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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Catholicism and Evolution

THE recent Papal declaration that the Catholic Church now accepts the modern scientific estimation of the age of our planet, undoubtedly represents a considerable landmark in the intellectual development of Roman Catholicism. Before long, we shall, no doubt, be informed that Rome has always accepted the evolutionary concept; indeed, we expect to learn in due course that this doctrine was discovered by the Fathers of the Church long before Darwin. Incredible as it may sound to our readers, the last-mentioned claim has already been put forward by a Belgian Catholic theologian, Canon Dorlodot, in a book published a generation or so back, entitled *Darwinism and Catholic Dogma*. The same claim is also advanced in a "Catholic Truth Society" pamphlet, *Evolution*, by Prof. Renouf of Cork. The present writer has actually read both the above works.

In brief, the argument elaborated by Prof. Canon Dorlodot and repeated in more summary fashion in the more popular pamphlet of his Irish co-religionist, amounts to this: long before Darwin and Wallace were born, or for that matter, long before modern science was ever heard of, certain philosophical theologians, Fathers of the Church, in particular, Origen, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory of Nyssa, taught what was, in effect, the theory of Evolution or "Transformism," as Catholic theology usually terms the doctrine propounded in *The Origin of Species*.

Prior to making his most recent declaration on the age of the earth, the present Pope had already tacitly admitted this claim by declaring belief in evolution to be a permissible "hypothesis" for Catholic scholars. The present Pope is not a scientific expert, nor even really a qualified theologian, since his career has been that of a "career-diplomat" before coming to preside over the Vatican. Behind the recent Papal change of attitude we can probably discern the influence of the Jesuits, the scientific leaders of modern Catholicism.

In its current attitude to modern scientific teaching with regard to the duration and development of our planet, the Church of Rome is actually pursuing its traditional reaction towards new and revolutionary conceptions in science and history: an attitude of more or less open hostility, followed by a cautious permission to investigate, finally ending in a silent acceptance of the new point of view as entirely consonant with traditional Christian teaching on the subject.

Actually, a classical example of the above process is afforded by the successive reactions of the Church four centuries ago to the Copernican-heliocentric-astronomy: prior to Bruno and Galileo, the Church officially ignored it; then, when the aforementioned thinkers began, unlike Copernicus himself, to use the new concept in a militantly anti-Catholic sense, the Church, not unnaturally struck back: it burnt Bruno at the stake, silenced Galileo forcibly, and put the new knowledge on the *Index of Prohibited*

Books for two centuries (1616-1834). It should, however, be pointed out that, notwithstanding many assertions to the contrary by ill-informed anti-Catholic critics, the Catholic Church never dogmatically condemned Copernican astronomy; the Roman Inquisition which condemned Galileo, like all tribunals in the Church of Rome, had only an administrative authority. It was, and is always open to a subsequent Pope, or General Council, to revoke its decision which, in the case of Copernican astronomy, was eventually done by Pope Gregory XVI in 1834, when books advocating the heliocentric theory were finally taken off the *Index*. On Catholic principles this would have been impossible if the Church had officially—that is, "infallibly"—condemned Copernican astronomy.

The past and present attitude of Rome towards the evolutionary teaching on Man and the Universe which has been increasingly accepted by modern science since Darwin is, in broad outline, much the same as its past attitude towards Copernican astronomy. Rome at first received the new revolutionary teaching with official silence, but actual hostility. However, the Vatican is a worldly-wise institution and, no doubt, taught by the case of Galileo, a case which did Rome a great deal of damage, carefully avoided making any sensational condemnation of evolution as such. When, however, the new scientific "heresy" provided the basis for a formidable "modernist" movement inside the Church itself and led by learned clerics, then Rome again struck back hard. The "modernist" leaders, the eminent Biblical scholar, Alfred Loisy, and the ex-Jesuit, George Tyrrell, were condemned like Bruno and Galileo in the earlier controversy. Like Bruno—unlike Galileo—the modernist leaders refused to recant. But times have changed and the fires of the stake are no longer available for unrepentant heretics. When M. Loisy was finally ex-communicated (in 1908) with the traditional "bell, book, and candle," the only inconvenience suffered by the great scholar was that his pious charwoman immediately gave notice! The world has, after all, moved on since the days of Bruno and Galileo!

The historic parallel may be continued both factually and instructively. As in the earlier case of Copernican astronomy, the condemnation of the "modernists," who applied—it was their crowning "heresy"—evolutionary principles to Catholic dogma, to "The Faith once for all delivered to the Saints," was followed by a period of reactionary obscurantism within the Church. But, again, as in the earlier case, Rome, even then, took care not to issue any final—"infallible" condemnation of evolution as such. Rome had conformed with her traditional practice: she was waiting to see which way "the cat was going to jump" before finally committing herself.

It is now evident that "the cat" has made its "jump," an evolutionary one! That, in short, evolution has now definitely come to stay and to dominate the science of all future ages. That the Vatican realises this is now demonstrated by the recent authoritative declarations of the present Pope with regard both to evolution in general

and, in particular, with reference to the age of the earth, now expanded from the six "days" of Genesis to the modern astronomical computation of about five billion years. We may now expect that, with her traditional tact, Rome will cautiously acclimatise the evolutionary concept to her traditional theological system. For a time, the old pre-evolutionary ideas will still be tolerated in backward Catholic lands, just as the old pre-Copernican astronomy continued to be taught in Spain until well into the last century. However, Catholic theology will be "revised" in order to meet the requirements of evolution.

