have refused to blame. You have been just because you have been impartial; you have been impartial because you have been just. You have not accused me of criminal neglect towards my own children; you have not said that it was I who have set nations by the ears, merely to gain a larger circle of worshippers. You have not said that I ordered old women to be burned or drowned because they had intercourse with the Devil, nor that I decreed the slaughter of many thousands because they could not believe the ridiculous stories my followers circulated about me. You did not credit me with being the author of the good that is in the world, but neither did you make me responsible for the evil. You merely asked for evidence before you expressed an opinion and passed sentence. And now you have questioned me with your head up your eyes open, and not with the dumb pitiful appeal of a dog begging for a bone.

I bear you no malice. and you have the full freedom of my domain. Sit thou on my right hand, and together we will judge those myriads who have called themselves my followers, whose compliments have been implied insults; whose every act of praise has been a disguised request for a dole, and whose conception ot the human nature I created is that of something that can be led to decency only by a bribe, or frightened into it with a threat. I could not trust them to deal justly with you, but I think I may trust you to advise justly concerning them; and it may well be that one of the first favours you will ask of me will be that of dealing with these followers of mine as liberally as possible.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

In the Free Thinker.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To The Editor "Reason".

Sir,

Since Mr. Cedric Dover's article, republished in your March issue mentions me, I hope you will allow me space for the following remarks.

When he says that he knows of 'no work published in India that attains the standard of a thorough modern study' he is evidently referring to works in English. Considering how small a proportion of the population English books can reach, this cannot be considered a great loss, apart from the fact that there are excellent books in English for those who can read them. It is propaganda through the vernaculars that is much more useful in India. In fact, I started my propaganda work with a pamphlet

in English fourteen years back, but soon saw that it would not be much good. About the vernaculars, your contributor has probably no first-hand knowledge though he mentions my Marathi monthly. I may mention therefore that besides my monthly, I have a small 12-anna book in Marathi on Birth Control, which is now in its sixth edition and was first issued in 1923. It gives all up-to-date information on the subject, besides dealing with the theory in all its aspects. It has also been translated into Hindi and Gujerathi.

Besides this, I am also running a Birth Control Clinic, first started in 1922, which is being increasingly taken advantage of by all communities, except perhaps Mahommedans, who are in the grip of the purdah system. I make it a boast that I am supplying birth-control appliances at prices at which only propagandists can sell them and which make birth-control possible at Re. 1 per month on an average, with the most effective means known to-day. As Mrs. How-Martyn saw for herself when she paid me a visit. I consider it also a special merit that I offer birth-control advice to anybody who asks for it, without any restrictions.

R. D. KARVE.



REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the people of this country." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, The Editor "Reason," 3. Morland Road, Byculla, Bombay. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India. 41, Queen's Road, Bombay 2.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

A Parsi reader of our journal says that he is rather surprised that we found it interesting to comment in our last issue on the views of a Parsi correspondent of the Parsi Young Men's Association regarding some quaint religious and social customs of his community. He seems to think that there is nothing to be wondered at that the Parsi community is still very backward in this respect. It is a fallacy, common to many, he thinks, that because many Parsis have adopted a Western mode of living to imagine that they have all become wonderfully advanced intellectually. It is not living in superb mansions, dressing fashionably, driving in costly cars and attending Europeanized social functions which indicate a real intellectual culture. He is, perhaps, right in

remarking that many of those who live this kind of life are the fortunate inheritors of rich ancestors who, themselves, made money mostly in commercial pursuits.

* * *

He believes that it is precisely, among these people, even more so than among the less fortunate members of the community, that a good deal of conservatism, narrow-mindedness and stupid superstitions are to be found. They cannot help it, he says, because their intellectual faculties are still lagging.

As regards the claim that the Parsis are better educated than any other community in India, he admits that it is so. But he puts this down to mere college education, and the object of taking university degrees and other academical distinctions is merely from a professional point of view and not for the sake of knowledge. Quite a fair number have a deep knowledge but take little interest in sound intellectual culture and are therefore unable to draw the inevitable inferences which sound knowledge alone can enable one to do.

* * *

Commenting on the grave communal riots which happened in many parts of India during the last Mohorram festivals and on the recent Kurrachi incident, The Times of India in a leaderette in its issue of the 18th April last, rightly deplores all these religious excesses and pleads for religious tolerance. "Recent disorders", says the Times, emphasise the need for a concerted attempt by leaders of public opinion to bring home to the masses the evil of religious intolerance"

The New Statesman, published in London, commenting on these religious disturbances and acts of fanaticism in India, also advises "Secularism" as a remedy. What is "Secularism" but "Rationalism"? And yet when it suits their purpose these high brow papers affect to treat Rationalism with disdain! How is it possible to get "leaders of public opinion" to preach religious tolerance to the masses when it is precisely these people who are wont to pass as very pious people before the eyes of the masses. The recent Kurrachi incident showed this clearly enough when all these people were very ready to condemn the Government and not one of them condemned the act of that fanatic who was executed.

* * *

Here in India, as the late Queen Victoria in her diary says of the people Egypt, it is the pride of every individual to boast that he is a staunch supporter of religion. To be called religious is a high social ambition with most people here. Small wonder that such people affect to treat Rationalism with contempt. Were they intelligent, far sighted and less egoistic in their outlook they would have recognized long ago the potentialities of Rationalism and the power for good it is likely to have in a country like India.

If people who have the national cause at heart were to realize this, they would join the Rationalist Association of India by the thousand. It is a hopeful sign that His Enlightened Highness The Gaekwad of Baroda has recognised this and is doing his utmost to promote Rationalism in his State. He has even invited us to deliver a few lectures on Rationalism in his State which unfortuntely we have not been able to do as yet

* * *

Who, after reading a lengthy letter in the Statesman of Calcutta of the 31st of March last, (which we reproduce

in this issue) will hesitate to say that only a sound Rationalism is capable of curing the religious madness prevalent in this country ? It is strange that any religion can have the effect of "Cannabis Indica" on the brain as the religion of that correspondent seems to have on him A religion which is intolerant of criticism to that extent is very dangerous indeed Any religion that acts as a deliraint on the minds of the ignorant and the semi-educated should be dreaded.

