

The Freethinker

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THE 19th century was essentially and pre-eminently, the century of the white races, the century of European supremacy in, and over, the entire world; this world-wide supremacy was practically ubiquitous; it extended not only to the current practice of politics and economics but, and very especially, to the contemporary domains of science and of technology. That completing of technical and economic developments usually described collectively as "The Industrial Revolution" which began about the middle of the 18th century, and which came to maturity in the following 19th century, placed European civilisation far ahead of any possible competitor, so much so, indeed, that the 19th century world was not only dominated by Europe mentally, but, equally was subjected to the physical and political domination of the white races. *Imperialism* was the prevailing political creed of that century, from which, Britain, the pioneer in the Industrial Revolution, became the principal beneficiary.

The Colour Bar

Theory expresses practice. The successful prosecution of Imperialism by the white races beyond the confines of Europe, found its reflection in various theories of race supremacy which enjoyed a wide vogue in the hey-day of Imperialism. Such theories naturally assumed the inherent superiority of the white races over the subjugated or "lesser breeds without the law"—brown, red, black and yellow—as the poet laureate of British Imperialism, Rudyard Kipling, expressed it in a famous phrase. In the more systematic hands of a group of racist theorists on the European continent, the general theory of racial supremacy of the white races, became narrowed down to the theory that one variety of the white races, or even one *nation*, were *inherently and biologically* superior to *all* other races whatsoever, by virtue of a superior and "spiritual" quality residing in its racial bloodstream. In the 20th century this last idea, as expressed by the Nazi theoreticians, Adolf Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg, became the dominant creed of the fortunately short-lived "Third Reich" (1933—45).

Non-European Racial Theories

One must not, however, suppose that, as is sometimes imagined, theories of racial supremacy are confined to the white races. Contrarily, they are universal. Many primitive races have names akin to the ancient German "Allemanni," "all men"; a self-chosen designation which indicates that they, alone, are "men," are fully human. The rest merely represent nondescripts existing precariously on the fringe of Humanity! Amongst the higher civilisations, such ideas found expression in pseudo-scientific theories long before Kipling—or Hitler. We recall the 9th century Spanish Arab, who went on record with the historic observation that "north of the Pyrenees, the people are white in colour. They are of great stature,

but are mentally sluggish and are absolutely incapable of ever arriving at intellectual maturity"! This was how the rude barbarians of the European "Middle Age" appeared to the brilliant culture of Arab-Moorish Spain. One can, perhaps, add, that it was no more obviously absurd than was the deprecatory attitude taken up by the 19th century Europeans towards the then decadent penal societies of Asia, or to the still primitive tribes of the then newly-discovered Africa. Similarly, the immemorably ancient Chinese culture despised the "outer barbarians" of the west, and the "secondary" Chinese "barbarians" who imitated them, and who rashly preferred Western science to the traditional

wisdom of Confucius and of Mencius. We have on record the report of the mandarins appointed by the then Chinese emperor, to report on the war then raging between the Ghurkas of Nepal, and the British East India Company; it concluded that this petty squabble between two tribes of outlandish barbarians was beneath the dignity of the Celestial Empire. It was not worth the bones of a single Chinese soldier!—and this was already in the 19th century! Right down to the "Opium War," which first demonstrated the military superiority of the West, the Court of Peking did not receive "ambassadors," only "bearers of tribute" from the outside "barbarian" world beyond the confines of (yellow) "civilisation."

"Semitism"—The First "Mein Kampf"

Before "anti-Semitism" raised its ugly head, there was "Semitism," "anti-Semitism" in reverse, as one might appropriately style it. Long before the gospel of "anti-Semitism" was first preached, the gospel of "Semitism" had reared its equally ugly head in the dogma of "the chosen race," promulgated by the ancient Hebrews, which finds its classical expression in the Biblical *Book of Ezra*, the Semitic version of "anti-Semitism," the first *Mein Kampf* as one could appropriately term it. Ezra expounds the full dogma of a chosen race, of the, as one should say, to-day, biological superiority of the Jews over all "the lesser breeds" without the law in the ancient world. As my friend, George Maranz, has aptly phrased it, "both the *Book of Ezra* and *Mein Kampf* know *what* a "chosen race is," they only differ as to *which* it is. In the New Testament, Ezra's "Semitism" recurs in our *Book of Revelation*, whose theme is the victory of Israel over the pagan world, of Jerusalem, over Rome, and which ends with a vision of "The New Jerusalem" above, an exclusively *Semitic* city, inhabited *solely* by Jews.