To "transform" the Church of Genesis and of St. Thomas Aquinas into a church which accepts Darwin and modern astronomy will be a sufficiently formidable task: the theologian who eventually accomplishes it will deserve his Heavenly crown!

F. A. RIDLEY.

IS IT PEACE? AN INDIAN VIEW

[This article is primarily political, but we include it as embodying a fresh angle on a subject that concerns us all.—EDITOR.]

IS it peace? or at any rate not early war? Hopes have certainly risen even in our special breasts, as we read the headlines announcing agreements on points of procedure in the disarmament talks. Remember the meetings early in the year of the four Foreign Ministers' Deputies; after several months of talk they had not agreed even on procedure.

Yet if we cast our minds back to the beginning of these discussions it is not easy to be hopeful. The first step was the American proposal in 1946 for an agreement on atomic energy control. Russia turned it down on the plea that it would infringe national sovereignty. It was not until October, 1950, that she accepted the principle of inspection.

Meanwhile much had happened. Russia had consolidated her rule over Eastern Europe, turning out the elected governments there one by one, and replacing them by Communist governments. In 1948, when the Communists seized Czechoslovakia and murdered Masaryk, the West began to show signs of alarm. Accordingly, Russia launched her Peace Campaign, of which the principal slogan was a ban on atomic weapons.

Though this campaign claimed millions of signatures, the Western Powers did not at first treat it seriously. Russia was systematically expanding. America had disarmed till she had not more than five or six divisions fit to take the field, and had acquiesced after protests in all Russia's acts of aggression. When Russia cried peace and accused America of warmongering the natural reaction was to ignore it.

THE PEACE CAMPAIGN

But that was to underestimate the shrewdness of the Russian campaign. People want peace so passionately that they will respond to any appeal for peace, even if it comes from the aggressor. By 1949 the Peace Campaign had persuaded many otherwise intelligent people that America was responsible for the international tension. In that year Russia achieved an atomic explosion: one was amazed to hear the joyful comment that this was good for peace, since it would equalise the balance of power.

That same year, 1949, China went Communist. The Americans were much upset, but confined themselves to

abusing the State Department. In 1950, a minor Russian satellite, mysteriously equipped with a first-class army led by some hundreds of tanks, suddenly attacked South Korea. America rushed to her help, but the American public were astonished to learn that they had scarcely any land forces fit to fight. Western Europe, totally defenceless, was in an agony of fear: a bitterly hostile Russia stood on her frontier with an army of a hundred or more divisions, and the whole of the effective American army—which would have been far too small and too late to help anyway—was tied down in Korea.

Russia did not attack. *Why*, we do not know. If she does not mean to conquer the world why do her leaders and their followers abroad continue to proclaim the world revolution? Why did she turn down atomic energy control? Why has she sabotaged the U.N., and kept international relations unfriendly by bad manners and abusive propaganda? Why has she maintained a huge army, vastly larger than any other country's? Why did Red China occupy Tibet? It may be possible to explain all these things away, but on the face of them they suggest hostile intentions.

After the invasion of Korea America began to rearm, and Western Europe made at least some realistic-looking gestures. Still Russia did not attack. If she means to attack in Europe her opportunity is already passing. On this consideration many observers base a hope for peace. Even Liddell-Hart has argued that to defend Europe with the NATO army is better, since it is less provocative than to do so as hitherto by the threat of atom bombing. He implies that America should withdraw her bomber squadrons from Britain.

It is permissible to reply that what has prevented Russia from attacking in Europe hitherto is precisely those bomber squadrons. It seems probable, also, that Russia's purpose in entering into apparently serious discussions on disarmament is, among other things, to get those bomber squadrons withdrawn.

LOSING THE PROPAGANDA WAR

Thus the Western Powers found themselves losing the propaganda game. Even before they began to rearm, and while the Communists were openly on the offensive, Russia was making headway with her peace propaganda. Immediately the Western Powers began to rearm, opinion began to swing against them. People advanced learned arguments to prove that Russia had never meant to go to war. She had not attacked in Europe! They forgot that she had attacked in Korea—not to speak of Czechoslovakia, Greece, Malaya, and a dozen other countries.

Finding the Russian peace propaganda far more effective than she had expected, America decided to try her hand at it too. Truman bluntly said so: he was going to deprive Russia of her propaganda advantage by proposing a disarmament conference. That is how the conference began.

Russia's peace propaganda was sheer hypocrisy, actually accompanied by unprovoked aggressive warfare. America proposed a disarmament conference confessedly as a counterblast to this peace propaganda. How can we expect any result?

Yet they have entered a conference and have come to some preliminary agreements, and the people of the world look on in hope. Can they afford to break up without any result?

N. K. PARIKH.

(To be continued)

THE BRITISH TRADITION

IN the issue for January 13, "The British Tradition" (Mowbray) was confidently recommended to Freethinkers, by "J.R."

Listening to most of the six broadcast talks I imagined that neither the speakers nor the B.B.C. were concerned about the fact that no forthright answers would be permitted the air. Turning to the talk by Dr. H. F. Lovell Cocks I find the Nonconformists take their freedom of worship as a matter of course because they've "inherited the British tradition of freedom of conscience." It was the Toleration Act of 1689 that gave them freedom, though "the campaign for complete religious liberty was to drag on for another two hundred years or more."