* * *

(Under the heading "Revolting Superstition" The Bombay Chronicle of the 26th April last writes:—"While we entirely disapprove of Pandit Ramchandra Sharma's fast, (He fasted as a protest against the slaying of some goats as a religious sacrifice by some Hindus at Kalyan) it is a pity that despite it and the efforts in other ways by other persons to prevent it, the sacrifice did take place and goats and fouls were slaughtered it is said in their thousands. To sacrifice innocent animals to appease the wrath of a god or goddess is a revolting superstition. Such superstition can be eradicated not merely by eleventh hour propaganda by fasting and other forms of Satyagrah, but by systematic and continuous rationalist propaganda against every inhuman or irrational belief or custom"

While we cordially agree with this sentiment, we would like to ask the Editor of the Chronicle what has he to say against the practice of a certain creed which enjoins the slaughter of millions of goats and thousands of cows every year.on the occasion of a well known festival. Is not this also a horrible superstition ?

* * *

The Anthropological Society of Bombay would seem to possess much leisure and patience to have wasted time in listening to a diatribe against modern knowledge by a Mr. R. K. Dadachanji. This gentleman is reported to have read a paper before the Society "on the truth of the ancient Platonic and Eastern religious theory of the soul as distinguished from the mind in the light of modern scientific psychology and psychophysics."

Though we are students of psychology and believe we keep fairly abreast of what is going on in this department of knowledge, we have not come across a single psychologist of repute who claims that phsychology has recognized the Platonic and Eastern religious theory of the existence of the soul.

* * *

According to that theory the soul exists as a distinct entity from the body which it quits at death. Has this mysterious existence been ever demonstrated ? What is the soul ? Mr. Dadachanji who seems to be a credulous sort of a person, perfectly innocent of what modern knowledge teaches on the subject, would be hard put to tell us what he understands by "Soul" and how psychology proves that it exists. The belief in the soul is, of course, a religious one based on erroneous ideas of the phenomena of life, and no scientific body in the West would waste time in discussing the theory of its existence.

* * *

Three books of The Thinker's Library Series issued by Messrs Watts & Co, London, for The Rationalist Press Association, are of outstanding merit, viz, "Letters on Reasoning" by John. M.

Robertson, "Religion of The Open Mind", by A. Gowans White, "Social Record of Christianity, by Joseph McCabe. In The Forum Series, Messrs Watts & Co have also issued a booklet on "Darwinism And Its Critics" by Prof: Sir Arthur Keith M. D., F. R. S. who smashes those ill-informed critics of Darwinism like Sir Ambrose Fleming, Mr. Arnold Lunn, Mr. G K Chesterton, Captain Bernard Acworth, and the Jesuit Father Woodlock. The last named, Sir Arthur dismisses in a few words as he considers him "an ignorant priest" who meddles in such scientific questions.

Mr. Mc Cabe's book is an illuminating one regarding the failure of Christianity in the Social sphere.

* * *

On the 12th of April last, Lord Marley, Chief Opposition Whip in the House of Lords, during a debate on China held by the London Lyceum Club Debating Society, said that the missionaries had secured their footing in China by "one of the most fraudulent international acts the world has ever known" This, he declared, was a treaty which was written in French and Chinese. It was drawn up, he says, by a Roman Catholic priest and the agreement of the Chinese had been secured that the French version should be the definitive language in the interpretation of it. A clause was included in the French version which did not exist in the Chinese version to the effect that missionaries should be entitled to hold land in China.

Despite the evident absurdity of it, there is still a number of men and women of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, who seriously imagine that they are going to convert the world in obedience to a so-called divine command in the Gospels. Their efforts in Africa, India and China have, so for, been a dismal failure. It is among the half-starved and down trodden classes that they have succeeded in making a few converts, of the bread and butter type, and it is by means of such social works as providing hospitals dispensaries and schools that they have attracted these people. These missionaries are always well provided. The Government helps them and silly old women, with more money than brains, are always found to provide them with money to carry on their work. As far as India is concerned they may keep on wasting their time as no or few Mahomedans will ever become converted to Christianity and the Hindus of the better classes only treat them with tolerance and indifference. In Africa most observers agree that these Missionaries are a nuisance and that they generally succeeded in spoiling the natives that are unfortunate enough to full under their sway.

* * *

The debate held under the auspices of the Rationalist Association of Indian and the Rationalist Youth League at the Blavatsky Lodge last month proved a great success. More than three hundred persons took a great interest in it. The discussion was "Whether Science or Religion has done more for progress."

* * *

Members will oblige by sending contributions to "Reason". It is most difficult to carry on the way things are going at present. Why this apathy and indifference?

* *

The two articles by Mr. M. V. V. K. Rangachari. B. A. of Cocanada

on "Relativity of Ethical values in Bhagavad-Gita" published in "Reason" in the December 1934 issue and that of March 1935 have been reproduced by the theistic journal Kalyan Kalpataru of U. P. in its annual Gita Number.

Mr. Rangachari, who is doing important work in South India in the cause of Rationalism, is at present working on the Gita and the so-called Sanatana Dharma based on it.

Mr, Rangachari has the advantage of being a learned Sanskrit Scholar and his articles on Hinduism are always read with interest.

NATURE IN BHAGAVAD-GITA.

The place of God (Purushottama) in the Gita is a complex problem. We are grateful to Basanta Kumar Chatterjee for the comparative study on the subject with reference to the Upanishada and the commentaries of the well-known Acharyas. (See Kalyana-Kalpataru, February 1935, pp 285 to 290.) It has been shown that Sankara, Ramnuja, Madhava, and Sridhara have each prepounded a different type of cosmology and explained the position of Iswera, Brahma or God in relation to the universe in conformity with his own system. That the Gita harmonises the preexisting systems of Indian Philosophy is well recognised. We find support for the theory of atomic-agglomeration (Arambha = vada) as when we read: "Matra sparsastu Kaunteya sitashna sukha duhkha dah: (Gita, 11, 14, the contacts of matter, C, Kaunteya, giving rise to cold, heat, pleasure, pain &c), for the doctrine of illusion (Vivarta-vada) which is expressly mentioned as in: "Mama maya duratyaya" (My power of illusion is impenetrable), and also for the law of evolution (Parinama-vada) as when it derives from the unmanifest-nature (Avyakta-Prakriti) the eight manifested-natures (Vyakta-prakrities, Gita, VII, 4), the modifications or Vikaras (Gita XIII, 6, 7) and the Gunas or qualities (XIV). The grasp of the Gita is thus encyclopeadic, covering the atomism of the Nyaya Vaisoshika schools, pointing the road to Buddhism and allied thought, as well as the Maya-vada of the Vedanta school, alongside the evolutional classifications of the Sakhya System, supplemented by the pervasive Yoga-discipline. In fact, the Gita reproduces *en bloc* most of the vocabulary of the Sutras, of Badarayana or Vyasa (Uttara Mimamsa) Gaimink (Purvamimamsa) Gatama (Nyaya) Kanads (Vaiseshika) Kapila (Sankhya) and Patanjali (Yoga). The profound respect that attaches to Gita is in the main due to the fact that while incorporating the divergent principles of the differing systems of philosophy, it epitomises the knowledge derivable from the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Sutras.