Race and "Racism"

How far, if at all, can such theories of inherent racial supremacy be justified, whether on behalf of the white race, or of any of the other races who have claimed superiority? In approaching such a thorny theme we will do well to follow the classic distinction made between

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

"The Colour Bar"

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

race, and what she called "racism," by that eminent anthropologist and social historian, the late Ruth Benedict who, had she survived into the era of "McCarthyism" would undoubtedly have been one of the first defendants called before the Wisconsin senator's notorious committee! Race, declared Prof. Benedict, is a *fact*, "Racism," contrarily, is a *myth*. It is a myth with ascertainable factual causes, usually of a *political* nature. The race theories of the Nazis were the obvious reaction to their defeat, in the First World War. Similarly, the ideas of Kipling expressed and reflected a *temporary* political and military superiority over the non-European races. The Shintoist "race worship" of the Japanese was a "defence mechanism" against the then ever-present fear of western conquest. However, whilst "racist" theories are mythical, racial *differences* are a fact, though one that is usually attributable to contemporary causes. These causes are usually temporary. For example, to-day, China and India are rapidly taking their place alongside of the most advanced western nations. Africa is still backward, but signs already indicate that, when once the appropriate conditions exist, this still existing backwardness may be overcome. "The Colour Bar," the *practical* expression of "racist" theory, belongs to the sphere of *politics*, not to that of *science*. It forms no part of a secularist outlook and, we hope, will form no part of any civilisation founded on secular principles.

McCabe's Latest

Crime and Religion (Progressive World, Clifton, New Jersey, 1954, 64 pp.).

TO describe this as just a book on the subject is quite inappropriate. It is *the* book on the subject. I will go further. It is the *first*, for the precise reason that it dares to report the plain truth, consciously and unafraid. McCabe never strays from the facts. Give these facts to a religious writer and (if he dared use them at all) you would have to rescue them from a cloud of moralising calculated to hide their implications and to conceal their import.

The book is a factual statement of the proportion of Roman Catholics in the criminal population, taken from official statistics of some 20 nations. It contrasts Catholic countries with Protestant and Communist, and in countries of mixed religions it compares the Catholic share of the criminal population with the non-Catholic, with particular attention to juvenile delinquency. The results are uniform. Catholics produce the biggest share, in proportion to numbers, of the criminal and delinquent population.

Which of our large national papers dare draw attention to the fact? Which of our big political parties? By whose hand is the voice of truth stifled? It is a sorry fact that there exists not one book in any language which exposes, as McCabe's does, the correlation between crime and religion; and, at a time when Catholicism is being allowed to recover to some extent its political power, it is deplorable that the facts of this correlation, in their entirety, are practically unknown to the electorate.

McCabe's analysis proves, too, that the best social agency for lessening crime is purely secular education. And that, of course, is politically unpopular.

McCabe's method is (1) to assemble all the most recent available facts and figures for each country dealt with; (2) to sketch the historical background and so expose the Church's criminal past; and (3) to give the sort of expert commentary we have learned to expect from him. For example:—

"The abnormal Catholic ratio of criminality is encouraged by the concealment of it in official docu-

ments and in so much academic literature. They talk about the social importance of religious education and generally refuse to look at the facts. So the myth, which priests invented, that the influence of their Church sustained the general character at a higher moral level in Ages of Faith than we find to-day—a monstrous historical lie (see McCabe's *History's Greatest Liars*) and that Catholic education renders the same service to-day and the world will more surely shed its present burdens if we return to the mediaeval creed, is still widely accepted. On this pretext statesmen grant an amazing power to the Pope and his hierarchy in Western Europe and America, and the further demoralization of public and international life to which this leads must be added to the increasing volume of crime."