The Toleration Act excluded Roman Catholics, and it was in consequence of this Act that heretics got into new and serious trouble. The Act not only deprived of toleration all who should deny in preaching or in writing the Doctrine of the Trinity as declared in the Thirty-nine Articles, but compelled all preachers to declare approbation of and subscribe those Articles omitting only the parts relating to government and ceremony. That the early Nonconformists were opposed by a Christian foe can be seen from the London Minister's Letter (1645) addressed to the Assembly of Divines and proclaiming a general toleration to be "a great impiety," and culminating in the Lancashire manifesto, a document of rare malignity of expression. The Ministers of Suffolk and Essex in their "Humble Petition" to the House of Peers, prayed "that Schismatics, Heretics, seducing teachers and soul-subverting books be effectually suppressed." "The Scots Declaration against the Toleration of Sects and Sectaries and the Liberty of Conscience" (1647) denounced "Liberties of Conscience, the Nurse of all Heresies and Schismes." The glory of the series is "The Harmonious Consent of the Ministers of the Province within the County Palatine of Lancaster, With their Reverend Brethren the Ministers of the Province of London against the errors, heresies and blasphemies of these times, and the Toleration of them" (1648). Among other genial sentiments they remark that "a toleration would be the putting of a sword into a mad man's hand; a cup of poyson into the hand of a child; a letting loose of mad men with firebrands in their hands; an appointing of a City of Refuge in men's consciences for the Devil to fly to; a laying the stumbling block before the blind; a proclaiming liberty to the wolves to come into Christ's fold to prey upon his lambs; a toleration of soul-murder (the greatest murder of all other) and for the establishing whereof damned souls in hel would accurse men on earth" Equally virulent is the lame concession which follows: "though we shall easily grant men are not to be punished by the Magistrate for their internal opinions which they do not discover, yet with our Reverend Brethren we do here profess to this Church and to all the Churches of God throughout the whole world, That we do detest the forementioned Toleration."

Like our radio parsons of lineal descent, the ministers cited above preferred no opposition, and all display alarm about the mental activities of mankind, about the future of the world, and of the Christian faith in particular. Why do we hear emasculated versions of history through our loudspeakers? Is there something degrading in tracing the long and painful history of man's misunderstanding of man? The very topic "Christianity and Toleration" recalls a fine delivery of Thomas Paine's: "Whether by Church or State, tolerance is not the opposite of intolerance but the counterfeit of it. Both are despotisms." In 1689

Almighty God was permitted the worship of Non-conformists in their own way.

Richard O'Sullivan, Q.C., in his topic, "Christianity and the Common Law," gives prominence to two ecclesiastics, Stephen Langton, author of Magna Charta (1215), the first clause of which "guarantees the freedom of the Church in its proper sphere; the Church in England shall be free and shall have all its laws in their integrity and its liberties unimpaired"; and to Henry of Bracton, father of the Common Law, "designed from the beginning to create and establish a society of free men and women living in the fellowship of a free community."

Great are the obstacles to freedom and fellowship! Even the more moderate achievement of complete religious liberty in England dates within living memory! And we live in the company of Blasphemy Laws! The mark upon human happiness following the observance of the more venerable Church Law is noteworthy in the ecclesiastics named. The Oseney Council (1222) had before it for trial the case of a deacon who, for the love of a Jewess whom he married, had embraced the Hebrew faith, undergone circumcision, and defiled the Cross. After degradation by Archbishop Langton he was handed over to the lay power and committed to the flames. Referring to this case, Bracton lays it down that a convicted clerk is to be first degraded and then burned (*Henrici de Bracton, De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae*, ed. Travers Twiss, 1879, ii, 300).

Surely a weakening of the Christian faith was necessary before rendering possible the best elements in our Western way of life.

J. G. BURDON.

THEATRE

"The Firstborn." By Christopher Fry. Winter Garden Theatre.

CHRISTOPHER FRY is not a man of great theatrical sense, but he is a good poet. Therefore, when a so-called play of his is staged we need not be surprised if he has sought a ready-made plot from the Old Testament, but we are disappointed when what passes for poetry are stretches of dialogue practically prosaic and too verbose to be theatrically effective.

For two acts the characters mostly stand about the stage and utter their words. In the third act, by accident it seems, we are relieved by some real dramatic action when Moses realises that Ramases—the son of Pharaoh and to whom he is greatly attached—is one of the first-born, and rushes to the palace in the hope of saving him from death at the Passover.

The words are beautifully spoken by Mark Dignam, who makes a noble and dignified Pharaoh, Alec Clunes in the best male part as Moses, Barbara Everest as Pharaoh's sister and Ruth Trouncer as his daughter. Also good are Cyril Luckham as Aaron, Dorothy Reynolds as Miriam and Robert Rietty as Shendi, but these are smaller parts. The parts are written without character and the actors are left to make what they can of them.

It should be said for Mr. Fry that this was written before the war and afterwards revised. I, for one, wish he had left it dormant.

One of the attractions is Michael Warre's settings and costumes, which certainly do give atmosphere to the piece.

RAYMOND DOUGLAS.

A GRAMMER OF FREETHOUGHT. By Chapman Cohen. An outline of the philosophy of Freethinking. Price 4s. 3d.; postage 4d.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND THE MYTHICAL CHRIST. By Gerald Massey. What Christianity owes to Ancient Egypt. Price 1s.; postage 2d.