The Gita enjoins selection from among the Vedas. It has no regard for the mere logician exercising himself on the letter of the texts (Vedavadaratah, 11, 42) whose flowery speech it condemns as foolish. Just as a tank in a place covered all over with water, even so are the Vedas useful to an enlightened man.

(Yavanardha udapane sarvatah samplu-dedake, tavan sarveshu vedeshu Brahmanasya vijanatah, II, 46). The Gita recognises: the fact all-too-patent that Srutis and the Smritis are manifold and divergent. (Rishibhir bahudha gitam chandibhir vividhaih pridhak, XIII, 5). Amid the clash of argument, and the the conflict of doctrine, the Gita leads the way to respectful understanding, and helpful assimilation, Perhaps its service lay in the ability to find place for Iswera and rescue Kapila Sankhya and allied philosophical thought from its logical if atheistic implications.

Even Gaimini's Purva Mimamsa does not strictly require the presence of God. The works themselves produce their fruit. "For the moral government of the world, according to Gaimini, no Lord is wanted (The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, Max Muller, p. 211) "Gaimini would not make the Lord responsible for the injustice that seems to prevail in this world, and hence reduced everything to cause and effect and saw in the inequalities of the world the natural result of the continued action of good and evil acts. This surely was not atheism, but rather was it an attempt to clear the Lord from those charges of cruelty or undue partiality which have so often been brought against Him." (ibid) In clearing God of the taint of injustice, Gaimini is apparently more loyal than the king, and more divine than God. Karma the religious counterpart of the principle of causality rules supreme. Good works like sacrifice (Yegna) charity (dana) and austerites (tapah) produce automatically their fruits.

Kapila-Samkhya saw through the futility of postulating an Iswera, who could not be held responsible for the production of effects from causes, The Samkhya Sutras expressly declare that the reward of every work done does not depend on any ruler of the world. "The works themselves are working on for ever more" Max Muller's Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p. 330). "If it were otherwise, we should have to ascribe the creation of the world with all its suffering to a Lord who is nevertheless supposed to be loving and gracious". (ibid). It is only the self deluded by Ahamkara egoism) imagines that he is the operator. All action are produced by the qualities of nature only. (Of. Gita, III, 27, Prakritch kriyamani gunaih karmani sanvasah, Ahamkara vimudhatma kartahamiti manyato.) Again:

Sadrusam chestates vasyah prakriter
gnanavanapi Prakritim yanti bhutani
nigrha kim karishyati (Gita, III, 33)

(Even the man of knowledge acts up to his nature, all beings follow nature. Restraint avails not.)

True knowledge discloses that it is nature alone that acts. All else is actionless.

Prakrityaivacha karmani kriyamanni
sarvasah Yah pasyati tathatmanam
akartaram sapasyati (Gita, XIII, 30)

He who sees that matter truly performs all actions, and the Self as being actionless, he sees the truth.)

"Nature will constrain thee" (Prakriti stram niyekshyati, XVIII, 59) is the soundest warning ever uttered. Samkhya endows nature (prakriti) with a reality, which entangles Purushas (the selves) which are a plurality. Viveka (discrimination) enables a self to become independent, (Kaivalya). The Yoga. Patanjalas resort to the expedient of super

imposing an Audi-Purusha (First Self). Devotion to this Purushottama is one of the modes of attaining Samadhi among the Upayas (practices) mentioned in the Sadhana Pada. thus understand why Patanja-Yoga is named Seswera-Samkhya (i. i. e. Samkhya with God). To one acquainted with the evolution of philosophical thought in the country, the Purushottama Yoga (Chapter XV) of the Gita will readily appear to be the crowning act of superimposing the Supreme Being (Aadi Purusha or Purushottama) upon the diversified cosmology of Kapila-Samkhya detailed in the two proceding chapters. If plurality of Purushas (selves) is the reproach of the Samkhya system, the hypothesis of a Supreme Self unattached to causality, and unconnected with the flow of events is not more logical. Human intelligence requires a Lord at once responsible for and unrelated to the universe.

A good deal of confusion is brought in by the free use of metaphor and personification. Nature is spoken of as the womb. "Etadyonini bhutani Sarvani tyupadharaya" (Parkriti, nature is the womb of all beings, VII, 6). Mama yonir mahod Brahma (The great Brahma is the womb, or the organ of birth, XIV S). The concepts of Brahma, and Purusha in the Gita are interesting study. Even from the layman's point of view, nature refers back to an agent weilding or possessing such nature. Power implies the potency referrable to a being. An abstract quality or nature is incomprehensible except as inherent in some concretised concept. The doctrine that a thing and its power are the same is often lost sight of. (Sakti saktimatera-bhedah . We raise the power to a point of personified dignity, lift it up to into an entity, and seek to differentiate it from the concept whose power we seek to postulate.

It has been observed (Nalyana Kalpataru, Vol, 2, p 289) that in the Upanishads also, a Being superior to Brahma is spoken of, where Brahma has been used to mean the power of God. When we speak of our nature we do not ordinarily mean anything different from ourselves. But when we deal with the concepts of divinity and his Nature, we differentiate : between Iswera and the Prakriti, or Brahma.

What is the significance of this Brahma ?"Tasam Brahma mahad yonih" (Brahma is the great organ of birth. Gita, XIV, 4). This Brahma is referred to as the high Bhuta (V, 24, Brahma-bhuteadhigatchati, goes to the eternal element'. Brahmi-stitih (the eternal element), Brahmi-stitih (the eternal state) occurs in II, 72. Brahmabhutam akalmasham (sinless, and of the eternal element) VI, 27. Brahma-bhutah, prasnnatma (XVIII, 54 merged in the eternal element, and calm in the Self; these expressions indicate that Brahama is supposed to stand for a kind of super-element above the five lower elements rather than the proper name of a Personality. Bhuta-Prakriti (material being in XIII, 35 and Jivabhutah (world of life) in XV, 7 also support the impersonal view of the concept of Brahma, as a super-sensuous principle subtler than the known elements of fire, air, water, the earth and the sky.

