

Is Science Vindicating Religion? A Modern Controversy "Cosmic Religion" and Its Agreement with Science

By John Haynes Holmes

This is an address delivered by John Haynes Holmes in The Community Church, New York City. On page two is a reply by E. Haldean-Julius.

Albert Einstein, without any question, whether or not his ideas prove in the end to be absolutely sound, is the greatest intellectual genius in the world today. Bernard Shaw, much more given to praising himself than other men, has said that Einstein is the greatest man now alive among us, and one of the eight men in history who rank as "makers of the universe." Certainly of all the leaders of thought in our generation, this man would seem to be the surest of immortality. Just what he has done there are few of us competent to say. But we know that he has recharted the pathways of the stars, transfigured the topography of heaven, and reconceived the nature of time and space.

What particularly attracts me to Einstein at this moment is a certain catholicity of interest and sympathy. Remote from the world in his laboratory and study, he is yet in the world in his identification of his life with the lives of other men. Thus he never forgets that he is a Jew, and that his fame and fortune must be used in the service of his people wherever they are miserable and oppressed. As a Jew, also, he is a Zionist, and characteristically devoted his first public utterance in New York City to the cause of Zion. As a citizen who endured the horrors of the Great War, he hates war with a perfect hatred as an intrusion upon the higher interests of the race, and never loses an opportunity to denounce it and to labor for its extinction. Finally, as a man, he is interested in religion as one of the major elements of human experience, and has made some of the most significant statements on religion that our time has heard. It is these statements with which I am concerned as an introduction to my theme. I ask you to consider with me the words of a scientist who has found it not inconsistent with his ideals to speak reverently and sympathetically of the deep things of the spirit.

In his most recent and illuminating utterance on this subject, Einstein begins by pointing out that everything that men do or think has relation to the satisfaction of their needs as living creatures. Every phenomenon of human life has its origin in some feeling or emotion. There are certain inward reactions, in other words, which have brought mankind to religion as well as to everything else. It is from this standpoint that Einstein traces the development of three periods in the religious history of man.

Periods of Religion

Among primitive peoples, religion had its beginning in fear—the fear of hunger, of wild animals, of storms and floods, of illness and death. In early times, of course, men had no understanding of the causal connections between phenomena. When a thing happened, they believed it was the deed of some personality, or spirit, existing outside themselves—in the skies, or in the sea, or in the forest. This led them to believe in gods as the agencies of natural phenomena, and to believe that the way to secure protection from these phenomena was to win the favor of the gods. It was in this fear of the world, and in this endeavor to live safely in the world, that religion had its origin. Religion, in other words, was in the beginning a great act in propitiation of unfriendly deities.

The second period of religion, according to Einstein, began with the development of social feelings. There came a time when men

wanted not only protection, but guidance and sympathy and love. They found this, to a certain extent, in their parents and kinsmen—in the men and women with whom they associated in the world. But the connection between human beings and the surrounding universe was uncertain. Fathers and mothers were fallible; relatives and tribesmen could be treacherous. There must be some friendly spirit in the cosmos, with which man could have communion and in which he could find guidance and affection. And so he came to conceive of God as Providence—a deity who is wise and therefore can give counsel, who is a guardian of righteousness and therefore rewards and punishes, who is a father and therefore comforts and inspires. This is religion as rooted in the social feelings of man, and reaching out to moral and spiritual concepts of the divine.

It is obvious that this second development of religion is infinitely higher than the first. But it is not high enough, says Einstein, for the chosen spirits of the world. No, there must come a third period of development which Einstein finds in what he calls a "cosmic religious sense." "This is hard to make clear," he says, "to those who do not experience it, since it does not involve an anthropomorphic idea of God; the individual feels the vanity of human desires and aims, and the nobility and marvelous order which are revealed in nature and the world of thought. He feels the individual destiny as an imprisonment and seeks to experience the totality of existence as a unity full of significance." So he reaches out toward the heavens and the earth, and the mind of man, and strives to know their truth and feel their beauty. Einstein's "cosmic sense," for all its western and scientific form of expression, is not unlike the eastern idea of "cosmic consciousness." He finds it springing up on the earlier levels of religious experience, as in the Psalms of David and in the Prophets, and he emphasizes his conviction that this "cosmic sense" is particularly strong in Buddhism. As a matter of fact, says Einstein, the religious leaders of all time have been distinguished by the possession of this "cosmic sense" as a kind of insight into the heart of things. More often than not these leaders have not been concerned with creeds or dogmas, or even with the refinements of a personal God, and have revolted from these ideas, and thus become atheists or infidels to their contemporaries. If we would see this "cosmic religious sense" in the "purest personal embodiment," says Einstein, we may find it in three prominent religious heretics—one a scientist, Democritus, one a philosopher, Spinoza, and the third a saint of the highest spiritual order, St. Francis of Assisi.

The Religion of Einstein

Now from such an analysis as this, we can draw conclusions about the attitude of the greatest scientific mind of our time toward religion. These conclusions, as I see them, are three in number:

In the first place, Albert Einstein believes in what John Fiske called years ago "the everlasting reality of religion." He treats religion not with scoffing and contempt, but with profound respect. He traces the history of religion from its earliest beginnings in the superstitious fears of primitive man up to the cosmic consciousness of "especially gifted individuals," and in all cases finds it a genuine reality. In its farthest reaches of communion with the vast harmony of the illimitable universe, Einstein sees religion dispensing with pictorial ideas of God, with doctrines of

personal salvation, with creeds and churches and rites of worship. But in essence it remains what it has always been—man's ultimate reaction upon the totality of experience. Einstein accepts religion, affirms its validity, in exactly the spirit of Professor Nathaniel Schmidt, in his recent book, *The Coming Religion*, who defines religion as "man's consciousness of some power in nature determining man's destiny, and the ordering of his life in harmony with its demands." Einstein, in other words, vindicates religion as a reality of experience in our time.

In the second place, Albert Einstein is a man who has himself experienced religion. He is one of these "specially gifted individuals" who feel this "cosmic sense" as the central motive of their lives. He does not exist outside of religion, and thus view it as some detached phenomenon, like a specimen upon the dissection table. On the contrary, he exists in religion, as his body exists in air, and breathes in his vitality from its inspiration. Like the Psalmist of old, he "considers the heavens," and watches "the moon and the stars," and ponders "man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him." What can be more religious than the humility of this mathematician before the vastness of the skies, and his reverence and awe before the impenetrable mystery of being! Einstein is more than a scientist; he is one of the great mystics and seers of all the ages.

Science and Religion

In the third place—an inevitable conclusion from all that has gone before—Albert Einstein insists that religion and science are not contradictory, but cooperative one with the other. He refuses to concede, in other words, that there is any conflict between science and religion. On the lower levels of religion, of course, there is antagonism, for science can tolerate no interference with the orderly processes of nature, and can recognize no intrusion of rewards and punishments upon man's behavior. Science can believe as little in a Christian Providence as in a Roman Jupiter or an Egyptian Ra. But cosmic religion rises far above these levels of imaginative superstition, and in its apprehension of a universe that moves in "beauteous order" through a time and space that are a single essence of reality, because "the strongest and noblest driving force behind scientific research." It is this "cosmic religious sense" that has held generations of men faithful to their scientific purposes, in spite of countless frustrations and defeats. "The only deeply religious people of our age," says Einstein, "are the earnest men of research."

Science and religion irreconcilable? On the contrary, they are friends and fellow-workers, fore-runners together of

... that one, divine, far-off event toward which the whole creation moves."

So much for Einstein, great scientist, profound religionist! All of which is an introduction to what I want to say about the relations between science and religion in our time! As I consider these relations, they seem to have passed through three distinct periods of development, or rather to have passed through two such periods, and now to be emerging into a third.