ACID DROPS

We wonder how many children listening to the broadcast talk the other day by Dr. Cockin, the Bishop of Bristol, to children, on the influence of Christ, understood his incoherent mixture of belief in things material and things spiritual? We wonder how many children will now go in for Christ as they go in for matriculation? We wonder also how many children listen-in to these hopeless broadcasts which are supposed to show the influence of Christ and the Holy Ghost "upon Beliefs about Mankind"? The desperate way in which the B.B.C. is propagating the outworn beliefs of Christ on children proves how serious it all is—for religion. Any bright child must wonder why he is obliged to "believe" childish Oriental superstitions which might well have done for the uneducated peasants 2,000 years ago in the East but simply make fantastic nonsense in these scientific days. Why does not Dr. Cockin tell the children to where it was that Jesus "ascended"? Is he afraid of modern astronomy?

Every now and then the newspapers publish accounts of what the churches call "exorcising" the Devil or Evil Spirits who, in a Christian land such as ours, always flee from a Cross reverently held up by a representative of God who utters at the same time enough Holy Words to frighten any Evil Spirit out of his senses. The latest example is recorded in the *Sunday Dispatch* with a "medium" in command and the inevitable Cross. It took place on Beachy Head and was designed to prevent further suicides there—the tendency to suicide being entirely due to a horrible Spirit, "a bearded man wearing a flowing robe with a cowl like a monk."

The medium naturally would not allow such a heaven-sent opportunity to pass and in a ghostly voice screamed: "This is evil. He is calling us a lot of fools, blaspheming. Fools. I will sweep you all over." Then the medium indulged in maniacal laughter, but managed to say that "the thing" wants revenge "to have his own back." Needless to say, after a spate of reverent prayers, "the thing" was laid to rest for ever, and there will never again be suicides on Beachy Head. We enjoyed finding out that the Evil Spirit was "blaspheming"—what a pity that a Roman Catholic judge couldn't have "it" hauled before him and be given twelve months hard.

Following a recent case, we note that the Rev. R. Gaul of Rand, Lincs., said: "There are more disgusting lapses in the morals of our clergy to-day than ever before. The bishops must be ignorant of the common man's reaction to the numerous court cases of sexual offences in which parsons have figured." We have refrained from commenting on the recent case, but we wonder whether our bishops know the cases referred to by Mr. Gaul? Whether the morals of our parsons are worse now than in more Christian times, a study of books like the *Decameron* and its contemporary literature would no doubt provide a definite answer. But in all fairness, it might be urged that parsons are no more immune from "lapses" than the rest of the community, their special Christian faith notwithstanding.

That body of rigid Sabbatarians, the Derby magistrates, have refused "an application for a concert of a musical nature" in a Corporation hall on March 23—a Sunday. They were simply horrified to learn that some of the music would be "jazz" with titles like, "When the Saints Go

Marching On," "Gimme a Pigfoot," and "The Bottle is Empty." The idea of such music being allowed on a Sunday—a *Sunday!*—was too much. What a pity boiling oil and similar gentle Christian reminders are no longer allowed in this materialistic age. We'd show these Sunday desecrators something if they were!

The "Church militant" appears to be strongly represented in Trenton, New Jersey (U.S.A.), where a burglar, who broke into the local church, was unfortunate enough to encounter the pastor, the Rev. Leonard Watson, who has rejected several offers to turn professional footballer. Although, presumably, a Christian, the reverend gentleman did not make the slightest attempt to practice the teaching of the Master about "turning the other cheek to the smiter." What he actually did was very different. He "subdued his man with a hammer-lock and choke-hold, then held him with one muscularly Christian hand while he telephoned the police with the other."

In a governmental handbook on the Far East, we came across this laconic entry. "Alfred Russell Wallace, a writer on Malaya." Why not, in future, write: "Charles Darwin, a Kentish naturalist," or "Karl Marx, a reader in the British Museum," or "Sherlock Holmes, a detective in Baker Street," or "Einstein, a writer on relativity." Apparently, Whitehall has never heard that A. R. Wallace, along with Darwin, first established Evolution, the most important scientific generalisation of modern times. Not bad for "a writer on Malaya!"

The other day, we were turning over the pages of the famous novel of Stendhal, Englished as *Red and Black* and described, no doubt correctly, in the publisher's "blurb" as "one of the world's greatest novels." Readers of this French masterpiece will remember it as one of the most devastating anti-clerical satires ever written, dealing with the corrupt and reactionary clerical regimes set up in Italy after the downfall of Napoleon. What was our surprise to find that all the best anti-clerical passages had been left out of this American edition of Stendhal's masterpiece. In short, a "Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark." A most convincing tribute to the power at present wielded by Roman Catholicism in "the land of the free"!

In May, 1952, we learn that a "Eucharistic Conference" is due to be held in Barcelona. According to Catholic theology, the Eucharist is Christ's Body, "The Bread from Heaven," upon which the Faithful presumably feed at the Eucharistic Conference. However, from what we hear of the economic conditions at present prevailing in Franco Spain, we think that the miracle most likely to be appreciated by the Spanish people would be the "Feeding of the Five Thousand" with *earthly*, not Heavenly bread. Why can't the Church work a *useful* miracle for a change?

There is at least one priest working in the East End of London who has very little use for the "give the other cheek" nonsense he is supposed to teach. He is Father Carey, who has a short and easy way with "brawlers and wifebeaters," as he is six feet tall, weighs 15 stone, and has a punch like a mule's kick. A "few of his well aimed sledgehammer blows," we are told by the *Empire News*, "can quell a street row quicker than a whole regiment of police." We wonder what Jesus has to say to that?