In the sloka : Abrahma bhuvanallokah (VIII, 16) the reference to the Brahmaloka, or the world of Brahma is more logically consistent with the stage of evolution in the order of the Brahma-life, than with a supposed upper world where Brahma sits on the Throne-

Getting rid of the figures of speech which often hinder rather than help the correct understanding of a philosophical concept, by focussing attention on non-essential analogies, we may conclude that Brahma is *per se* Nature as one sees it. To the scientist of to-day let it stand for electro-magnetic or radio-activity.

To the sages of the Gita and the Upanishads, it stood for that distant borderland between the abstract, universal, concept-ridden existenee (Tatsat) and the beginnings of the formulatlon of a concrete individualised phenemenon (the Asat.) While the former is Akshara immutable in-destructible, the latter is Kshara (destructible.)

The reference to both Kshara and Akshra as Purushau (men) is the usual practice of personification, as when a ship is called "she" and the pet animal is given the proper name of a human being. In XV, 16, the words "dvavimau purushau loke" are best translated by Dr. Besant thus: "There are two *energies* in this world", and Purusha meaning energy fits best with my thought.

Nature is the source of the principle of causality. Karya karana kartritve hetuh prakritirutyate (XIII, 21). There is no principle higher than nature (prakriti) that may explain the phenomena of the universe. If we need not lift up the veil off nature, and pry behind, as perforce we may not be able to, we have the assurance of the Bhagavad-Gita, that along with Purusha, Prakriti is the eternal twin-sister.

Prakritim Purusham chaiva vidhyanadi ubhavapi
Vikaramscha gunams- chaiva vidd
hi prakriti sambhavan (XIII, 20)

Know that nature and self, matter and spirit, are both without beginning. And know also that modifications and qualities are all born in nature.) When we seek to probe further behind, we forget that we are embarking upon the task of defining that which it is agreed on all hands should eternally remain undefinable. However imperfect in its goal, Kapila's Samkhya is the longest rope given to human understanding, and beyond the knowledge conveyed by chapters XIII and XIV in the Gita about his system, their is no higher form of knowledge. (Gnanamuttamam, XIV,1)

Is it any wonder that the Gita places Kapila as the first among the Sidhas, the foremost liberated among the sages ? Of the perfected, the Muni Kapila, Sidhanam Kapila munih (Gita. X, 26).

Cocanada, M. V. V. K. Rangachari.
13-3-1935.

THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCHES IN EUROPE.

One by one the countries of Europe are shaking off Christianity. This fact has now become so evident that the churches are talking of uniting and are doing their level best to revive the dying creed. First France discountenanced religion officially. Then came Portugal, Spain and Russia. And now it is the turn of Germany to renounce Christianity wholesale.

This growing disownment of Christianity may be said to be general in Europe, though countries like England Ireland, Italy and Czecho-Slovakia, for political ends, still continue to give State support to that creed. Even in those countries the slump against Christianity has set in in earnest as the better informed are no longer attracted by it. In England we hear daily of diminished Church attendance and the question of empty pews is sorely disturbing the confidence of the clergy. Despite their effort to stem the tide such as making Sunday observance more rigid, the service of the Broadcast to popularize religion, a more attractive form of services, less boring sermons, advertisement and a denunciation of Materialism among other things, the people keep away. While this indifference is spreading among the masses, the more enlightened are no longer interested in the supernatural claims of Christianity.

In former Catholic countries like France and Spain, great efforts are being made to re-conquer the position and to combat the apathy of the people. In France, especially, these are very noticeable due, probably, to the fact that anti-clericalism there is not as aggressive as it was before the Great War. This more tolerant attitude, one may even call it a laissez-faire policy, is put down by priests as a sure sign of return to Catholicism and this belief seems to give them great hope and courage.

While education in France is no longer in the hands of priests and nuns, the clergy is allowed much more freedom than before and a good deal of their activities, which on a strict enforcement of the present laws would be considered illegal, are quietly tolerated. Cardinal Verdier is actually one of the most popular figures in Paris.

In the rural districts, Catholicism is still pretty active and to this, doubtless, is due that such celebrations like the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes, Rogation-days and other festivals still meet with a great success in France. It is for this reason that those people who get their inspiration from religious publications are loud in asserting that religion is rapidly reviving in France and that the Great War has shown the people their grave mistake. This is not true. People who talk like this do not know the real nature of the French on religious questions. In France, people are only hostile to religion as soon as it interferes with politics. For the rest they look upon it with indifference and are not concerned with the interest the masses take in it. As regards the masses, it must be remembered that France is a country of 40 millions inhabitants and one does not expect that all these people have suddenly become free thinkers. The truth is that in France as in other countries, it is not possible to educate everybody on the same level. Many people who are now practising religion were in their young age educated by priests and nuns, and it will take time before secular

education enlightens the masses properly and lessens their priestly views on the theory of things.

In Spain, the revolt against the Church is not due altogether to the same causes as in France. The people there are far more ignorant than the masses in France, and their general tendency is for super stition. Religion, therefore, is naturally attractive to them, especially to the women. Their quarrel with the Church was mostly of a political and economic nature—a fact clear enough to the enlightened but not to the ignorant masses. In such a country a reaction in favour of religion is quite possible. The Church knows it and is actively at work, through the women, to reinstate religion. The educated, however, have lost their confidence in a Church that is justly held to have been the cause of the downfall of their country. Such by the way, is also the case in Mexico where the ruling classes have a deep aversion to Catholicism. This deep seated revolt against the Church in Catholic countries is not due, as the religionists put it, to a temporary aberration, but to a permament alienation from a Church which has been weighed and found wanting. One can safely: prophesy that it is only a question of time as education spreads to see the grip of the Church on those countries slacken more and more It may not be out of place here to remark that the alienation of Catholics from the Church is not of the same nature as the indifference of the Protestants to their Churches. Once a Catholic has severed his connection with the Church, if this severance is due to enlightenment, he ceases completely to have anything to do with it. He looks upon its teaching as pure superstition and there the matter ends. The reason for this is that the dogmas of the Catholic Church are hide bound and cannot be reconciled with modern knowledge Those of the Protestants are elastic enough to be stretched even to breaking point, to accomodate lukewarm believers. To revert to the position of the Church in Catholic countries, one must mention Italy. That country would have followed the way of France, Spain and Portugal but for the pact of Mussolini with the Pope. This dictator, who was himself a Socialist and a Rationalist, has thought fit to come to terms with the Church. Whatever may be his political motives in doing so, there is no doubt that he has done a great deal of harm to the cause of free thought and liberty of conscience by the liberal concessions he has given to the Church. By landing education in the hands of the clergy Mussolini has done incalculable harm and this act alone will retard progress, at any rate intellectual progress, for generations. This will retard the religious emancipation of that country and give a longer lease of life to the Church of Rome which has its seat in that country. However, if intellectical evolution follows a natural course, Italy, in the end, must follow the other Latin countries in repudiating a religion which has been justly recognized not to be a power for good In Czecho-Slovakia also doubtless for political ends, the Church of Rome has been officially encouraged to do very much as it likes. Already people there are groaning under its sway and they are bitterly experiencing what it is to be under a despotic power as that Church can be where it reigns supreme.