In the beginning—i. e., at the opening of modern times—and down through at least the first half of the nineteenth century, science and religion were in open warfare with one another. The conflict turned upon questions of fact—the age of the earth, its place in the solar system, the structure of

the heavens, the evolution of species, the nature of man, the rule of law. It is to be remembered that, for a thousand years before the Renaissance, there had been no science in our western world. The Greeks had a highly developed science, but it all disappeared with the collapse of the Roman Empire, and was as completely forgotten as though it had never been. In its place came theology, a Christian theory of origin and destiny which was based not upon observation and experimentation but upon certain preconceived doctrines of revelation. The theology of the Middle Ages, in other words, was all based upon the Bible, and constituted therefore an attempt to explain the world in terms of the Biblical cosmology.

Facts Versus Dogmas

When science came along, it was inevitable that their should be a dispute between science and religion, for science, with its careful and systematic study of the physical universe, discovered facts altogether inconsistent with the doctrines of the church. Thus, the earth was much older than had even been imagined; this earth was not the center of the universe, but an insignificant planet in a remote corner of the heavens; this universe was not a series of concrete spheres, but a vast, illimitable range of stellar space; there had never been a creation, but only an evolution, of organic forms; man was not divine in his origin, but the offspring of the animals which had preceded him upon this planet; there were no miracles, or divine interventions in the world, but only one unbroken realm of law and order. These were some of the new facts which science submitted to the judgment of men, and which religion denounced as heresies, blasphemies, illusions. But in every dispute of this kind between science and religion, from the first discoveries of Copernicus to the latest speculations of Einstein, science has been triumphant over religion. In this conflict over the facts of the physical order of the world, religion has always and everywhere been defeated. The victory of science over the so-called revelation of the church has been the most sweeping in the whole history of the human mind.

There are many persons who believe that this victory of science has meant the end of religion—and great has been the joy of the atheists and free-thinkers! As a matter of fact, however, religion has not been touched at all. For religion, in its true estate, has nothing to do with questions of fact in the outer world of the physical senses. In the absence of any science which could give a knowledge of the facts, religion developed, as we have seen, a system of theology which it offered as a statement of reality, and with which it was so foolish as to identify its own destiny. When science was revived, it was inevitable that there should be conflict between a theology which pretended to describe facts upon a basis of revelation, and a science which undertook to discover facts upon a basis of research. It was this conflict which Dr. Andrew D. White took pains to define with exact precision when he entitled his famous book upon the subject, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*. It was this theology which science was fighting—and destroying. But theology is not religion. It cannot be identified with religion, no matter how definitely religion itself may insist upon the identification. Theology is only what men think about religion, or what they think about the world from the standpoint of religion. And theologians may come and go, as they have come and gone since the beginning of man's conscious thought, but religion remains what Einstein himself has called it—man's "cosmic sense" of the "totality of existence." The victory of science, therefore, in the first

period of development in our time, is a victory over theology, and a challenge to religion to work out a new theology in terms not of ancient tradition but of modern knowledge.

The Materialistic Interpretation

No sooner was this conflict decided in favor of science as against theology, than there developed a new conflict which this time involved religion itself. This conflict occupied the second period in our history of the relations between science and religion, and had to do not with facts but with the meaning of facts. In other words, the interpretation of reality! Religion, of course, has always insisted, as a condition of its own existence as something real and not illusory, that the fundamental interpretation of the universe is spiritual. It has seen the world as life, and this life as manifesting intellectual and moral qualities which reach their fulfillment in the soul of man. It has attributed this life, in all its range from star-dust to breathing organism, to a divine origin in God, and in this God has found that ultimate reality of spirit in which all things "live and move and have their being." But the science of the last century would have nothing to do with this! As science looked at the universe, through its microscopes and telescopes, it saw no evidence of spirit. On the contrary, it saw phenomena so completely physical as to eliminate altogether the spiritual hypothesis. Here was matter, the substance of the world—the hard, impenetrable raw material out of which everything was made. And this matter was indestructible! Here, in the second place, was force—the energy which gave motion to the world, and thus created the reality which we know as life. And this force was inexhaustible! Lastly, there was law, the reign of law, which tied everything together in a uniform and universal chain of cause and effect. And this law was immutable! Matter, motion, law—these were the constituent elements of the world! And they left no room, or seemed to leave no room, for spirit. It was on this issue, which had to do with the uttermost reality of things, that religion and science joined in their second great battle for supremacy. And in this battle over interpretation, exactly as in the first battle over facts, science seemed to be everywhere triumphant. This universe is made not of spirit but of matter. Its processes are not fundamentally intellectual or spiritual, but mechanical. The picture of the world is not that of a person but of a mechanism. What we have here, in this stupendous collection of elements, is a piece of complex physical machinery—colossal in its proportions, infinite in its complications, incomprehensible in its significations, but in essence a machine, like a gasoline engine or a dynamo. Science, in other words, is materialistic. Its mechanistic philosophy has put an end to the spiritual vagaries of religion.

Contemporary Science and Religion

It was with this equipment that science came bursting like a conqueror into the twentieth century. How complete was its victory, and how uncompromising its method, is shown by psychology, which, as the latest of the sciences, has taken over the whole of the mechanistic point of view. Not only God but the soul, not only the mind but consciousness itself, has been swept away by much of the new psychology, and human phenomena reduced to a set of reflex responses to mechanistic impulses. Man, like the universe, is a machine. A charge of electricity, applied to a few grains of matter in a test-tube, is all that is left of man who, in the Old Testa-

ment, was made by God to be "but a little lower than the angels, and (to be) crowned with glory and honor."

But at the very time when religion, as well as theology, seemed to have been completely and finally routed by science, something unexpectedly happened. Almost without warning, and for reasons which have left the researchers of our time still gasping with amazement, the whole structure of physical science came tumbling to the ground. All these things which seemed to be so certain were certain no more. Realities as hard as steel, as swift as lightning, as sure as gravitation, were suddenly turned as though to flitting shadows. The universe, by the wave of one magician's wand, became, as it were, the abode of relativity. Force, for example! It was no longer a thing in itself. It seemed to have some peculiar relation to matter, to be a form of matter. And grave doubts began to appear of its inexhaustibility. But if force is a form of matter, what is matter? Certainly not, as we had supposed, the impenetrable substance composed of atoms which were themselves indivisible. No, atoms began to yield to radio-activity, and radio-activity to electricity, and electricity to a form of the ether or a thing in the ether, and ether itself to space. So that now we are told that matter is space, and has no reality of its own at all. And as to its indestructibility, that is a myth as foolish as the myth of the Virgin Birth. This brings us to law, the last refuge of a materialistic science, and this also is going. The best scientists of our time are telling us that the reign of law has been dissolved. There is no longer an indissoluble chain of cause and effect. There are effects today which have no adequate causes, and there may well be causes which have no effects. In any case there is no mechanical uniformity which holds the electrons and the stars together like the parts of a vast machine. There is no cosmic mechanism any more. The whole mechanistic or materialistic approach to life is gone, as one of the gigantic illusions, or superstitions, of the human mind. So at least agree two such prominent scientists of our time as Sir Arthur Eddington, greatest of British astronomers, and Sir James Jeans, one of the great mathematical physicists of the modern world. The day of materialism is over, says Professor Eddington. "Materialism and determinism, those household gods of nineteenth century science which believed that the world could be explained in mechanical and biological concepts as a well-run machine, must be discarded." Professor Jeans agrees with this affirmation. "Thirty years ago," he writes, "we thought we were headed toward an ultimate reality of a mechanical kind. (The universe) seemed to consist of a fortuitous jumble of atoms which was destined to perform meaningless dances . . . under the action of blind, purposeless forces, and then fall back to form a dead world. . . . Into this wholly mechanical world, through the play of the same blind forces, life had stumbled by accident." But now all this is gone! "Today," continues Professor Jeans, "there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is leading towards a non-mechanical reality."

