It is now nearly fifty years since the School Medical Service in Britain began, and it has, during that period, expanded without interruption. It has, in conjunction with improvements in the standard of living and in family and general care, very greatly improved the health and cleanliness of the children, so that it is now possible for the Service to give more attention to the needs of individual children. Everyone who is responsible for children in any way, or is otherwise interested in their welfare, will be grateful to every member of this Service, whose patience and devotion and efficiency are giving to so many a start in life that is now so much better than it was.

G. Lapage

RELIGIOUS AND BIOLOGICAL TEACHING

In a short paper devoted to religious and biological teaching in schools on the origin of life and man, Dr. L. M. J. Kramer examines the divergence in educational practice between what he calls the Sunday School, biblical or religious approach to the question of life's and man's origin and the formal scientific and biological teaching about them in schools*. There is always the danger of setting young minds along one of two equally undesirable paths, one materialistic or even anti-religious, and the other taking too little account of the strong appeal of science to the intellect. Before this educational divergence can be reduced, an intellectually satisfying reconciliation of religion as a whole with science as a whole is necessary, and a teacher of religion, or of science, who has not made a reconciliation for himself may be ineffective as a leader of thought. Whatever view we take, evolutionary biology appears as an important social factor, affecting beliefs, and beliefs often precede or condition our actions. Biology teachers in particular wield a powerful social tool, and should be careful how they do so.

The relationship of evolution to religion is not a new problem. There have been, however, recent developments in both evolutionary studies and cognate matters and in religious thought.

In his paper, Kramer reviews some of the newer scientific work and discusses how it may affect school practices, and also attempts to follow some religious trends before suggesting ways along which a reconciliation of science, including evolution, with religion may be reached. There are, he believes, four tests which may be applied before reconciliation is achieved.

The first test is that the strong appeal of science to the reason exposes young students to two dangers. One is that of becoming a prisoner of the reason, requiring material signs and practical evidence for views held in almost every department of life, even for religious beliefs. The second danger, which frequently accompanies the materialistic view, is of losing the power to appreciate simple or beautiful things in Nature or the arts.

Those who grow into such an extreme state of mind are bound to be superficial in their approach to the deeper problems of life. Yet even those who are believers in God and sincere Christians may feel the compelling influences of intellect and reason in connexion with physical matters. The first test of a valid reconciliation must be that it shall provide an escape for prisoners of the reason and also satisfy others who are not unmindful of the appeal to their reason.

The second test of a true reconciliation is that it must be emotionally satisfying. It is not infrequently found that young people mistaking the applications of science to the production of destructive weapons for the quest for truth develop a strong antipathy to the logical processes of thought by which science often achieves its ends and effects. They try to ignore science and become prisoners of strong emotions. The second test of a true reconciliation is that it must provide a different route of escape from that for the intellectual prisoner—an escape from misdirected emotionalism—as well as, naturally, doing no violence to the feelings of those Christians who are not unreasoningly against all that science stands for and has attained.

* "Alpha and Omega". British Social Biology Council Educational Paper, No. 7. (Tavistock House, London, W.C.1.) 1s. 9d.

INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS

FORTY-SECOND SESSION

The forty-second Indian Science Congress was held in Baroda during January 4–10 under the auspices of the Maharajah Sayajirao University of Baroda, and was opened by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. About five thousand people, including two thousand delegates, attended the session, and there were about sixty guests from countries outside India.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Prof. S. K. Mitra, president of the session, referred to the sudden death of Sir Shanti Bhatnagar, a past general president and an honorary member of the Indian Science Congress Association, and the audience stood in silence for one minute. Welcoming the scientific workers and other visitors to the session, Mrs. Hansa Mehta, vice-chancellor of the University of Baroda and chairman of the local reception committee, made an appeal for the application of science in the service of man so that the destructive potentiality of science could be usefully converted for doing good. In his short inaugural address, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru exhorted the scientists to co-ordinate activities and render all help in framing the Second National Five-Year Plan for the improvement of the conditions of people. The general president of the Association, Prof. S. K. Mitra, emphasized in his address the need for application of modern scientific methods in the industrial sphere with the view of increasing production and making things available to consumers at cheaper prices.

The scientific business of the session was carried out in thirteen different sections representing different branches of science, and twenty-nine symposia on different scientific aspects and problems were held. In all, more than a thousand papers were read. The following popular lectures were given: symmetry in the atomic world (Prof. P. A. M. Dirac); on the human value of scientific progress (Prof. P. Auger); volcanic eruptions (Prof. T. Watanabe); relation of science to democracy (W. Kaempffert); hæmoglobin (Prof. Linus Pauling); scientific foundation of planning in the U.S.S.R. (Academician K. V. Ostrovityanov, leader of the U.S.S.R. delegation); study of India in the U.S.S.R. (A. A. Guber); scientific research in new China (Chien Tuan-Sheng, leader of the delegation of the People's