It is to day an admitted fact that the power of a creed in any country is not exactly due to the belief of the people in it. Political and economic considerations have more to do with it than its accep-

tance as a creditable doctrine. We saw this in the past during the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism.

The Northern countries of Europe, including England, adopted Protestantism not because one and all were convinced of its truth, but because their princes elected to adopt that creed. The opposite took place in countries which remained Catholic. Since then,people adhere to a creed in imtitation of the ruling power,it is interesting to see what has happened in Russia. That country decided to reject Christianity completely and adopt Atheism instead. The experiment has been a huge success despite all we hear to the contrary from interested parties, who naturally view with horror the encouragement of what they call a "godless" doctrine. The success which Russia justly claims is in the increased percentage of literary. Under the Tzar the percentage of illiteracy was 93 per cent. The people were besotted, superstitious, intemperate and ignorant. Now we hear of the opening of schools and museums every where. Education has become compulsory; people are taught the evil of superstition, and the advantage of a scientific and rational education.

It is stated that the Soviet has forcibly closed down the Churches, and that people are prevented to worship as they like This alleged interference with the liberty of conscience and freedom of thought has been strongly condemned and indignantly denounced by the religionists, and even by many Freethinkers also. As regards the religionists, they forget that they themselves adopted similar methods when they could enforce them. The Church of Rome, especially, introduced the infamous Inquisition for the purpose of enforcing its doctrines and compelling belief. No Rationalist, of course, would dream of arguing that because Christians penalized and persecuted unbelievers Russia is justified in treating Christians in a similar manner. Two moral wrongs do not make a moral right. But in our opinion,Russia is right in completely closing the religious schools. It is the duty of the State to protect the children from harmful influences. No country can ever expect to free itself from debasing and demoralizing superstitions as long as the children are educated by priests and nuns. The experiment of Russia will certainly be watched by other nations,and it is possible that in years to come if excellent results are obtained from it they will adopt it without ceremony.

As it is Germany is trying to imitate Russia though with a different aim. We hear that Hitler and his associates are trying to repudiate Christianity and introduce the old Nordic paganism to regenerate the German race. With this object in view they are also interfering with scientific and freethought associations. The whole scheme sounds idiotic enough and one can safely predict a disastral failure for this ridiculous attempt.The surprising part of it is that this Anti-Christian movement has so far met with little or no resistance. Are we to conclude from this that in Germany also people now care very little for Christianity ?

How do the pietists view this universal dissatisfaction against Christianity ? As usual they will tell us that it causes them no misgivings and they are sure that in the end Christianity will triumph as it has done scores of times before. As a matter of fact, Christians are fond of arguing that ever since the beginning

of its career Christianity has had to face many fierce storms but in the end it has always emerged triumphant. If they really hold this erroneous view it only shows how blind they are and how unsafe is their childish complacency.

It is true that from the beginning of its career Christianity has weathered many storms. But what kind of storms where they ? They were mostly domestic quarrels on doctrinal points and heresies. In the main, it was really the stand of one superstition against others. They were all like savages fighting with bows and arrows and never had the occasion to face or use modern weapons. It is the first time since it has come into existence that it has encountered such an attack and, as was to be expected, it could not resist the onslaught of modern arms. This time it has met modern Rationalism and it has not taken long to recognize in it a different foe altogether. "Modern Rationalism" Says Mr. A Gowans Whyte in his "Religion of the Open Mind," "is not merely a renewed phase of old scepticism. It is much more formidable in its direct offensive on critical grounds; and it finds the promise of permanancy through its bond with constructive science. This combination of frontal and flank attack has forced theology to do what it never did for the pioneer heretics; that is to say, to retreat and to admit its retreat." The Churches fought against Higher Critics until the scholar's views of the Bible could no longer be denied.....They fought against the lessons of geology and biology (one may also add Astronomy) until it was realized that antagonism would be more deadly than submission." On the whole the Churches haye been vanquished and, to day the thoughtful view Christianity merely as an Oriental Superstition which must inevitably take its place in the cemetery of dead creeds.

C. L. D'Avoine.

"RAMA RAJYA."

I would recommend to all who speak and write in pious praise of the Ramayan and like works to read an absorbing little book entitled 'On RAMA-RAJYA Etc.' by S. D. Nadkarni (published by the Samaj Samata Sangh of Dadar, Bombay).

I had seen this book reviewed in the papers several months ago and though I had wished to order a copy I forget about it. It was in a shop in the Congress Exhibition grounds at Worli that I saw it copies and bought one. As it happened that I finished reading the book at about the same time I read Mahatma Gandhi's latest statements on what he calls the true Varnashram and the position of women in it in the *Harijan* of Sept. 28 and Oct. 12, I ordered a copy of the book to be sent to Mahatmaji, and am awaiting his views on it.

The book is, as its author calls it, "an Expostulatory Letter to the Greatest Hindu" (meaning Mahatmaji) "from a Critical Co-religionist" (that is, the writer of it). It is in reality a reply to a set of apparently influential people like the Shankaracharyas etc. who met in a Conference some years ago, and declared for "Swaraj as we had it in the days of Ramchandra" and also for certain other things which showed quite clearly the nature of the Swaraj or

'Ram-rajya' which they wanted. But it is not equally clear why Sjt. Nadkarni has chosen to address his 'expustulation' (or rather indictment) not to any of those estimable folk, the real defendants in the case, but to Gandhiji, unless it be that he regards him as a judge, and then, too, as one known to have betrayed an, injudicial leaning towards the 'Rama-rajists' by certain of his utterances, particularly one expressing approval of Rama's abandonment of his wife Sita.