The Third Period

Such is the change which has come over science in the last few years. This change is due to the most amazing and revolutionary discoveries that science has ever known. Let it be said, to the everlasting credit of science, that it was science itself that discovered and revealed its own illusions. Materialism is gone—is as dead as Caesar—because the sci-

tists say so! But if materialism is gone, what has come to take its place? This brings us to the third period in the history of the relation between science and religion, into which we are just now moving at the present time. In this period of new discovery, now dawning upon the world, the names of Eddington and Jeans are supreme, at least in England and America. For this reason, and for the further reason that their writings are easily available to the general public, I propose to follow the teachings of these two men in attempting an answer to the question as to what is to be our interpretation of the cosmos in the years to come.

At the start both Eddington and Jeans agree upon a fundamental proposition, that the mechanical conception of the world is yielding to a mathematical conception. Mechanics is giving way to mathematics. "Phenomena," says Eddington, "all boil down to a scheme of symbols, of mathematical equations." Jeans says the same thing. "Our remote ancestors," he writes, "tried to interpret nature in terms of anthropomorphic concepts, and failed. The efforts of our nearest ancestors to interpret nature on mechanical lines proved equally inadequate. . . . Pure mathematics has proved brilliantly successful." Einstein also agrees. Those who have seen his note-books, or read his papers, know that they are all one amazing mass of algebraic equations. The universe, in the last analysis, must be interpreted in terms of mathematical formulae.

But these formulae do not define reality. They only define the relations that exist between the phenomena of reality. What is reality? What are the phenomena of reality in themselves? What is the ultimate from which all things proceed, and to which all things, sooner or later, return? It is in their answer to this most fundamental of all questions that Eddington and Jeans go off in different directions, and yet come in the end to the same conclusion.

Eddington's Viewpoint

Eddington believes that the mathematics of nature can never explain anything. It must ever remain unknown. The final answer of the formulae must always be a cosmic X. He therefore abandons the formulae, and returns to ourselves who have conceived the formulae, and who now ask the question as to what these formulae may mean. It is man, says Eddington, who contains the secret of the world—man with his love of truth, his sense of order, and his responsibility for right. Nature may be expressed in mathematics, but not man who has conceived the science of mathematics to express the correspondence which he finds between the order of nature and the workings of his own mind. It is conceivable that mechanical science might produce in some distant future a robot, "a creature which thinks and believes" and thus may duplicate the mechanical activities of a man's life. But it is not conceivable that such a robot, whatever he thinks and believes, would actually care about his thoughts and beliefs. He would never ask if a thing is true, never search for an answer to the question as to why it is true. But it is just this concern for the truth of all we think and say and do, that is central to the life of man as he has sprung from out the world of nature. It is this that makes man to be something wholly apart from all physical phenomena and thus in essence a spiritual reality. "When," says Eddington, "from the human heart the cry goes up, 'What is it all about,' it is no answer to look only at that part of experience which comes to us through certain sensory organs, and say, 'It is about atoms and chaos—a universe of fiery globes, . . .'"

Religion---"Cosmic" or Common---Is Not Scientific

By E. Haldeman-Julius

One difficulty in attacking the religion of John Haynes Holmes is that there is so little of it. He professes few, if any, definite points of religious belief. If we classify a belief in spirit as indefinite (which it is), then Mr. Holmes has no definite religion. He rejects nearly all that has been identified as religion and that is still synonymous with orthodox or popular religion. He does not believe in a personal (or anthropomorphic) God; he does not believe in the Christian dogmas of the divinity of Jesus and original sin and the miraculous atonement--in fact, he brushes all miracles aside as fables; he has, as I recall from earlier statements, a kind of vague belief in or hope for immortality--but he does not believe in immortality in the definite or doctrinal Christian sense and in the present address he ignores that idea. He does not believe that a God inspired the Bible; nor that a God interferes in the processes of nature; nor that a God personally and directly influences the lives of men; nor that a God rewards and punishes human beings in a future life.

What Mr. Holmes calls his religion consists of two affirmations, one of which is not correctly to be described as religious, since even atheists may and do share that which is feeling more than intellectual affirmation. In his belief in spirit, Mr. Holmes is religious though not in a specific, doctrinal sense; that is to say, he does not express his spiritual belief in any coherent, logical, explanatory form but merely asserts it as more of a poetic flourish than anything else. When he speaks of a "cosmic sense" and of our "reaction to the totality of the universe," he is stating the attitude of all sensitive and thoughtful persons--of atheists no less than those who use the name of religion--if he means "humility before the vastness of the skies and reverence and awe before the impenetrable mystery of being." (I object to the phrase, "impenetrable mystery of being." How does Mr. Holmes know that this mystery is impenetrable? All he knows is that it hasn't yet been fully solved--but think how very much more we know about it than our ancestors knew even a hundred years ago!)

Common vs. "Cosmic" Sense

Looking at the idea in another way, how can anybody have, really and truly, a "cosmic sense"? Mr. Holmes doesn't have it, I am sure, no matter how fervently he uses the expression. The cosmos is

just naturally too big for his limited mind (and my limited mind) to grasp. He can't have a "cosmic sense" in the intelligible meaning of the phrase, as for instance he can have a sense of human life or the United States or the street scenes of New York City. Physical scientists like Eddington and Jeans are perplexed by the cosmos and led into the shadows of unreality or of a reality which is yet beyond them--they can only interpret the cosmos, in its farthest imagined reaches, in mathematical symbols--and, when they strive to speculate beyond their knowledge, they spin around in a tangle of spiritual verbiage which has no meaning nor direction. Evidently these men do not have, in any realistic interpretation, a "cosmic sense." Neither does Einstein, although as a great mathematician and student of theoretical problems on a universal scale, he may be said to have more of the "cosmic sense" than Mr. Holmes or myself.

And neither Einstein nor anybody else ever had a definite, complete, intelligible "reaction to the totality of the universe." I am sure that Einstein never had a reaction to the totality of the world--just think how big a reaction that would have to be!--so how could he react to the whole mysterious universe, in one swoop of sensitively clear and complete reaction? As far as that goes, no man ever had a reaction to the sum total of human knowledge; so how could any man have a reaction to the sum total of the universe, a vast deal of which is still beyond the range of definite human knowledge?

I think it is useful to debunk these gorgeous phrases. They appear all too frequently in the kind of dim religious shadow-thinking in which such men as Mr. Holmes delight to indulge. After all, what do they mean "excepting the opposite of what they say? They mean that the universe is so big and so bewildering and so immensely and intricately greater than things human that no man can have a "cosmic sense" of this universe nor "react to the totality of this universe."

Facing Mystery Honestly

Mr. Holmes talks big--but all that he really says is that the universe is bigger than he is. That is a platitude. It has no bearing on the religious question--excepting as it explains psychologically why many people are religious without real evidence upon which to base their beliefs in religion. On the same princi-

ple, an atheist feels the mystery of the universe and he has even a feeling of humility and awe (though not of reverence, which implies a theistic viewpoint); but this feeling doesn't lead the atheist to belief in religious ideas, although others who by temperament are more mystical or by intellect are less advanced and resolute in thinking are led by this mystery and awe before the universe into some kind of religious faith which is, after all, a way of escape from a spectacle and a problem which they dare not contemplate and which they long to solve in a simple though superficial, indeed illogical, fashion.

The atheist can contemplate the mystery of the universe without running away from it and without turning desperately or childishly to a form of religion or mysticism in the vain belief that he is finding a solution. He is resigned to understand as much of the universe as he can (to follow, that is, patiently the researches and intelligent speculations of science) and to let the rest of the mystery wait upon further knowledge. As eagerly as Mr. Holmes, the atheist would like to know the explanation of the mystery right now. But he wants knowledge, not rhetoric; knowledge, not poetic mistaking itself as formal thought.

Here is the fundamental difference between the atheist and the theist or mystic: the atheist wants a real explanation of the mystery, and beyond the present limits of such an explanation he simply recognizes that the rest is mystery; the theist or the mystic wants to call the mystery by another name--God or Spirit or Universal Mind--even though it explains absolutely nothing.