The present unsettled nature of international affairs and the existence of the "iron curtain" (or "dollar curtain" if you like), does not make research of this nature any easier, and McCabe has had to omit Hungary for lack of information.

As for Russia, at a time when unthinking people are apt to cry "too much science," or "science only deals with measurable inhuman things," McCabe notes that "the Soviet authorities apply science alone to the rectification of behaviour, and it throws into deeper shade the failure of the Catholic system."

There is an astounding contrast between the criminal records of Catholic countries like Eire, Spain and Italy on the one hand, and a country such as Sweden, where the Catholic numbers are negligible. Coming nearer home, secularists in Liverpool and Bradford in particular will find plenty of local ammunition for their anti-Catholic propaganda.

McCabe's book, with so much information packed inside 64 pages, is unanswerable. He has added another damning indictment of what his friend, the late H. G. Wells, called the greatest evil in the world today, Roman Catholicism.

G. H. TAYLOR.

Chapman Cohen on Parsons

WHAT is the origin of parsons? Are they born and not made? Are the parsonic qualities congenital or acquired? Books on natural history give us little help. The study of a whole species appears to have been overlooked. Not wholly so, perhaps, because anyone with a taste for symbolism who has watched a crowd of penguins must have noticed how suggestive they are of a conclave of parsons. Their colouring, so suggestive of a parson, the gravity with which they sit contemplating nothing in particular, their activity at feeding time and their fight for the poor eel, so reminiscent of the struggle between Church and Chapel for the control of the child. There is, also, a curious suggestiveness about the description of a penguin—"body elliptical, head small, bill moderately long, tail short." True, only modesty would say the clerical *bill* was moderately long. Their *tale* is certainly shorter than it used to be, intelligence is demonstrably small, and if we take "body" as the equivalent of parsonic reasoning, there is no denying its elliptical character.

Anthropologists derive all existing varieties of parsons from a species that made its appearance about the time of palaeolithic man, but against this parsons protest that they are really without ancestry. Every other organism known to science is related to a definite environment. But the parson is not related to anything we know. He is not here to give reliable information. His function is a heavenly one. He has no earthly use.

Selected Heresies.

Christianity and Mau Mau

By COLIN MCCALL

FOR several years now our radio and Press have been telling us of the atrocities committed by the Mau Mau, but they have told us little about the organisation itself. Most people are aware that it is a kind of secret society: few know that it is, in fact, a religion. It has political aims, of course, but it is the religious—indeed, Christian—basis of its ritual that has enabled it to function as a powerful terrorist body. It springs principally from two factors in Kikuyu history: the loss of land to the white settlers, and the receipt of Christianity from the white missionaries. And though one may sympathise with the revolt against white domination, one must rue the form it has taken. Above all, it is important to note the harmful influence of religion upon the strife in Kenya, for it seems generally to have been neglected in our newspapers.

Two papers should be mentioned as exceptions: *The New Statesman and Nation* and the *Manchester Guardian*. (There may be others, but, if so, I haven't seen them.) As long ago as December 6, 1952, Mr. Kingsley Martin, editor of the former, stressed the curious Christian elements in the Mau Mau creed; and recently the latter paper has printed an Anthropologist's comments on "Mau Mau as a Religion" (*Manchester Guardian*, June 24 and 25, 1954).

Dr. L. S. B. Leakey was brought up among the Kikuyu and is a foremost authority on their history and habits. His two articles are packed with useful information for English readers who are ignorant of the religious nature of Mau Mau. They show that it is largely "a blending of Christianity with some of the original pagan beliefs of the Kikuyu," deliberately fostered by the leaders of the movement when they discovered the ineffectiveness of purely political activity directed towards the same ends. The Kikuyu Central Association—predecessor of Mau Mau—had failed to gain a following of more than ten or fifteen thousand people as a political organisation. It was the adoption of religious ritual and idiom—the exploitation of Christian missionary methods—that turned the lukewarm K.C.A. into the fanatical Mau Mau.