In the book are discussed with a critical detail and scholarly documentation, rare in these days of hurry and superficiality, what are called the three "blots on Rama's escutcheon", viz. the assassination of Vali, the abandonment of Sita, and the decapitation of Shambuk,—besides two other episodes, viz. one from the Mahabharat about how Dronacharya caused Ekalavya to cut off his own thumb to offer him as *dakshina* (preceptor's fee), and another from the Shrimad Bhagavat relating to the Vaman Avatar. After subjecting these time-honoured stories ("skeletons in the cupboard of our heritage", as they are called in the book) to a close examination both ethical and literary, Mahatmaji's expostulator goes on to consider the broader question of Varna, Ashram women's position, Ahimsa, sectarianism etc. I am particularly interested in the first-named subject. I find that some of the points brought up by Sjt. Nadkarni on the head are answered explicitly or implicitly in Mahamaji's latest statements on the subject; and it seems only fair to his expostulator as well as to him to say that the latter has conceded most of the former's position already. But the points raised on the question of Varna and Heredity on pages 52f. of the book call for an answer, and I am anxious to know what Mahatmaji has to say on them.

I must confess, however, that I at first found it hard to accept many of the sratements that Sjt. Nadkarni makes in the book. But as there is an engaging ardour in the argumentative parts of the book, and a challenging sincerity is apparent through the whole of it, I marked some passages for verification, though I could not impugn off-hand the authentically of any of them. I have been enabled by now to verify must of them to any satisfaction. I must say, however, that I have as yet hardly got over the disagreeable shocks I felt in reading certain portions of the book, in spite of its fascinating style. That is why I am as eager to know what Gandhiji has to say in reply to this Expostulatory Letter to him, as I was to read its pages.

I do not claim to know the author of this "Rama-tajya". But the occurrence of certain expressions in the book, such as "Rama's Monkeys' Raj" for British rule (pp. 30 & 58), the description of Clive as "the forger and founder of the British Empire in India,.....who died by his own hand" (p. 41), and the story about Miss Katherine Mayo being the Kaliyug Avatar of Sita (p. 10), confirm me in my conjecture that it must be the gentleman of the same surname whom I met in a railway carriage between Bangalore and Belgaum in the Christmas week of 1927-28, I saw him engaged in a lively discussion conducted in Sanskrit with the Mysorean astrologers. I was informed on enquiry that he had been a Shastri in a Pathshala somewhere on the

Konkan coast. I even remember to have tried to make fun of the debaters in Sanskrit by asking them whether it was 'Sanskrit' *i. e.*, cultured or lawful) to talk in Sanskrit in a railway carriage in the presence of Mlenchhas, but the Mysoreans jokingly assured me that the old rules, if there were any against such conduct. did not bind them any longer, since their friend (Sjt. Nadkarni) had made a new Smriti which abrogated all the old ones! I then asked if the Kaliyug had ended for a new Smriti to be made to supersede Parashara's which is believed to be the Smriti for this Yug'. The ex-Shastri said that it was Gandhi-yug now, Kali-yug having ended with the coming of Miss Mayo, and on being asked how, he told me that quaint story retailed in the footnote to page 10 of this book.

Be that as it may, I would fervently appeal to all Hindus who are not incapable of thinking for themselves, or who can keep their minds open to fresh light, not to fail to read this most stimulating book. No doubt, in spite of its engaging style, it may give rude shocks to the self-complacency of some. But seekers after Truth should persist and try to meet appeals made to Reason and Conscience by the same sort of arguments.

Readers of the book will find that the much boosted Bhagavad Gita is not left untouched in it. People who try to read Rationali-m, Psycho-analysis and what not into the over-worked Gita,—as does Mr. V. V. K. Rangachari, for one,—will do well to meet, if they can, the shrewd comment and exhaustive arguments in in the section on 'The Gita' in which certain unhealthy passages in the 'Lord's Song' are refreshingly dealt with.

The question of the ethical valuation of the Ramayan has just now some topical interest lent to it for Marathi readers by the fact that a controversy on the subject is going on in the columns of the *Dnyan-mandir*, the newly started Marathi magazine in Bombay, following a contribution to its first number from Mr. B. V. Jadhav, the ex-Minister, on 'The Lesson India has learnt from the Ramayan'. I am sure, those of my readers who can follow Marathi will also benefit by this controversy.

D, S. DESHPANDE.

THE KARACHI FIRING.

To the Editor of the "Sunday Statesman."

Sir,—In your leading article of March 23, you have tried to analyse the causes of the Karachi Firing and have wound up by a somewhat arbitrary suggestion that in future as an extreme limit of concession the Muslims should be allowed to perform the last religious rites within the precincts of the prison. This suggestion in itself anticipates a repetition of such executions which are the result of murders by persons who are known to the non-Muslims as fanatics This would merely be the remedy and perhaps a very ineffective remedy for an evil. Is it not possible to remove the root cause of such incidents? Let us examine the whole question dispassionately.

What makes Mohammedans mad on such occasions?

Is it the lust of loot? Is it the desire or intention to defy authority? Or is it blood-thirst?

To find a correct answer to these questions you have to take certain psychological effects into consideration. In British law, grave and sudden provocation, though no defence to the crime of using criminal force, is a consideration for the mitigation of the sentence. As far as is known, unwarranted personal injury or the attack on the modesty of a woman related to a person are the chief incidents which set an otherwise rational person raving mad. A Mohammedan as a rule is no exception to such provocation and is readily excited and sometimes driven to take the law in his own hands. But believe me when I tell you as a law-abiding Muslim, that the feelings even of the most docile, even of a coward, Muslim who might not show any struggle if he was battered to death or if he saw the modesty of his wife, sister or mother being outraged are bound to be driven to a state of frenzy if he hears the name of the Prophet being abused. I wish to assure you again that I am not all exaggerating. When a Mohammedan hears of any publication or utterance by any person insulting or abusing the name of the Prophet his first instinct, almost without exception, is to kill that person at the first opportunity. Not all the laws of the world and all the arms and ammunition of the great powers can change this psychology. The actual action of killing the author of such blasphemy may be delayed for fear of punishment but the mentality and the desire to kill the culprit is never satisfied until the revenge has been taken.

After all murder is not the only offence for which capital punishment is awarded. There are civilized countries where men are hanged for the offence of rape and in some parts of the world people are lynched and hanged by the mob from the first lamp post for the crime of insulting the modesty of a woman.

In short according to the mentality of Mohammedans no punishment short of capital sentence is adequate for blasphemy.