What Einstein Believes

This idea of God as Spirit is all that I can discover of a genuinely religious nature in Mr. Holmes' address. There are, however, misstatements and palpable errors of reasoning or intolerable risks of assumption which should be corrected. And first of all I want to point out that Mr. Holmes is making entirely too much, in the name of religion, out of Einstein's expression of his feeling about life. In all that Mr. Holmes quotes from Einstein and in the very concise and simple statement that Einstein made some time ago in *The Forum* ("What I Believe") there is not the slightest indication of belief in a single, definite item of any religious creed--not even in Mr. Holmes' idea of God as a Spirit. Plainly, when Einstein talks of "religion" he has in mind nothing more than a sensitive reaction to the mysteriousness of the universe (not a "reaction to the totality of the universe," however) and an attitude of idealism which is distinctly human in its character. Einstein said in *The Forum* article (italics mine) "To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms--this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men."

You see that Einstein explicitly disclaims any "religiousness" whatever excepting this feeling of the mystery of things; and this is clearly a poetic feeling, a mark of sensitiveness, rather than a statement about religion. Einstein himself chooses to use the word "religion" in the sense of poetic and idealistic feeling; very well--but not one person in ten thousand uses the word in this sense; when we speak of religion we have in mind ideas about God and immortality and man's moral responsibility to a higher power; perhaps Einstein may be called religious, since elsewhere he refers to "the intelligence manifested in nature"--yet that is, after all, a philosophic rather than a religious idea and, in any case, there is not enough religion in it to place Einstein on the side of or anywhere near the side of the orthodox angels; he does not even affirm a belief in Mr. Holmes' Spirit-God.

Negative on God Idea

Whatever tag may be placed upon Einstein's ideas, they are evidently the ideas of a sensitive, reflective and intellectually honest man who has no mystical

opinions about the universe: practically they are ideas which an atheist may hold--and when a so-called "religious" man expresses ideas which are compatible with the position of the atheist, where is the "religion" in those ideas? In *The Forum* article Einstein made a careful, deliberate statement of his belief. He devoted two paragraphs to religion and we can reasonably assume that if he believed in a God of any description he would have said as much. On the contrary, he took the pains to deny having a belief in the popular or Christian God: "I cannot imagine a God who rewards and punishes the objects of his creation, whose purposes are modeled after our own--a God, in short, who is but a reflection of human frailty." There was the natural opportunity and place for Einstein to say what kind of a God he believes in, if any--but he didn't. Save for that one negative statement, he ignored the idea of God. Obviously God is a word which he does not care to use and which means nothing to him; and in Mr. Holmes' quotations from later remarks of Einstein there is no reference to a God; he is still talking of "religion" only as human idealism and a feeling of mystery in the universe. Furthermore, in *The Forum* article Einstein expressly declared that he has no belief in immortality, "although feeble souls harbor such thoughts through fear or ridiculous egotism."

I review carefully Einstein's statements about religion, because there has been such a frantic effort (and not, it seems to me, an entirely honest effort) by theists in America to use Einstein's distinguished scientific name as an advertisement for their religion. The theists are still desperately and disingenuously trying to prove that science is on the side of religion--and what a sorry policy of exaggeration they use in the attempt! Common sense would tell us that if science were really and decisively on the side of religion, as these theists tell us, a big and formidable list of scientific names could be produced, with definite statements of belief from this great number of scientists, showing that theism has the strongest scientific backing. But what do we observe? When an Einstein talks in a vein of rational and secular idealism, voicing at the same time his sharp disdain for the most notable ideas (God and immortality) which are associated with religion, the theists rush illogically and with a mighty outburst of rhetoric to claim him for their own, merely because he uses the word "religiousness."

A Faint Peep for Theism

And in all their clatter about the harmony of science and religion, the theists bring upon the stage always the same little group--Eddington, Millikan, Osborn, Pupin and Jeans--who, even so, are not (with the exception of Pupin) in the least orthodox nor Christian, who offer no support for the ideas of religion in the main, and whose utterances about God are suspiciously vague and are, in any case, clearly unrelated to the scientific fields in which these men specialize. Theists sometimes talk as if the whole world of science were shouting fervently in behalf of religion;

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yet all they can ever produce in proof of this claim is the feeblest sort of faint, confused peep--and we can't even be sure it is a religious peep. When the theists show us dozens or scores of first-rate, eminent men of science--instead of the same little band of three or four or five which they repeatedly exhibit--we shall be more impressed by the claim that science is on the side of religion. And these few scientists believe only in a vague theism (which, says Eddington, cannot be proved) and not in explicit, important religious creeds.

Einstein doesn't even believe in theism; to call him "religious" to claim him for religion even though he uses the word "religiousness"--is to play fast and loose with familiar, intelligible meanings. Einstein is not himself being scientific when he refers to his idealism as "religiousness"; he is using carelessly a term which has a well-established meaning quite other than that of human idealism; but the vital point is that he makes no concessions to what the majority of men, clerical leaders as well as laymen, count as religion.

Was it a "cosmic religious sense" that, as Mr. Holmes suggests, led Einstein to formulate his theory of relativity? No; it was Einstein's intellectual curiosity, his driving desire to formulate an answer to certain problems; men do not need a "cosmic religious sense" nor any other kind of religious sense in order to think and work and plan and build. Human motives are sufficient. It is ridiculous for Mr. Holmes to say that a "cosmic religious sense" must be the inspiration that held "generations of men faithful to their scientific purposes, in spite of countless frustrations and defeats."

"Lower Levels of Religion"

And I don't believe that Einstein means to be mystical nor religious in any accepted sense when he says: "The only deeply religious people of our age are the earnest men of research." What he means, evidently, is that the men of research (the scientists) have a more profound respect for truth, are more sensitively interested in contemplating and also in progressively solving the mystery of life, and are contributing more to the fine possibilities of human life than other men. That is the only reasonable interpretation which can be placed upon his statement. Incidentally, what a good round slam that is at the preachers and mystics and spiritual peddlers of palaver!

Again, when Mr. Holmes quotes Einstein as saying that there is no conflict between science and religion, I take it that Einstein meant there is no conflict when all of the religious ideas are taken out of religion--thus leaving nothing that can properly be called religion. What Mr. Holmes calls "the lower levels of religion" (where he admits there is a conflict with science) are the levels which monopolize practically one hundred percent of what men agree to call religion. Mr. Holmes and a few others, who insist upon redefining religion, are only a trifling minority--men who have gone so far in getting rid of religion but, for sentimental or traditional reasons, timidly hesitate to go farther. All that remains of Mr. Holmes' religion is the belief in a Spirit-God and that is pretty vague: Mr. Holmes himself, on another occasion, has referred to it as "the Unknown God."

When Mr. Holmes deals with history he is always unfortunate. And at times I suspect him of being just a little--well, not quite frank and fair in his remarks. Thus he summarizes in his own way what he describes as the three main periods of religious belief. In this summary he implies that the stage of primitive religion was over and done with a long, long time ago, centuries ago indeed. The second period of religion, he says, "began with the development of social feelings" and was a "religion of guidance and sympathy and love." He conveys the idea that this second period of religion developed in full flower away back in the early history of religion, although he doesn't say in precise language just when this period began nor how long it remained.

True History of Religion

Well, that is a very important point and Mr. Holmes, by slight-

ing the point and even implying a grossly erroneous view, confuses the whole issue. The fact is that Mr. Holmes' first period (of primitive religion, a religion of fear and superstition) really lasted until well toward the end of the nineteenth century and is the religion of millions today. Surely Mr. Holmes doesn't mean to say that throughout the long centuries of Christian domination of life there was a "religion of guidance and sympathy and love." We know better; we know that religion, until recent years, was predominantly a thing of harsh dogmatism and fear and superstition. It has only been within the present century, within the past three decades, that the old theology of hell and damnation has been undermined to a large extent among the people.