"The potential field, from which Mau Mau adherents were to be won," writes Dr. Leakey, "lay among the tens of thousands of nominal Christians, who were well acquainted with the outward forms of this religion, but who had never accepted its doctrines nor become real believers in its Founder." The different missionary sects had taught their own special brands of Christianity, but the general pattern of worship was similar and the nominally Christian natives had listened to sermons and participated in hymn-singing, prayers and recitations of the creed. These rites were used as the foundation of the Mau Mau ceremonial.

First of all a creed was drawn up and widely circulated. Dr. Leakey does not give it in detail but he calls it "a very dreadful parody of the Apostles' Creed." Actually it is a strange mixture of righteous resentment and Christian recitative. Here is part of it, as quoted by Mr. Kingsley Martin in *The New Statesman* referred to earlier:—

"I believe in God the Father, Lord of Nature, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and I believe in Gikuyu and Mumbi who inherited this country. . . . They were deceived and robbed of their lands and rule of this country. They were dispersed, ruled and made as useless pieces of earth. Their fearless children have risen and are now awaiting the truth at the right hand of God. They are praying to the Father Lord of Nature and protector of age groups, for the eviction of those who robbed us of our land, whether dead, alive, or not yet born. I believe in the clean ceremonies of

Gikuyu and Mumbi, the leadership of Kenyatta and Mbiyu, and political agitation by Africans and in justice, also the everlastingness of the Kikuyu tribe. God bless us. Amen."

Then hymn-books were written, printed and distributed, says Dr. Leakey, set to tunes from the "Ancient and Modern," but with very different words. They lamented the lands stolen from the Kikuyu, praised Kikuyu prophets of old who had foretold the evils that would follow the coming of the white man, and called for the expulsion of these strangers. "Other hymns extolled both past and present Kikuyu leaders as servants of God and poured scorn upon those who sided with the Europeans or helped them in any way, frankly speaking of them as 'Judases' who would be destroyed." Martial tunes like "Soldiers of Christ, Arise," and "Onward Christian Soldiers" were also adapted to Mau Mau purposes; so, too, were prayers and Bible texts. And Dr. Leakey informs us that "God, in these prayers and sermons, was referred to sometimes as 'Mwathani Ngai,' the common form of address in Christian works in the missions, and sometimes as 'Mwene Nyaga,' the old Kikuyu name for the Supreme Deity."

Mau Mau became known as "the true religion of the Kikuyu," and its oath ceremonies became associated with the tribal ceremony of initiation into adult status. The ceremonies "were, and still are, preceded by most solemn prayers to God, while those taking the oaths have to start off with the words, 'I swear by Almighty God and in the presence of these witnesses.'" In many cases the sign of the cross is made, in blood, on the forehead.

Dr. Leakey considers that Mau Mau is ten times more dangerous than a merely political movement, precisely because it is a religion; and I agree. But he errs, I think, in looking to the Churches for an antidote. True, he calls for a return to "the simple teachings of Christ" instead of the "more stylised" British Christianity. He would dispense with the "teachings of the early fathers embodied in the Canon Law, with its rather stereotyped printed forms of formal worship, that the missionaries were familiar with"; and he dislikes sectarianism. Now this may sound very nice; but what precisely are the simple teachings of Christ? Do they include the forsaking of fathers, mothers, wives and children in order to inherit everlasting life (Matthew 19; 29) or the hating of these relatives to qualify for discipleship (Luke 14; 26)? Is the doctrine of hell among them? And how about non-resistance to evil? It would seem prudent to withhold this last precept until the Mau Mau trouble is settled. In the meantime the Kikuyu might be regaled with sermons on the more appropriate text, Matthew 10; 21: "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death."