Now in order to convince you of the correctness of this view held by Mohammedans I will ask you to apply the following test. Take the case of a Mohammedan who talks irreverently and commits blasphemy in respect of the Prophets of other religions If such a person is killed by the followers of the religion whose Prophet he has insulted or abused. you will never find excitement in Mohammedan quarters nor will there be any desire to make any demonstrations nor will their be any feeling of animosity against the murderer.

And if the murderer was executed and a procession ot his funeral was taken out by Hindus it would rather invoke the sympathy than resentment of Muslims. Unfortunately there is no such parallel case in the history of this country up to now.

In fact the feelings of the Mohammedans would be, that he deserved to be killed for insulting the memory of the prophets of others' religion. Muslims are indeed enjoined to refrain from saying irreverent things even about the idols of the followers of others religions.

Amendment of law is necessary.

So, the only way to stop a repetition of the incidents of Karachi is to amend the law and make blasphemy pun ishable with death. Such a law would once and

for all put a dead stop to more blasphemous works or utterances. It would then be no longer necessary for any individual to perform with his own hands what would become the duty of the Government in the ordinary course of law.

It is not a bit of use concealing the fact that when a Muslim kills a person who has committed the offence of blasphemy, *he is considered to be Ghazi while alive and a Shahid (a martyr* when *executed*) and any Mohammedan who when tries to give any other version of such a case is obviously guilty of hypocrisy which is likely to deceive none.

Of course any idea of looting or killing Hindoos on the occasions of such last rituals, is absurd through it is not unlikely that hooligans might take advantage of such occasions and resort to violence or robbery for their personal benefit.

If the law could not be amended immediately and some people must indulge in blasphemous utterances and writings and consequently murders and executions must take place, then the next best thing would be to arrange matters in a manner such as was witnessed in the case of certain recent cases when the last religious rites were performed without any untoward happenings. But let me conclude by saying that your suggestion regarding burials within prisons is not a practicable one.

Yours, etc.
A FRANK MUSLIM.

Delhi, March 25.

[We readily publish this letter as a thoughtful comment on our own article and for the interest of its subject matter. By publishing it we do not lend any support to the tremendous change proposed in the law of this land.
—Ed. S.]

[The writer of this remarkable letter gives the lie to those conciliatory Muslims who would have us believe that Islamism is not an intoletant creed. It may be so in theory, (There is strong reason to believe that The Prophet was not intolerant) but in practice Islamism has proved itself every where to be the most intolerant creed that has ever existed. A single example among scores of others may be cited. Jews are obliged to assume Mahomedan names in Persia otherwise their lives would be unsafe. One may also add that no other creed is tolearated in Arabia. The writer of the letter in question is wrong when he says that the followers of other religions also would kill people who attack, criticize or insult their founders of prophets. Only a fanatical Mahomedan would do this. Why, the Mahomedans, generally, even resent the criticism of the Koran! What ever may have been their past, no Hindu, Jew, Christian, Parsee or Buddhist would to day kill any body who criticizes, attacks or even insults their prophets and their sacred writings. They would try to refute and defend their creed: may get angry and feel outraged, but no one would think of killing such on offender. Ed. Reason.]

RELIGION AND FREEDOM.

From times gone by until this century, there has been a large number of believers whose devotion to a supernatural being, however fantastic, has been deeply rooted in their hearts. There is a thing—the main factor—that will be necessary to abolish. It is religious education.

I believe that one's stubborn fanaticism starts from childhood; that his mysticism is prepared in his early age when his plastic mind is more easily impressed. A child of religious parents begins to receive lessons about God when he is very young. As he grows older his faith is developed, the development of a thing that was not inborn in him but was merely suggested by the education he received. "Why reject God" a believer may ask, as he is convinced of the truth of his existence. He is convinced by the routine prayers which he is compelled to say: by the unreasonable exhortation and teaching of the priests; by the alleged miracles he heads to have happened in temples or grottos, which defy all the axioms of Science. And his conviction becomes more and more solid by the fertility of his imagination. But is all this proof of the truth of a religion?

It is indeed very ridiculous for any religion to rely on such questionable credentials.

There are believers in all sorts of religion and the name of God is repeated throughout all countries.

In this enlightened century, religious beliefs weigh heavily on the majority of people who imagine that religion will save them from awfull punishment.

As they cannot release themselves from the adversities of this world they nourish the hope of divine reward in the other realm. But even so, this large number of devouts, who out number the unbelievers cannot be proud of the kind of belief they hold. Their imagination is full of the chimeras of the unseen. This is why Napoleon addressed Balashor ni these ironic words when the latter told him that the Russians were very religious:—"A great number of monasteries and churches is always a sign of the backwardness of a people." Doubtless he diagnosed rightly the then weakness of Russia.

As Science has advanced so much we hare no need of the Sacred Scriptures to know the truth. It would be a waste of mental energy since the book of Nature should be all sufficient for the truth seeker.

Is it not monstruons that because a man is a honest truth seeker and would rather follow rational thoughts, the religion of his parents considers him as a social leper and would bury him as a mangy dog ?

In some quarters even if he makes the acquaintance of a Rationalist he would be rigidly branded as a heathen and would be a wicked heretic if he reads books on materialism or others enlisted in the Index.

Religion strictly forbids its faithful flock tc be in contact with anything that is against its doctrines.

It does its best to prevent its adherents from knowing the damaging truth. Why should religion impose such restrictions if the truth it teaches was self evident ? It is because the very essence of religion; the secret of it, so to say, is founded on fiction. The believers are prevented from acquiring knowledge which may open their minds and allow them to see the hollowness of creeds. To accomplish this religion thrcatens the timid and ignorant with eternal punishment in the hereafter and thus maintains its sway in the world. Is there any wonder that religion dreads that kind of education which enlightens the mind ?

No one can pretend to a certain knowledge of a transcendent being and can give us unmistakable proofs of his existence. If some people willingly worship such an imaginary being, the multitude do it through fear—fear of punishment that they believe may be meted to them after death by that unknown quantity they call God. As death ends all these deluded people will probably never know that they have been deluded throughout.

From a rationalistic point of view, all religious ceremonies and preaching are a pure waste of time. They affect the march of progress disadvantageously as the mind is encouraged in pursuing a will-o-the wisp.-theseso-called spiritual exercises. Who knows the losses civilization suffers by the absorption of so many minds in useless pursuit of things imaginary?

This can only be prevented if religious education was abolished. If the mind was unhampered by wrong impressions.