And whence came these sentiments of sympathy and love to drive the fear and superstition out of religion (a task which, by the way, is not completed)? These sentiments were the production of the rationalistic, humanistic influence in science, in historical study, in the consideration of ethics, in the criticism of religion. Liberal theists such as Mr. Holmes have simply humanized their religion by reducing it to its lowest quantity; their religion is better only in the sense that they have less religion and more humanism. Far from the hazy incorrectness of Mr. Holmes' suggestion about the second period of religion we find the truth in the recognition that this second period has not reached its full development--and when it does, religion will be a thing of the past. This point is vital to a historical consideration of the subject; and Mr. Holmes errs on this point most inexcusably; none knows better than he--or should know--the truth of what I am saying. Mr. Holmes' so-called third period of religion--the development of the "cosmic religious sense"--has already been shown up as merely a phrase without any particular meaning.

The process of Mr. Holmes' thinking in his summary of these three periods of religion is amusing. He says that the first period of religion--the religion of fear--was based upon error. He says that the second period--that of "guidance and sympathy and love" and a kind Providence, running the world--was also grounded in error. And then he assumes that the third period (which is of course only a rhetorical period) of "the cosmic religious sense" has finally settled down in the truth. This is queer reasoning; religion has been wrong twice, says Mr. Holmes, therefore it is

right the third time. It seems to me that when a special kind of effort to interpret life has twice landed in the very hugest sort of error, the third appeal should be regarded with more than suspicion.

Knowledge and Interpretation

I may add that I regard Mr. Holmes with suspicion when I find him playing such verbal tricks as in his quotation from Professor Nathaniel Schmidt's *The Coming of Religion*, defining religion as "man's consciousness of some power in nature determining man's destiny, and the ordering of his life in harmony with its demand." Really, Mr. Holmes, were you fully awake when you offered this gem? Nature determines man's life and whatever destiny man may have--naturally, inasmuch as man is an inseparable part of nature. And man tries to discover the secrets of nature and organize his life in harmony with nature--of course, and what of it? That is rationalism, not religion.

Mr. Holmes has a fancy for dividing his interpretations of thought into periods. This is a convenient method, but it happens that Mr. Holmes doesn't use it so very well. Thus in his remarks about the first period of conflict between science and religion he commits the glaring mistake of saying that the Greeks "had a highly developed science"--when the fact is that the Greek culture was weak precisely because it did not develop science but was led astray into abstract philosophical speculations through the influence of Plato and his followers. Materialism predominated in Greek philosophy; but science in the pagan civilization was very meager; the Greek thinkers made some brilliant guesses, which modern science verified and elaborated, but they did not have a "highly developed science."

However, Mr. Holmes is accurate enough, on the whole, in his statement of the warfare between science and religion over questions of reality. Then he goes on to describe the second period, in which he reminds us that science sharply took issue with religion over the interpretation of reality. For a while, says Mr. Holmes, science seemed to be triumphant in this sphere also (though why he should arbitrarily divide the discovery of reality and the interpretation of reality into separate spheres is not entirely clear). Science was not only the winner of knowledge but also the interpreter of knowledge. We should think the one role would naturally go with the other role. Who can interpret reality better than the scientists who have discovered

[Please turn to page three]

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Cosmic Religion

Continued from page one

moving to impending doom. Rather is it about a spirit in which truth has its shrine, with potentialities of self-fulfillment in its responses to beauty and right. It is in man, whose genius it is to conceive the very mechanical formulae in which the processes of nature are expressed, that Eddington finds his demonstration of the reality of spirit. From this spiritual essence of man's nature, he moves easily to the spiritual nature of the cosmos itself, which he finds in what religion has known for centuries as God. It is this astronomer, and not a mere theologian of the church, who asserts the existence of God, and he finds this deity to be "Him through whom comes power and goodness." Sir Arthur Eddington, in other words, is a theist—and a theist because he finds it impossible to explain the universe except in terms of spirit.

Thought or Machine?

Professor Jeans, in his search for ultimates, follows another path. Unlike Eddington, this great physicist refuses to abandon the mathematical formulae, of which I have spoken, as a possible interpretation of reality. He insists that in the equations which reveal the relations that exist between phenomena, there may well reside also the revelation of the ultimate which these phenomena express. Certainly there is nothing mechanical in these elaborate symbols. These mathematical equations, in other words, embody what the phenomena of the universe are doing. They are the thought of one who looks upon the cosmos as it moves, and who in himself, of course, is infinitely greater than man who has with such difficulty and in the end so imperfectly discovered some portion of the mathematics of the heavens. "The universe," says Jeans, in one of the most paralyzing statements which has been made by any living man in our time, "the universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine. . . . Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter. We are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter. Not, of course, individual minds, but the mind in the atoms, out of which individual minds have grown. . . . From the in-evidence of the universe, in other words, Professor Jeans discovers a creation behind which there must exist a creator, just as behind every thought there must exist a thinker. If, as Jeans states, the universe begins to look like "a great thought," then in and through and behind this universe there is the thinker who has conceived the thought. It is this which brings Jeans to the momentous proclamation that there must exist "a great architect of the universe who is a pure mathematician."

This is God. So far at least as God has been conceived in all ages as a great Mind existing behind reality! But Professor Jeans is not satisfied to conceive of the ultimate merely in terms of a mental concept. The mathematical formulae which hold the mind of this great physicist represent more to him than mere mathematics. "The laws which govern nature," he says, "are less suggestive of those which a machine obeys in its motion than of those which a musician obeys in writing a fugue, or a poet in composing a sonnet. . . . The motions of electrons and atoms do not resemble those of the parts of a locomotive as much as those of dancers in a cotillon." Mathematics, in other words, supplant mechanics only themselves to be supplanted by art and beauty. There is not only thought here in the universe, but emotion and aspiration and high visions of the spirit. Professor Jeans speaks perhaps his noblest word on this phase of the problem when, in a recent letter to the London Times, he states that the mathematical formulae which interest him as a physicist appear suddenly before his eyes as "a musical score." He sees in these letters and numerals not merely algebraic equations, but the score of a great symphony, the work of a great musician. And when he sees this score, he sees not merely the "framework of scales and key and tune," but also, behind and beyond and above, the surging orchestra with its instruments and music. The workings of the universe, in other words, bring to his ears "the music of the spheres"—which carries us straight back to the teachings of old Pythagoras, who built his universe around the twin poles of mathematics and music. The cosmos, just because it was a mathematical conception, became at the same time the music which produced "celestial harmonies." With the modern theory as with the ancient, God is not only a thinker but a poet, a musician, a spirit that conceives in beauty and attains in song.

The Ultimate Expression

Such is the conclusion of these two great scientists of our day as they search the universe for the ultimate expression of its life. What they find is what the religion of every age has found—namely, that the world is spirit, that God is spirit, "that they who worship (God) must worship him in spirit and in truth." The conclusion of all our argument is therefore plain. The answer to our question, "Is science vindicating religion?" is easy. May I summarize the whole trend of all that I have been arguing in three definite propositions:

First, the materialistic, or mechanistic, interpretation of the universe is dead. It has disappeared from the minds of modern men, in all probability never to return. Secondly, science, in its endeavor to find and formulate the ultimate that lies behind the phenomena of existence, has failed. Science has hoped to match its brilliant success in uncovering facts by an equally brilliant success in uncovering the interpretation of these facts. But in this it has in the end come to nothing. So

far as the ultimate interpretation of reality is concerned, science today stands absolutely bankrupt. Thirdly, in its failure to explain the universe, science must give way to religion. Nay, science is not only giving way to religion, but is supporting it, vindicating it, cooperating with it, in its presentation of spirit as the secret of all life. Where science ends, in other words, religion must now begin. It is in explaining this necessity that Sir Arthur Eddington declares, "This must be done to make room for a spiritual conception of the universe and man's place in it, with religion supplementing that part of the picture which science now must acknowledge itself unable to paint."

Religion Unscientific

Continued from page two

reality and given it an organized place in the consciousness of men? Or if a few scientists are not so good at interpretation, we should think that science as a whole—or the range and attitude of scientific thought—would best supply us with an interpretation of reality. But, says Mr. Holmes, science met its Waterloo at last. Its mechanical interpretation failed and religion is once more assuming its proper place as the interpreter of things. To be sure, religion has always failed in its interpretations, whereas science has succeeded in gaining for us all the knowledge that we have and the only tenable, tangible interpretation we have is a scientific one.