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

I. BARR.—The phrase simply means that a man's actions are determined by his heredity and environment. Read Anthony Collins' *Concerning Human Liberty* and Chapman Cohen's *Determinism and Free Will*, or the article on Determinism in either the *Encyclopædia Britannica* or Chamber's.

G. BENNETT.—Thank you for your contribution. We shall make use of it as soon as possible.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 4s.; half-year, 12s.; three months, 6s.

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

Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.

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

SUGAR PLUMS

The Birmingham Branch, N.S.S., under its indefatigable secretary, Mr. Charles H. Smith, continued its indoor session at the "Satis Cafe," off New Street, on Sunday last, February 24. The lecturer was Mr. F. A. Ridley, who took as his subject, *The Political Awakening of Asia*. The lecturer pointed out that, hitherto, the history of civilisation and of world-leadership had oscillated between Asia and Europe in alternative epochs of political supremacy and cultural leadership. Since the 16th century, European Imperialism had increasingly subjugated the Oriental world, a process which had reached its culmination in the 19th century. The mid-20th century witnessed an Asiatic resurgence which the lecturer traced in some detail.

One of the first Englishmen to interest himself in the Indian National Resurgence was Charles Bradlaugh, the Founder of The National Secular Society, who addressed the Indian National Congress in 1889. Turning to the future, Mr. Ridley did not consider that the present resurgence of Asia would follow a single pattern. China would probably develop on different lines to those of Russian Communism and a "mixed economy," neither completely Capitalist nor Socialist, was probable for some time to come. One thing, however, was certain: the old pattern of Colonial Imperialism had gone, never to return. A large number of questions were put by the audience, to which the speaker replied. A most successful evening which opened up vast horizons.

Rationalism is on the up-grade in the Midlands! We learn that a branch of the *Rationalist Press Association* has now been successfully launched in Coventry. The secretary is Mr. J. H. Bridle, 30, Brookside Avenue, Coventry, who is anxious to contact any potential Rationalists in the area. Future meetings will be held at *The Rose and Crown Hotel*, High Street, Coventry, where monthly meetings will be held, beginning on March 16, at 8 p.m. We wish every possible success to our friends of the R.P.A. in Coventry.

"THE FREETHINKER" FUND

Donations for week ended Saturday, March 1, 1952:—

A. Hancock, 2s.; Lewisham & District Branch N.S.S., 8s.; Mrs. A. Vallance, £1; Norman McLeod, 6s.; E. W. Shaw, 10s. 6d.; Phillip Pearl, £1 15s.; J.W.B., £1; Andrew Harvey, £5; A. F. Rand, 5s. 9d.; S. Truslow, 10s.

Total for week: £10 17s. 3d.

Total received to date: £472 4s. 11d.

THE PROTESTANT MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

THE celebrated Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, whose revolt from Romanism created so great a stir in the 16th century, founded a cult as intolerant as Catholicism itself. Nor was the rival Protestant creed formed by John Calvin less inquisitorial and persecuting than Lutheranism in its earlier days. In truth, Philip Melancthon and the Swiss Zwingli were Reformers far more humanitarian in their teaching than their better known protagonists, but Luther's influence in Protestant Germany remained supreme. As Dr. A. L. Drummond states in his *German Protestantism Since Luther* (Epworth Press, 1951, 22s. 6d.): "The name of Martin Luther is the hallmark of German Protestantism. His translation of Scripture like our Authorised Version, made the Bible a true *Volksbuch*. His *Little Catechism* ranks with the *Shorter Catechism* as a rational guide to man's chief end."

For centuries Lutheranism and Calvinism were at daggers drawn until, in 1817, the two sects were fused in Prussia and other States and their original titles have been superseded by those of "Evangelical" or "Reformed." But to Romanists Luther has ever been repugnant, and Protestant humanists have censured his inflexible conduct, his bitter hatred of Anabaptists, his approval of the slaughter of the insurgent German peasantry, and his pronounced anti-Semitism. Still, his apologists urge that he was the creature of a harsh and intolerant age.

When Luther died in 1546 he left no notable successor. Ideas announced by Luther in the heat of controversy were treasured by his adherents as indispensable articles of faith. Still, they were less Puritanical than the Calvinists and their churches were adorned with stained glass, pictures and statuary, and ornamental woodwork and metal.

Protestantism in different States varied in doctrine. In 1577 conferences bearing the attractive title of the Formula of Concord were convened to define the true faith. This definition was expected to compose all differences but, as Dr. Drummond confesses it "brought not peace but a sword." It was accepted by the Saxon Elector and adopted by most German sects in 1580, but then, after acceptance, rejected by the Palatinate, Brunswick and Brandenburg. It was received by the free cities of Lübeck and Hamburg, but dismissed by Bremen and Frankfurt. Then, ironically enough, "Sweden and Denmark eventually adopted it (the latter having previously made its very publication a crime punishable by death!)" Most of the more moderate denominations welcomed it as less illiberal than preceding pronouncements, but their hopes proved visionary. Rancorous Lutherans' intense hatred towards the Calvinists in 1592 displayed their animosity by denouncing them as blasphemous heretics while, in Lutheran churches a hymn of hatred was sung containing the lines:—

Guard Thou with Thy Word, O Lord,
And smite the Calvinists with Thy sword.