It is only when civilization recognizes this fact clearly that men may strive to learn without fear or restriction so as to discover the truth of their own mental efforts. Will people be ever encouraged to think for themselves? Will such an advancement ever happen? Will the World ever cast off the fetters of superstitions that are a bane to progress? To judge by the number of thoughtful people in the world, by the number of those who are not swayed by mass suggestion, it will take a very long time indeed, if the time ever happens, that vested interest shall be powerless to influence the minds of men.

J. G. Soares D'Almeida.
Atráz da Camara Margao
Portuguesa India. 8. May 1935

To

The Editor,

'REASON'.

Sir,

It was most interesting to read in the Notes and Happenings of the March issue of Reason about the cases related by Dr. Jacob Solomon L. M. & S.

It really must have been a welcome relief to the readers of the medical magazine to have a few minutes amusement among the rest of the articles which must certainly have been very serious reading. And I am sure the editor of that esteemed magazine must have accepted it for nc other purpose than this, forgetting for the time being that it was a medical magazine and not an Illustrated Weekly.

Except for this there is no other excuse for the publication of that article in a medical magazine.

It is most astonishing to note that no objection whatsoever was taken by the other doctors on the publication of such nonsenical articles in a magazine which went into the hands of medical students. This is nothing less than blasphemy against Medical Science. And there is greater cause for objection as we note that the article proceeds from one who is an L. M. & S.

Not satisfied with relating absurd cases Dr. Jacob Solomon L. M. & S goes on to add to our Medical Dictionary a new discovery of his own "Magnetised Water."

I think Dr. Jacob Soloman would have been more successful in another sphere than that of a doctor, (If I may be allowed to make a suggestion). He

seems to be an adept in the art of finding out whether a case is of ordinary illness or that of evil possession.

It is well that both author and magazine are miles away from the city of Bombay where I feel sure such publications would never pass unchallenged.

I am sure the readers of Reason will agree that the article was treated with undue mildness by the editor of this journal.

Yours faithfully,
ASTRON.

An Interesting Debate.

A debate was held under the joint auspices of the Rationalist Youth League and the Rationalist Association of India on Saturday 27th. April at the Blavatsky Lodge at 6 p. m.

The subject under discussion was 'Science has done more for the Progress of Humanity than Religion'.

The speakers for the proposition were Mr. S. A. Megherian and Mr. Kaniyalal Vakil while Rev. Scott and Mr. S. S. Kavalekar opposed the proposition. Dr. G. V. Deshmukh presided.

There were more than 300 present.

Mr. Megherian in moving the proposition said "Progress is nothing else but the desire of human beings to master time and space". The speaker further added that another factor included in Progress is pain and this question of pain both Religion and Science have tried to solve. "But what terrible suffering," continued the speaker, "Religion has caused in its search for human happiness". Religion of today was nothing else but a refined conglomeration of the superstitions of caveman. Science is based upon the finest courage, the courage which sacrifices without any desire of reward. On the eourage which sacrifices without any desire of reward. On the other hand there is not a single Religion which did not say that what ever you do you will reap the reward seven or even tenfold.

Rev. Scott oppositing the proposition said that he did not defend anything and everything that was done in the name of Religion, nor was he an opponent of Science, but he could show from citing the highest authorities of Science itself that a religious impulse was necesary for the genuine progress of mankind. In the words of Bertrand Russel, "Increase of Science in itself is not sufficient to guarantee the general progress of humanity". He also pointed out that Mr. Stanley Baldwin himself had wished that air craft were never invented Science of this type, viz. aircraft was bayond human control and therefore detrimental to the genuine progress of humanity.

Speaking of the good Religion had done for humanity Rev. Scott said that many an unselfish man had gladly and unselfishly suffered for the good of humanity, and that in India missionary institutions had done a great deal towards the the progress of the country in particular and humanity at large, facilitating not only the education of men but also of women. "Even the great scientist, Mr. Thomas had admitted a few years before his death said Rev. Scott, that it would be impossible for genuine progress to be effective as long as man was not spiritual."

Mr. Kaniyalal Vakil speaking for the proposition said that Religion enforced

certain Beliefs of its followers irrespective of these beliefs being true of not.

Pointing out the difference between the Scientific outlook and the Religious outlook the speaker said that while the Scientist does not say the last thing in any matter the Religious man asserts and takes things for granted. The speaker laidstress on the fact that not a single day passed by in India without a Hindu-Muslim clash somewhere; and all this was done in the name of Religion alone.

Mr. Vakil concluded by saying that the scientific man was a superrealist.

Mr. Kavlekar the next speaker observed that there was no real conflict between Religion and Science and further added that they had a common aim viz. the progress of humanity. The speaker contended that progress lay in the simple and artistic development of human life and held that Religion had made man more humble and humane. It was only when Religion and not Science dictated to politics that the world could attain peace. Humanity marched to progress not under the leadership of scientists, but under the leadership of such great prophets, like Christ and Buddha.

Mr. Megherian in his reply to the opposition said that Religion having killed, persecuted, tortured and done everything possible to supress research and investigation and the spirit of inquiry, realised its helplessness and found that the only way out was to say that there was no antagonism between Religion and Science. As regards Mr. Kavlekin's statement that lack of peace in the world was due to the sway of Science in politics Mr. Megherian asked if there was a single scientist in any ministry of the world. Politics is dominated by Religion rather than the spirit of Science. Scientists are more busy in the pursuit of Truth. With regard to Rev. Scott's argument about Science being out of control, Mr. Megherian asked how many times Religion was not out of control.

The debate was a great aucccss.

Dr. Deshmukh decided not to put the proposition to vote and wound up the debate by congratulating the Rationalist Youth Leugue for their activities and thanked the speakers for the cordial and able manner in which the debate was conducted.

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The Rationalists Association of India

Objects.

To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the masses of this country.

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The Association was founded in March, 1930, as the Anti-Priestcraft Association with the above objects. Its name was changed to the Rationalist Association of India in February, 1931. Its membership is daily increasing, and consists of professional men, college professors, business men, and others with progressive ideas. The committee will be very pleased to hear of any ladies or gentlemen who will be willing to work as local Secretaries of the Association.

Reason.

"Reason" is the organ of the Association, and is published monthly. Though started recently, it has a wide circulation. It is one of the means of carrying out our objects. Members and sympathisers are cordially invited to contribute articles to the journal.

Membership.

Life Membership is Rupees Hundred. The annual subscription is Rupees Five. This entitles you to a copy of "Reason" free. If you are not already a member of the Association, write to us, and we will send you the next issue of "Reason" per V. P. P.

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