Mr. Holmes seizes the opportunity to introduce Eddington and Jeans upon the stage. What has happened? Mr. Holmes says that "the whole structure of physical science came tumbling to the ground." This is typical of theistic exaggeration. A more careful version of what happened is that, in the field of physical science especially, more complex vistas were opened and the stuff called matter and energy was found to be more subtle and intricate than scientists had formerly realized—although it is wrong to represent the scientists of a few decades ago as believing that they had solved entire the mystery of life. These scientists realized the incompleteness of their knowledge and the difficulties, many of them yet un-golved, of the problems they were studying. But it is not true—it is far from true—that "the whole structure of physical science came tumbling to the ground."

Inasmuch as he says so much about Einstein, Mr. Holmes should know that Einstein himself stated, in a message on the bicentenary (1927) of the death of Newton: "What has happened since Newton in theoretical physics is the organic development of his ideas." Since the real dawn of modern science, there has been no such melodramatic wreckage of "the whole structure of physical science" as Mr. Holmes wildly asserts. On the contrary, the structure of physical science has been steadily added to and built upon by successive investigators; Eddington and Millikan also have merely developed further, clarified and to some extent corrected (though not destroyed) the knowledge of their predecessors.

In studying electrons, Eddington has discovered mysterious behavior in these infinitesimal particles of charged matter. He has, in a word, come upon new problems in science. He and other physicists are still discussing the meaning of recent discoveries—and the discussion is by no means one-sided, but in the field of physics some of Eddington's ideas are disputed by able colleagues. For example, Eddington seems to find indeterminacy (or free will) in the behavior of electrons. But the conclusion does not so rapidly follow. It is reasonable to conclude, at this point, that Eddington has simply run up against something that he does not understand. What seems to be a puzzling lack of order may well be the lack of human understanding, thus far, of the laws or habits of behavior in such refined and elusive matter. The answer, I should say, must be left to science. It is certainly unscientific in the extreme for Eddington to throw up his hands and say, "This proves that there is free will. This mystery is God." No—this mystery is not God—it is a mystery. I take a position of suspended judgment on the problem whether chance or law reigns in the universe. In any case, all that we mean by law is a description of the behavior of things. We do not mean that a God drew up a

set of plans which nature must follow. To speak of "laws of nature"—that is but our way of symbolizing phenomena according to our human conceptions and values. Again, I do not see that the ideas of chance and law necessarily conflict. When we speak of chance, we mean on the one hand the unpredictable happenings of the future—that is to say, we do not know enough about the circumstances that will combine to determine the future in this or that fashion; and on the other hand, we mean accident, as we call it, which is not the same as lawlessness; and we also mean a law of probabilities, the chance that in a certain number of tosses of a coin heads and tails will fall about an even number of times—but each toss is nevertheless a chance, for we do not know whether that particular throw will result in heads or tails. The idea of chance, however, does not mean causelessness. Things don't just happen—although, given a long enough time in which phenomena can be shifted about in endless patterns and conjunctions, anything may conceivably happen.

But Mr. Holmes doesn't handle this question of law and chance very skillfully. In fact, he forgets himself and contradicts—that is, he intends to contradict—our position with the other. In the early part of his address he says that "cosmic religion [which he identifies with science] rises far above these levels of imaginative superstition, and in its apprehension of a universe that moves in 'beauteous order' through a time and space that are a single essence of reality, becomes 'the strongest and noblest driving force behind scientific research.'" He adds that "science can tolerate no interference with the orderly processes of nature. . . ."

But in the middle of his address, when he is ready to tell us how "the whole structure of physical science has come tumbling to the ground," Mr. Holmes reverses himself and says: "This brings us to law, the last refuge of a materialistic science, and this also is going. The best scientists of our time are telling us that the reign of law has been dissolved. There is no longer an indissoluble chain of cause and effect. There are effects today which have no adequate causes, and there may well be causes which have no effects. In any case there is no mechanical uniformity which holds the electrons and the stars together like the parts of a vast machine."

I do not see that this view improves the prospects of Mr. Holmes' Spirit-God. It seems plainly, considered from any angle, to be a deadly blow at theism. But it is very inconsistent of Mr. Holmes to throw the argument of a "beauteous order" at us and then, a bit later, wheel completely around and throw at us the argument that "the reign of law [order] has been dissolved." He doesn't try to reconcile these two statements—and in the form in which he offers them and from the theistic viewpoint he can't reconcile them. What he does is to contradict one extreme statement with another extreme statement. Chance, as I have said, may reasonably be regarded as the name for what we don't understand nor foresee in the behavior of things; it is not synonymous with causelessness, although Mr. Holmes definitely uses the term in that sense.

The thing for which Mr. Holmes and all the new theists are looking, of course, is a field of the unknown in which to place their ever-receding God. The true statement of the conflict between science and religion is that science wins in every step of knowledge; and religion keeps backing off into the unknown and saying, "Here in the unknown is the [unknown] God." And when Mr. Holmes says that the universe is spiritual, he means that the unknown is spiritual; and the answer is that this is unknown to Mr. Holmes—he is merely finding a dignified term to cover his ignorance—while within the known area of life the material evidences are overwhelming. For that matter, Eddington and Jeans and the other few eccentric scientists deal with material things when they are following their special science of physics; it is only when they desert science and try to frame some apology for religion that they talk about "spiritual" notions. A "spiritual reality" is a contradiction in terms. A Spirit-God is not even a contradiction. It is an inconceivability.

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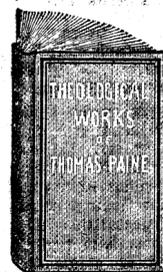
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Weekly Reviews and Other Literary Ruminations Isaac Goldberg

A NEW POETIC LOCHINVAR OUT OF THE WEST

The Iron Dish. By Lynn Riggs. New York. Doubleday, Doran & Co. \$2.

I spoke recently in these columns about the plays of Mr. Riggs, who has just been honored with the production of Green Grow the Lilacs by The Theater Guild. I saw the opening performance last night, by the way (Dec. 8, 1930) and it was received with discriminating enthusiasm by a distinguished Boston public. In actual presentation the play differed very little from the impression I had formed when reading the manuscript. Mr. Riggs, a born poet, may have much to learn about the tricks of the theater; about vital drama itself he has less to acquire.

However, it is of his poetry that I speak today, although it is difficult, once having read his theatrical pieces, to keep them entirely out of mind when considering his verses.

Riggs is poetic not only in vocabulary but in the quality of his thinking. He looks out upon the familiar phenomena of living as if he were gazing upon them for the first time, and yet he speaks of the self-same phenomena in almost ultimate terms. If this sounds too metaphysical I shall presently quote some of his stanzas to show just what I mean.

This young Oklahoman—he is only thirty-one—is both an eye and an ear. He has a strong predilection for music, especially the folk-songs of his native territory, and a feeling, equally strong, for the pictorial. In his plays, of course, these preferences take the form of choric interludes, folk-dances and such, as well as an addition to scenery of the more picturesque sort. In his poetry the qualities are more subtly transmuted. His fondness for music appears as a delicate sensitivity to short, melodic lines. His feeling for the pictorial becomes an exquisite imagery that manages to be at once symbol, sight and sound.

I should say, indeed, speaking from a purely esthetic standpoint, that Riggs in a few of his poems has suggested that perfection which so far eludes him in his dramas. Certainly he has in his verses a conciseness that would aid enormously the structure of his plays. The lyricist in him wages conflict with the dramatist. Hence the episodic character of his stage pieces, in which melodrama dwells side by side with idyllic interludes.