Are such teachings of Jesus really to be preferred to the teachings of the Mau Mau? If they "draw back tens of thousands who have gone over to Mau Mau as a religion"—as Dr. Leakey hopes—will it be a change for the better? These are questions that should be answered by the Doctor. He should also explain how a religion can persist without some "formal worship" or even "rather stereotyped printed forms" of the same. After all, Christ taught His disciples to recite the Lord's Prayer. It simply will not do to talk vaguely about the "simple" teachings of Christ, or of the New Testament: it is certainly no satisfactory solution even to the religious side of the Mau Mau problem to give the Kikuyu more Christianity, simple or complex.

This Believing World

Although it may be true to say that when a man bites a dog, that is "news," it would be truer to say that if some "sports" woman says that she has been completely cured of cancer by prayer—that is "full page" news. It would, of course, be useless to point out that hundreds of thousands of poor men and women have died of cancer most of whom prayed just as fervently; for we get the same phenomenon in "dreams." Out of exactly 1,908,763 dreams, one foretells something a little correctly. It is the one which immediately becomes "news." The other 1,908,762 are never referred to.

The lady who won the American Open Golf Championship, "Babe" Zaharias, was cured of cancer by prayer. Therefore, prayer cures cancer. And to clinch matters, the *Daily Express* called in the Bishop of Croydon who prays sometimes as much as two hours a day, year in and year out, not only for himself but for "suffering people," to explain why. Not that the Bishop can name any cures—that doesn't matter—but he can laughingly tell people how thoroughly he believes in prayer and, naturally, in God to whom, he insists, you can talk "because you want and need to, not just for duty's sake."

But supposing "you say that you do not believe in prayer or God"? You can't prove that there is no God, the Bishop tells us, "any more than I can prove, scientifically, that there is one." So the best way for a confirmed Atheist is to try "talking in to the God you don't believe in." Here is the magic incantation. "Oh God, if there is a God, show yourself to me." And if you keep that up a few months, you will find it works as it did with the Bishop. Twenty-five years ago, the Bishop of Croydon did not believe in God. He followed his own inspiring incantation—and now he talks regularly with God. One wonders sometimes whether our Bishops ever grow up—or whether they believe that even their own sheep (and other people) never grow up.

Six girls asked the *Manchester Evening News* to tell them "if there is really a God." And as its pious staff, although brought up to believe there is—as were the girls—were quite unable to give the necessary evidence, the editor got the Dean of Manchester to provide some clinching arguments on behalf of the Lord. The Dean saw at the outset the difficulty if Evolution is true, but then he believes in Evolution; and he is quite certain that "creation" and "Evolution" do not contradict one another. Evolution is merely "the process by which God creates."

In other words, after opposing Evolution tooth and nail—and many Christian sects still oppose it—Christianity now has to accept it; but these days it is merely the way that God works! The Dean throws overboard the "old mistaken" ideas about the Bible held by people "a century ago." Why, "people believed that God had, as it were 'dictated' the books of the Bible to their authors" among other absurdities; which absurdities, it may as well be to point out, were exposed more than a century ago by Thomas Paine pretty thoroughly. And Christians were ready to murder him for doing it so well.

The Dean therefore advised the girls not to go to the Bible for "history or science" but to "the scientist and the historian." And to remember that "the Bible is one of the foundations, but not the only foundation, of the Christian faith." With such crushing "arguments," we are sure that, not only the young ladies, but nearly all the readers of the

Manchester Evening News, will now be convinced that there is a God. And our only surprise is that the Dean did not make Jesus Christ the Greatest Evolutionist the World has ever seen.

How magnificently religious teaching in school and home helps to obliterate juvenile delinquency is proved by the way a boy of twelve in New York recently kicked a child of three to death because he couldn't say his prayers properly. The religious hero proudly declared, "I just got mad and kicked him." That was all. It sounds exactly like the *apologia* religious child torturers and animal torturers use when caught—it has, in fact, become a thoroughly religious "cliché."

Ask at Your Library

By JAMES H. MATSON

THE historical existence of a person named Jesus is, one would suppose, an essential to any system or persons calling themselves Christian, although there are isolated exceptions. That the question is unsettled and is of live interest is evidenced by the spate of recent books on the subject, and in the works here under review the divergence of opinions as to everything appertaining to him and his activities gives no cause for congratulation to any Christian, and to the mythicist are additional evidence, if such were needed, that the "quest for the historical Jesus" has not succeeded in finding this elusive being.