Some Protestant princes persecuted unmercifully all who deviated from the orthodox Formula. One of these sadistic Lutherans, Grumbach, proved exceptionally

virulent. Dr. Drummond, who writes as a Christian Theist, tells us that this pious monster, after a successful heresy hunt "had himself represented in a medal as a victor in shining armour, holding a balance, the infant Saviour in one scale, and in the other the Devil with four Calvinists!" Ultra-Lutheran persecution continued after Grumbach's death. "The Chancellor of Saxony after being imprisoned for heresy in a damp and verminous dungeon, was executed with a sword bearing the inscription: 'Beware, O Calvinist, Dr. Nicholas Krell!'" Fiendish punishments, however, tended to alienate humane Lutherans who drifted towards Calvinism. Melancthon was so distressed that he frequently uttered the prayer: "From the rage of the theologians, good Lord deliver us!" Yet devout and quite well-meaning people still implore the world to return to religion to remove the evils that curse mankind to-day.

Indeed, the Calvinists themselves were terribly intolerant and their burning alive of Servetus is one instance only of their enmity of freedom of opinion. Yet, our historian contends that by the standards of the 15th and 16th centuries the Reformed Church in Germany has a good reputation. For, he avers, when the Catholic Alva was devastating the Netherlands the Calvinists who fled into the Lower Rhine duchies in 1567 they settled there in safety.

It is true that in some German principalities their secular rulers were so enraged by the pitiless bigotry and intolerance of Lutheran pastors that they were determined to restore religious order in their dominions and, as the years advanced, sectarian animosities were greatly ameliorated. As a matter of fact, the imperative need for Protestant union became obvious with the successes of the Counter-Reformation when the astute Jesuits artfully utilised Protestant dissensions as a valuable weapon in their crusade.

Then came the Thirty Years' War when, outside Britain and the Scandinavian countries, the Protestants were menaced with extinction. With the close of that protracted conflict, the German Protestants—those that survived—were exalted by their supposed victory. But as our author observes, there was little reason for enthusiasm for "Germany was ruined agriculturally, industrially, intellectually—even if there is exaggeration in the claim that the population was reduced from 17,000,000 to 5,000,000." Of her seats of learning Königsberg alone escaped devastation, while the Reformed Universities of Marburg and Heidelberg were shattered.

When Charles Lewis, the exiled Elector of the Palatinate returned to Germany to repopulate and restore that formerly prosperous Calvinist dominion, he welcomed members of all creeds and all went well for a time. Yet, later, the undisciplined armies of Louis XIV overran and plundered the partly restored Palatinate. Then, when the French King Louis "was compelled to renounce the Palatinate in 1697, the Jesuits remained to carry on his work. The most prosperous principality that professed the Reformed faith was utterly ruined."

Amid all the trials and tribulations of the time the German masses were sick and tired of theological disputes. A few enlightened pastors had learnt a bitter lesson, but most were as fanatical as ever. As late as 1685 a leading theologian affirmed that "the divine authority of the Scripture would be imperilled by the admission that it contained any human element whatever." It was Bible murder to revise Luther's rendering, for had not "the University of Wittenberg declared in 1538 that it was

blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to admit that there was any bad Greek in the Epistles."

Drummond's survey contains a scholarly study of the later growth of Liberal Lutheranism and the pietist leaven of its sombre creed. His chapter on *The Reign of Rationalism* is as impartial as can be expected from a religious writer. The conclusions of Biblical criticism are fairly stated, while the second part of the volume deals with the relations of Church and State in the Reich.

The toleration exercised by Frederick the Great who desired all his subjects to go to Heaven in their own way is duly noted, and approved. Our historian opines that Luther and Calvin were really the forerunners of Voltaire, and suggests that the men of the Era of Enlightenment would have endorsed Dr. Bridges' lines:—

Luther and Calvin, who, whate'er they taught,
Led folk from superstition to free thought.

T. F. PALMER.

REVIEW

ANY practical work dealing with the application of science to agriculture should have the blessing, not only of farmers, but of everybody who recognises there is nothing under the sun which really concerns him so much. We have to eat, willy-nilly, if we want to live, and in a world that cannot expand, an increasing population makes it imperative to grow more and more food. Certainly, in our own small island it is perhaps the most important of all subjects, this growing our own food—as two wars and more people to feed, are showing us.

One of the latest editions to Messrs. Watts' "Thrift Books," *The Polished Ploughshare*, by Syd Fox (1s. net)—a series which, it should be added, is remarkable value—deals with "how far can science help the farmer?" Mr. Fox was a demonstrator and lecturer in the faculty of Agriculture at Reading University and is now lecturer in Animal Husbandry there. He is thus fully qualified to discuss and write as a specialist and he has, in addition, tried to interest the general public who are not actually farmers. His various chapters, among others, deal with science and the soil, science and the farming process, science and the crop plant, science and the housing of livestock, science and animal husbandry and breeding, and science and farm management. All these chapters deal with their subjects from the point of view of a practical agriculturist and not just as an exercise in science.

As an example, we can take the question of ploughing. Ever since people grew their food some type of ploughing has been in existence, but here comes Mr. Fox in his chapter on crop husbandry telling us: "There are those who question the use of the plough at all, since, they say, it carries the valuable zone of decomposing material of high humus content too far below the surface of the soil for young plants to make use of it. In dry areas this argument may have real force, since, with sparse plant growth, organic matter will accumulate only slowly with the soil. On the other hand, continued surface cultivation without ploughing must set a limit to the depth of tilth which can be put at the plant's disposal, and deep-rooting crops will be set at a disadvantage." What he has to say about ploughing, in fact, must be well considered by those who have to do it. And those who have had their curiosity aroused by "artificial insemination," will find what Mr. Fox says as applied to animals of great interest.