Riggs sometimes suggests the severe imagery of the school known in French literature as the Parnassians; yet he has in him something, too, of that literary chapel which revolted against the coldness of the Parnassians and became known as the Symbolists or the Decadents. Peculiarly enough the first of these schools affected the visual qualities of sculpture and painting, while the Symbolists sought the vague suggestiveness of music. "Music above all things," as Verlaine wrote in a famous poem.

There is danger, commenting in too great detail upon such poems as these, of having them disintegrate under the pressure of analysis. Let me then rather transcribe a few of them so that you may savor their quality. (I may add parenthetically that a number of Riggs' Oklahoma dialect poems are not represented here; they may be found in the regional miscellany made a year ago under the direction of B. A. Botkin and published with the title Folk-Say, at Norman, Okla., by the Oklahoma Folk-Lore Society. Another annual with the same title is shortly to be published, and I intend to report upon it as soon as it is available.)

Here is Riggs the poet writing on the materials of his craft:

The High Words Aloof, the words From mouth to mouth Wing high, North and south.

In the blue air Slowly they rise Above the wind And the cloud ice.

They never wait for them that fall: Their shadows are long As their flight is tall

In a certain place At last they speak

To one alone On a mountain peak. Notice how, even with so intangible a breath as a word the poet, by his intense need of visualization, constructs an image that is also a symbol.

Consider again the image that follows. I suppose that one may be taught to appreciate such lines as these; for the moment, however, I prefer to let them speak for themselves:

The Intimate Cleavage Time was when the frost Found no entry Into this rock, And it a sentry.

Some place, forgotten, A wound undressed, Has made welcome Its cruel guest.

Two rocks will stand now, touching In a chaste kiss— Through what eternities Alone like this.

Riven, intact. Terrible To have known The intimate cleavage Of stone!

Let not these aloof stanzas—they are by no means so frigid as they appear, and mask an intensity of feeling—induce unattuned spirits to imagine that Riggs dwells in a lofty ivory tower. As a matter of fact, his plays are full of such situations and lines as worry our censors in their professional moments. And some of his Oklahoman stanzas are in the same vein. Let me reprint, from the 1929 Folk-Say, the ditty called

The Widdler I been a widdler more than once Whut with marryin John s' early An' havin children—Jake an' Liddy, Botchie an' Bean, the twins, an' Pearley.

An' John a-dyin then, an' leavin Me to wash an' mend an' scrub Fur other people to make a livin. He shorely left me "in the tub"! The preacher 'at preached the funeral wuz Atkins.

All dried up like a little prune. I married him before I knowed it, Hardly knowin whut I uz a-doin.

He beat my children, but he talked good. He always said he liked my hips— "Such a nice shape fur a wome'n to have!"

A nice thing from a preacher's lips! I ain't told you about Neb Farley, Him that treated us 'n' nice. When I uz a-gettin divorced from the preacher.

O, I been a widdler more than twice! Whether as playwright or as poet Mr. Riggs is of the caliber that deserves not only encouragement but the more substantial support of purchase. Unless I sadly miss my guess we shall hear much more of him.

ADVANCE NOTICE

I am always glad to hear from Upton Sinclair. When, if ever, such a thing as the definitive history of American literature is written, there will be much dispute as to the rank that shall be assigned to Upton; there should be no dispute as to the man's integrity and to the salutary influence that he exercised in his day all over the world. The recent bibliography of his works, including translations into languages throughout the globe, lists five hundred and twenty-five titles distributed through thirty-four different countries. In Russia alone, 2,000,000 copies of his writings have been sold.

His next book is to be a novel, entitled Roman Holiday. I was unable to follow Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair in the psychic divagations of their Mental Radio. Not even the letter from Albert Einstein, or the two-column review of the book in the London Times, gave me the slightest thrill of conviction. I believe in coincidence; I do not believe in telepathy. Yet all of us have hunches, and even my untelepathic self somehow feels that Roman Holiday is going to be for Sinclair a novelistic holiday in which the claims of art will not be flouted too much in favor of the claims of sociology. Posterity is notoriously ungrateful; even those works of art which were written primarily to improve the world are as tracts usually forgotten and, if remembered, are remembered for their revivifying artistry.

Friends of Sinclair who have read the manuscript of Roman Holiday—they include W. E. Woodward and Fulton Oursler—speak of it in unabated admiration. I genuinely hope that my hunch is not playing false. I should like to have an American holiday with Roman Holiday.

"A SCRAMBLE for Beauty: In New York 500 Plastic Surgeons Do Rushing Business"—thus an O. O. McIntyre headline. Even so, there are six million people in New York City and most of them are below the economic, not to say the esthetic, grade of plastic surgery.

Three Women

By Isaac Goldberg

This week, as it happens, I seem to have been preoccupied in one way or another with women. (Bibliographically speaking, of course.) First came a short novel from the French of Jacques Chardonne, well and unobtrusively translated by Viola Gerard Garvin. The book is published by Simon & Schuster at \$2. Eva, or The Interrupted Diary was imported to America wrapped in the profuse compliments of such worthies as Arnold Bennett, Andre Maurois, Gerald Gould and others. With one accord they praise the work for its subtle psychological analysis and its gracious style.

Evidently I am not attuned to the charm and delicacy of M. Chardonne. Eva is not a bad book; I am in great doubt that "A rereading of this book in ten years, in fifty years' time will give one the same pleasure as the reading of it today." So wrote Edmond Jaloux. I am in doubt, indeed, that anybody will be reading this interrupted diary in ten years, not to speak of five decades. To show you how these Frenchmen can blurb about one another, listen to this from Gabriel Marcel, writing in L'Europe Nouvelle: "This is a real gem and can stand as an equal in the company of no matter what the masterpiece." Under such praise the slender proportions of Eva, whether literary or physical, sink beneath the wave.

Let us rescue it from its friends. It is in the first place the desultory diary of a husband who, in his infatuation for his wife, discovers only at the very end that she has not loved him. So far, commonplace. Yet, as he writes, "The artist knows that defect of his work and loves it, because it springs from the same source as its essential virtue. If Eva were perfect she would not be Eva."

Now, it is the very quality of this husband's infatuation that contains also the nobility which allows him to release Eva for marriage to another without a qualm. The Eva who deserts him, who has never loved him, is not the Eva whom he has celebrated in his notes.

The tale is told almost tenderly, with a certain poetic insight, and is not at all over-written. To many it should come as a relieving contrast to the mountains of he-man fiction under which our readers stagger to their literary entertainment. Is not this enough? Why handicap a book with a profuseness of praise that threatens to alienate the very type of reader for whom such unsensational and mellow wisdom was created?

II

So much—and perhaps it is not enough—for Eva. On the same shelf I found the life of Mary Baker Eddy by Dakin, which has now been released in the Blue Ribbon dollar series. It is one of the best values in the catalogue. Not having written the book, I do not have to preserve the quasi-scientific attitude of the author toward his subject. I know that excrement on the public highway is one thing—a malodorous offense; that same excrement, being studied in the laboratory, is viewed (and even smelled) objectively by the investigator. Toward his investigation Mr. Dakin preserves this objectivity of the laboratory.

At bottom, I suppose, we are all what we are. Despite the backsliding of a number of modern scientists who should know better, we are, perhaps within variable limits, creatures of one sort of determinism or another. I do not mean to say that it is useless to give, or try to give, direction to our existence; if, however, we strain the invisible tether that links us to our destiny we very soon feel the tug around our throats. We should be charitable, then, even to a Mary Baker Eddy. It is hard. Not a redeeming human quality seems to have illuminated her mean career. Time and again she disgusts us with the violence of the schemer, the self-seeker, the mountebank, the religious adventuress. Condemnation is altogether too easy in her case. Yet, with all these reservations, I cannot find in me the charity that Dakin exercises. Even for a confirmed neurotic, this Mary who placed herself on an equality with Christ abuses the prerogatives that modern psychiatry vouchsafes to the mentally ill. Merely because she converted her wretched nature into cathedrals and mountains of gold does

not entitle her to any more consideration than a less successful combination of the charlatan and invalid saint.