The Nazarine Gospel Restored, by R. Graves and J. Podno (Cassell, 3 gns.) is a volume of well over 1,000 pages, an immense book, and the claims made on its behalf are equally big. To quote its authors: "It seeks to prove that the four Gospels are irresponsible Greek piracies from a single authentic tradition orally preserved in Aramaic, the text of which is given in full." It is clear that modesty has not prevented the authors from advertising their wares. But there is not a trace of evidence that their new gospel is an orally preserved tradition. It is evident that an immense amount of labour and knowledge of available sources of all kinds go to its make-up, but the resulting rifacimento produced from its varied components leave a grave doubt as to its meaning or object and the question even arises: Is it meant seriously? Robert Graves is the author of a series of historical novels dealing with the Emperor Claudius and his times, and of another called *King Jesus*, and the reader is inclined to ask: Is he still writing fiction? One feels regret that so much valuable knowledge is wasted on this huge tome. The material showing the dependence of Christianity on earlier Jewish sources is clear and important, but as it is the authors have merely added a new "Life of Jesus" to the many already existing imaginary lives, depicting him as a member of a secret society. It is true that the writers attempt to show that the party to which he belonged did not commit their religious teaching, etc., to writing and in this way explain the absence in the literature of that time of any reference to the story put forward in the book before us, although every scrap of the available existing writings and fragments are made to contribute to the build-up of this fantastic new revelation of the True Original Gospel. Yet it must not be supposed that the book contains no valuable suggestions as to the way in which the orthodox gospels were formed, which, if not original, are at least extremely important contributions to the study of the subject. For example, the suggestion that many of the Gospel incidents are founded on misunderstanding of synagogue frescoes of Old Testament scenes. Critics have claimed that this view has already been

(Concluded on page 246)

THE FREETHINKER

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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.

To Correspondents

CORRESPONDENTS may like to note that when their letters are not printed, or when they are abbreviated, the material in them may still be of use to "This Believing World," or to our spoken propaganda. On the basis of an eight-page paper, space is the enemy, which means we cannot print as much as deserves to be printed.

CHRISTIAN RATIONALIST.—When Christianity is studied in comparison with earlier religions we find that "what is true is not new, and what is new is not true."

J. LE CONTE.—If *The Freethinker* ceased to be militantly anti-Christian there would not be a journal left in the country that could be depended on to expose religious doctrines and practices without having some other axe to grind. We welcome your limited support.

PETER LIVESEY.—Biologists find that "life" is not a unity and can be experimentally disintegrated in piecemeal fashion.

G. DICKINSON.—As you rightly say, the N.S.S. seeks changes through political means, while remaining non-party.

R. WALLACE.—The Humanism of to-day differs materially from that of Comte (Positivism) in the matter of ritual.

B. CALCUTT (Australia).—Thanks for information which, even when crowded out of print, is always useful for our speakers.

L. R. MOORES.—Theosophy, as is usual in oriental mystic cults, offers no material for public investigation. Nothing in it can be satisfactorily verified.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

J. CLAYTON'S Lectures: Friday, July 30, 7-30 p.m., Wheatley Lane, Sunday, August 1, 3 p.m., Platt Fields, Manchester; 7 p.m., Bomb Site, Deansgate. Tuesday, August 3, 7-30 p.m., Hapton, Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.:

F. ROTHWELL, Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday at 7 p.m.: HAROLD DAY and others.

Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle St.).—Sunday at 8 p.m.: J. W. BARKER and E. MILLS.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: G. A. WOODCOCK. Every Sunday, 3 p.m., at Platt Fields: a Lecture. At Deansgate Blitzed Site, 7-30 p.m.: COLIN MCCALL. A Lecture.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, noon: F. A. RIDLEY and L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Every Friday at 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

West London Branch N.S.S.—F. A. RIDLEY, H. ARTHUR, L. EBURY, C. E. WOOD and W. J. O'NEILL. Hyde Park, every Sunday, 5 p.m.