The Polished Ploughshare is heartily recommended to all who have to live on the land and to all who are interested in agriculture in general.

H.C.

A MELANESIAN VERSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

"Papa belong me fella, stop on top;
Name belong you he tabu;
Pidgin belong you he come down along ground all same on top;
Give me fella Kai-Kai enough along day;
Forget 'im sin belong me fella, allsame me fella forget 'im sin
belong all together;
No let 'im me fella long something no good, but help 'im me fella
long something good.
Pidgin belong you, Big Fella strong belong you, light belong you
altogether day.—Amen.

NOTE.—*The Lord's Prayer*, as used by the Melanesian pastor, Salau, a seventh day Adventist from Vella Lavella, British Solomon Islands.

CORRESPONDENCE

AN AMERICAN TESTIMONIAL

SIR,—In the near future you will receive a money order from me amounting to \$1.75, the approximate equivalent of 12 shillings, as payment for a six months' subscription to *The Freethinker*.

I have been an avid reader of *The Freethinker*, at least whenever I have been able to procure a copy of it, and I consider it the best, in all respects, as a Freethought publication. For the quantity and quality of its literary output, considering its limited size, I say it is unexcelled, and I want to see its circulation in America greatly increased. The articles in *The Freethinker* are not too lengthy, and pack wit, pungency and literary calibre. Mr. Ridley's articles, in particular, reveal broad scholarship and a thorough understanding of the true nature of Freethought in the present day and age. His articles are vividly written and show all the earmarks of painstaking and scholarly research. In my opinion, if it is of any account, Mr. Ridley's articles follow in the best traditions of literary Freethought, established by Geo. W. Foote and Chapman Cohen. Again, I say, *The Freethinker* is without a peer in the English-speaking world, as a Freethought periodical. In combating the theological virus, in all its manifestations, it has done an effective job, a job that is necessary in maintaining and furthering intellectual progress. And to-day, it is doing a very positive work in exposing the political designs of clericalism, religious obscurantism, and all shades of mysticism.

Wishing you the greatest measure of success in your most worthwhile work, the work of keeping alive the freedom of thought and expression, which is being seriously threatened.—I am, yours for Freethought and a saner world,
LEON SPAIN.

THE MONARCHY

SIR,—In answer to Editorial, *The Freethinker*, February 24, I am surprised that a thinker of your calibre should fail to see the fallacy in your argument. The unreasoned will of unreasoning people (practical politics though it may be), is in no way better than the "grace of God." Your line is only an extension of the highly discreditable *Vox Populi Vox Dei*.

"Practical politics" is, more often than otherwise, the vote angler's excuse for lack of integrity.—Yours, etc.,
HARRY KEMP.

[We note your criticism of our Editorial, "By the Grace of God." Surely, however, if we are going to have a monarchy at all, it is better that it should be based on a genuine *Will of the people* rather than on a fictitious *Grace of God*?—EDITOR.]

CHRISTIAN TRUTH AND THE B.B.C.

SIR,—As a regular reader who has welcomed with intense satisfaction your policy of devoting more and more space to the application of Free Thought principles to the practical problems created for the present generation by the development of social and economic conditions in the modern world, I naturally welcome also your campaign against the policy of the B.B.C. in forcing upon its listeners its advocacy of reactionary theological dogmas which have already been rejected by the overwhelming majority of the British people.

The evil is not confined to the plethora of avowedly religious broadcasting. In the very week in which your editorial page treated of the most recent researches into the social history of Peru, the B.B.C. dealt with the same general topic in the form of a "schools" talk on Pizarro and his introduction into Peru of the precious Christian gospel. The main body of the talk gave a factual—and typical—account of the scheme of blackmail, looting and murder which the Christian invaders used to inflict upon an unsuspecting people the priceless boon of "Christian truth."

Had there been no further comment, the narrative itself might have suggested to the more intelligent school children that the spread of Christianity was not necessarily an unmixed blessing.

The B.B.C. narrator, however, was there to round off the "educational" broadcast with a religious observation expressed in conventional B.B.C. reverential tones regarding the precious character of the Christian faith and the prayerful conduct of the conquerors after murdering the Inca.

I suggest that tendentious trimmings of this sort are even more objectionable than dogma administered frankly as dogma.—Yours, etc.,
TOM COLYER.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

OUTDOOR

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

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

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, 12 noon. L. EBURY and W. G. FRASER.

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

INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: H. L. SEARLE, "The Search for Evidence."

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1). Tuesday, March 11, 7 p.m.: HECTOR HAWTON, "The Art of the Detective Story."

Leicester Secular Society (Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: Mr. A. HANCOCK, "Economics Philosophically Applied."

Manchester Humanist Fellowship (Onward Hall, 207, Deansgate).—Saturday, March 8, 3 p.m.: Miss DOROTHY SYLVESTER, M.A., F.R.G.S., "Population Problems."

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: Dr. R. H. HILTON, "The Social Significance of Robin Hood."

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: Prof. J. C. FLUGEL, D.Sc., "The Problem of Humour."

West London Branch N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, Marylebone, W.1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, "The Awakening of Asia."

WANTED. Old Catholic pamphlets, such as "Sight of Hell," by Father Furness; "Instructions to Nurses," etc. Books on Freethought, Witchcraft, etc., purchased. Send details and prices to E. W. Shaw, 195, Chipperfield Road, St. Pauls Cray, Kent.