The simple cohorts who believe in her eclectic doctrine, patched together from every one with whom she had come in contact, should achieve sufficient common sense to read this book as calmly as they can. Essentially, the tale is no more preposterous than that of any other religious source book. But this is something that took place before our very eyes, as it were, like Mormonism (I almost wrote Moronism). It attests not only to the eternal Barnum in humanity, but also to that fool in us of which Barnum himself said one was born every minute.

III

I open the window for air and proceed to a woman who inhabited a different sphere. I mean Emily Dickinson, a Centenary Edition of whose poems has just been published, at \$4, by Little Brown & Co. of Boston. Several recent biographies have given the mottled details of her life, especially of the married man—whenever he was—with whom she was supposed to be in love. They are all interesting, but I would not trade them for the collected poems of this once obscure New England genius.

Emily's poems are never long; they are as arrows shot into the infinite and finding a target in our own hidden lives. She can say more in four lines than most poets in four hundred. For such as she no cathedrals are raised, but it is the Dickinsons and not the Eddys who bring, or help to bring, true healing. Emily's poems, in fact, were largely her healing.

Let me quote a few lines:

Faith is a fine invention For gentlemen who see; But microbes are prudent In an emergency.

Another:

A deed knocks first at thought, And then it knocks at will. That is the manufacturing spot, And will at home and well.

It then goes out an act, Or is entombed so still That only to the ear of God Its doom is audible.

A pleasant trait of Emily's poetry is its intellectuality, which does not snuff out her divine gift of lyrical conciseness. Her best lines are as flashes of intuition and yet rarely does even her mysticism offend, because even mysticism borrows its quality from the mind that plays with it.

"SINFUL" PROFESSION

Lotta Crabtree, in her heyday a celebrated actress, arranged in her will that a memorial window, in honor of her mother, should be given to a New York City church. The church refused to accept the gift, because the profession of an actress was in its view sinful and disgraceful. Now it is announced that a small Chicago church will find room for the memorial window. Humanism and common sense triumphed over the Christian idea of sin. The Chicago church, in its action, rejected the traditional Christian view that the theater and its protagonists are sinful and accepted the worldly, rationalistic view that acting is a perfectly good, as it is also a finely talented, profession.

We think that the New York City church acted in a hypocritical rather than a righteous manner. It has probably accepted memorial windows from rich persons who have followed the trade of wholesale exploitation and financial trickery which, in the modern expression, is no better than racketeering. Churches are not usually sensitive about the source of gifts coming from their rich benefactors. Isn't it rather like straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel for a church to refuse a gift from an actress and take a gift from a rich exploiter?

WHEN Hoover said that under the reign of "economic individualism" and the special guiding reign of the Great Engineer, the fullest prosperity and the abolition of poverty would be brought to the American people, he was just a bit inaccurate: in fact, what the people have been given is "leisure" of unemployment: far from an easy or agreeable "leisure," in which the only discernible advantage is the possibility that the people will be stimulated to some sound thinking about Hooverism and "economic individualism."

MINING EXPERT, financial expert, promotional expert, schemingly an expert in making fools of people to make a fortune for himself—that's the life story of Herbert Hoover.

Just Out! A New Sham-Smashing Book!

The Church That Was Founded on Lies and Forgeries

By Joseph Wheless

A Startling Expose of Christian Frauds, Forgeries and Fakeries!

Smash go the presumptuously historical "facts" on which the Church of Rome claims to be based!

The Catholic Church claims, and offers feeble "proof" based on a forgery, that Christ constituted St. Peter the first head of the Church of Rome. In this new book, entitled "The Church That Was Founded on Lies and Forgeries," Joseph Wheless ably proves this alleged fact is an absolute fallacy, pointing out and positively showing that Peter never was in Rome! This fact alone shatters the entire foundation on which the Catholic Church was supposedly built, for if Peter never was in Rome, he could not possibly found the Church of Rome; he could not be the first bishop or "pope" of the Roman Catholic Church nor he could have died or been "martyred" in Rome.

The career of Peter, Christ's right-hand man, is completely disclosed. We see him not only as a disciple, and as a mythical bishop, but as a man—a Jew with a genuine prejudice against, and hatred for, all Gentiles. Yet millions of Gentiles, today, bow down in reverence before his venerable (so-called) shrine! In this new book we see him as a quarrelsome, ignorant fisherman ever watchful for an opportunity to be in the limelight.

"The Church That Was Founded on Lies and Forgeries" is one of the most powerful and complete exposures of the depravity of the Church of Rome. There can be no dispute concerning the authenticity of this surprising document for we are confronted with positive citations from the "Scriptures" and other ancient ecclesiastical records. Differences in the style and construction of the writing of many of these records point unmistakably to the fact that they had been "doctored," many years after the originals were composed, for the convenience of contemporary church heads. Besides learning of forgeries, other unscrupulous methods of the ancient "Fathers," committed to attain power and establish precedent, are exposed in this book.

"Fraud," says Ingersoll, "is hateful to its victims." Yet over fifteen million people in the United States alone abide by the teachings of the Church of Rome—the superb fraud of all times!

Another of the most astounding facts that comes to light in this careful study of Mr. Wheless' is that the first church was NOT the Roman Church, but the Greek Church; and the epistles of the apostles and saints (besides being lies and forgeries) were originally written not in Latin, but in Greek.

"The Church That Was Founded on Lies and Forgeries" is a book to be read not only by Freethinkers, but by men who have previously accepted the teachings of the Church of Rome without question, content to accept the superstitions imposed on them by ancient bigots grasping for power and wealth; submitting to countless ceremonies without benefit or meaning; depriving themselves of comforts that the greed of the "church heads" could at least partially be satisfied.

Says Mr. Wheless, "The Christian Church and its very basic claim of Divine origin and right of rule are proven to demonstration to be gigantic forgeries and false pretenses. To repudiate it forever and to speed its hastening destruction must be the vindicating work of outraged self-respect of mankind. Deprived of its revenues and of its grafting privileges derived from superstitious reverence, it will speedily die the death."

Wheless has made a careful and thorough survey of his subject. He does not generalize, but presents the cold facts, pointing out the actual contradictory quotations from the ecclesiastical documents that have served as the basis for the foundation of the Church of Rome.

This scorching exposure of the lies and forgeries found in the ecclesiastical records has been made into an attractive volume and priced within the reach of every one. You should not put off ordering this valuable book another day. It is a wise and worthy addition to any library.

Burbank said, "The time has come for honest men to denounce false teachers and attack false gods." He was right! Here is a book for the thinker, for the man who has the courage to face the truth. It is a book that undoubtedly has a tremendous appeal. Can you imagine any drama more intense, more exciting than having the frauds and fakeries that have tricked the people for centuries shot to pieces before your very eyes?

That is exactly what happens! Bit by bit you are shown how the people were frightened into belief by false prophets, how theories became facts, and facts were twisted, and added to, decade after decade until there is in existence the Roman Catholic Church of today, evolved from forgeries and lies!

You will find in this new book the sound reasoning of the trained lawyer who has read widely and studied in detail the subject matter. Every page will reveal some amazing fraud, some startling lie that millions of men and women have accepted without question until the present time. It will be of interest to note that at one time the bishop of Rome did not reign supreme, but was hooted at by other churches in his effort to become dictatorial.

Here is a book most assuredly for the masses—a book that will give you—a broader and more comprehensive outlook on the lies, forgeries and fakeries that make up religion, the superstition that has had the people bluffed too long! Man is no longer content to let the fatuous "church heads" prey upon his mind, corrupting it with untruths so that he will remain submissive to their wishes and desires. He is ready to do his own thinking, manage his own finances and set his own ideals.

Here is a book that sets forth in plain, simple language unadulterated facts, the truth about the "rock" on which the first church was founded. "THE CHURCH THAT WAS FOUNDED ON LIES AND FORGERIES" is a most daring presentation of facts.

It is printed on a good grade of paper, and is attractively bound in stiff card covers. Size 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches. You will find 87 pages crammed full of sham-smashing truth!

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