YUGOSLAV HOLIDAYS (Apr. to Oct.).—Dormitory accom. in hostels, camps of Yugoslav Trade Unions, Youth Movements, etc. Reductions for youth; family exchange. Write: Sec., 16, Doneraile House, Ebury Bridge, London, S.W.1. Send stamp; state holiday month.

ANGLICAN CLAIMS TO PRIVILEGE

PUBLIC MEETING

Organised by *The National Secular Society*

"Why a State Church?"

Speakers:

H. J. Blackham

L. Ebury

P. Victor Morris

F. A. Ridley

Chairman: J. W. Barker

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1

Thursday, 13th March, 7-15 p.m. Open 6-45

Admission Free

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

THE PILGRIM FATHERS DEBUNKED

(Concluded from page 67)

TEN SHILLINGS FOR RIDING

"Back in 1663 there was no Sunday joy-riding. . . . Kenelm Winslow, Jr., found this out when he was fined 10s. for 'riding on The Lord's Day.' Winslow told the Court that he was not riding just for the fun of it but that he had to for personal reasons, but this made no difference, he paid the fine."

LOOK OUT, MR. CLARKE!

"Mr. Clarke is prohibited from keeping company with Mrs. Freeman under pain of such punishment as the Court shall think meet to inflict."

"Mr. Clarke and Mr. Freeman hath bound themselves in £XX speece that Mr. Clarke shall make his personal appearance at the next Court to be holden in March next and in the meantime to carry himself in good behaviour towards all people and especially towards Mrs. Freeman concerning whom there is strong suspicion of incontinency."

Twenty pounds seems rather a stiff fine for Mr. Clarke's lapse from grace when we consider that King David who, we are told, was a man after God's own heart, possessed a large harem of wives and concubines, and not content with this battalion, cast covetous and lustful eyes on the wife of Uriah the Hittite: furthermore, he ordered Uriah, who was an officer in his army, to be put in the forefront of the battle where he duly got "bumped off." This excellent way of disposing of a rival probably inspired Mr. Al. Capone, who was not a gentleman after God's own heart, to "bump off" some of his rivals.

THE SAME OLD MOON

"On June 16, 1744, the Rev. Thomas Prince, who was born on Cape Cod, wrote in *The Christian History*: 'Our young people took unwarrantable liberties, night-walking, frolicking, and lewd practices, some grew bold in and encouraged and corrupted others thereby.'"

This illustrates the truth of the old French saying: The more things change, the more they remain the same.

FIFTEEN CAPITAL CRIMES

"The Pilgrim Fathers had, on their statute books fifteen capital crimes. They included blasphemy, witchcraft, idolatry, marriage with in the Levitical degrees, 'presumptuous Sabbath-breaking,' and cursing or smiting one's parents. The Courts had a wide discretion however, and hanging was seldom done except in case of murders."

DELUSIONS OF WITCHCRAFT

"Although there had never been any hangings for witchcraft on the Cape, many believed in the agency of ghosts and witches. This has proved a never-ending source of material for writers. It is related that 'Old Chapman,' the British captain, would sometimes get high and that one night, returning home with some hale companions, as they approached the Meeting House, Chapman ran ahead, but in the darkness was not missed. He stationed himself at a point in the graveyard where he knew his companions would pass. When they came fully abreast, he roared with a voice that shook the hills: 'Arise ye dead and come to judgment.' Nobody arose, but tradition says there was some of the fastest running that night ever known in East Harbour Provincetown."

PURITANICAL ENSLAVEMENT

"People of Massachusetts have liked to believe that slavery in any form had touched Massachusetts but lightly. This impression has been a standing one for

quite a while, but unfortunately records proved otherwise. It is known that they considered themselves 'elected, to whom God hath given the heathens for an inheritance.' The Puritans not only enslaved and captured some of the Indians, but sold them to work in the tropics. They also obtained Negroes by importation, purchase and exchange. A general form of punishment for criminals in the Puritans' colonies was slavery, and although fighting against religious prejudice for themselves, they even enslaved the Quakers at one time.

It is interesting to note that the slavery system was not private, indulged in by only certain families and individuals, but an enterprise of the authorities of the colonies and existed for over half a century."

F. A. HORNIBROOK.

DUST BOWL

By the books we are told,
That in Egypt of old,
When they gathered for banquet or feast;
Though the company gay
Only lived for the day—
They had thought for the morrow, at least.

As the cup passed along
There was laughter and song,
But one figure there checked the tones;
For, set there behind,
The guests to remind—
Were somebody's second-hand bones.

Yes, there was the query
To "Drink and be cheery."
Saying, "These hours are yours but borrow"
This *memento mori*
Said, "Sip and be sorry—
"For those who may rest there to-morrow!"

Now, one might suggest
(As a mere second best),
And, to stream-line the lesson-book fable;
When dining and wining
To thought p'raps inclining
A small item placed on the table.

Where the finger-bowl rests
For the comfort of guests,
A small DUST-BOWL there they could lay;
To bring round the revels
To Hunger's low levels,
And the starving, who'll die with the day.

ARTHUR E. CARPENTER.

Mr. Graham Greene, well-known as both pious Catholic and as prolific novelist, has gone on record recently with this weighty observation:—

"If the Church shut its doors and would not let anyone come in, then it would not make any converts, would it? But surely, Faith, which our Lord declared to be capable of "removing mountains," would not find any difficulty in such a trifle as opening a church door?"

THE MOTHER OF GOD. By G. W. Foote. Price 3d.; postage 1½d.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY HANDBOOK. (General Information for Freethinkers.) Price 9d.; postage 1½d.