Notes and News

Readers, old and new, may like to know that in the course of the next few weeks we shall be introducing several new writers who are acknowledged experts in their respective fields.

The organiser of the Thomas Paine Exhibition (1951), Mr. Adrian Brunel (Pres. of the Thomas Paine Society) will be writing for us on that famous precursor of the freethought-secularist movement. Though new to *The Freethinker*, Adrian Brunel has a wide reputation in international freethought circles.

We are similarly extending a welcome to Joshua C. Gregory, B.Sc., F.R.I.C., Hon. Lecturer in the History of Science at the University of Leeds and *Membre Correspondant de l'Académie Internationale de l'Histoire des Sciences*. He was lecturer in Chemistry at Leeds University

for 17 years prior to his retirement, and is the author of many scientific publications, and articles in scientific and philosophical journals (see *Who's Who*).

We shall also be publishing authoritative articles on the law covering "obscene" publications by a leading authority on the subject, Mr. Alec Craig.

We are pleased to learn that the Merseyside Branch of the N.S.S. had a successful meeting on Friday, July 16, at the Stork Hotel. As this was the first meeting for a considerable time it was gratifying to see many of the members in attendance. The chairman, Mr. W. Parry, President of the Branch, was able to strengthen old contacts and make new ones from those who wished to be kept in touch with the Merseyside meetings. The speaker was Mr. F. A. Ridley, his subject "A Secularist looks at the World," a view in which the Catholic danger loomed large. Many questions were asked by an appreciative audience, and ably answered.

Defender of the Faith

By E. H. GROUT

ALTHOUGH the break with the Papacy occurred during the reign of Henry VIII, this was not at all because the views of that monarch on religion were enlightened. On the contrary, they were much behind the more progressive opinion of his time, considerably behind the position openly adopted a century and a half earlier by Wycliffe, Sir John Oldcastle, and their followers.

When Martin Luther came out with some mild attacks upon papal methods, Henry VIII wrote an answer, for which the Pope awarded him the honour, *Fidei Defensor*, in 1521. A few years later, Henry VIII had himself proclaimed the Supreme Head of the Church in England, dissolved the monasteries, stopped the dispatch of annates and other money to the Pope. Whereupon the Pope withdrew the honour, but Henry continued to use it, and what is more, all the succeeding monarchs have continued to use it—which is certainly giving a very long stretch to the hereditary principle. *Fid. Def.* will be found on the coins of to-day.

The father of Henry VIII was one of the most avaricious of British Kings; but he was so grossly superstitious that he thought he could use some of his wealth to improve his position in the next world. Henry VII left a large sum of money so as to pay for the performance of 10,000 masses for his soul's welfare. His view of the Deity was so narrow that he thought God would be influenced in his favour if He were petitioned often enough! Even beyond the tomb, the rich were to have the advantage—which is the direct opposite of the anti-rich parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

The son was not a whit more enlightened. Omitting the growth of anti-Church feeling evidenced in *Piers Plowman*, in the Lollard tracts, in Skelton's *Colin Clout*, and attacks by rebels on several occasions, there is sufficient evidence of it in the lifetime of Henry VIII to show that he would have had a strong backing if he had taken up a much stronger attitude against the Church. An irrefutable witness is Richard Fitzjames, Bishop of London. This bishop's Chancellor, William Horsey, had been charged by a coroner's jury that he had (with two servants) feloniously killed and murdered Richard Hunne. The Bishop of London wrote an appealing letter to Wolsey, Archbishop of York, asking that powerful ecclesiastic to intercede with the King to have Horsey tried by "his discreet council,"

... for assured am I, if my Chancellor be tried by any twelve men in London, they be so maliciously set in *favorem*

haereticae pravitatis (in favour of heresy) that they will cast and condemn any clerk (cleric) though he were as innocent as Abel."

The letter is given in full in *The Tragedy of the Lollards' Tower*, by Arthur Ogle (1949.) Incidentally, the letter contains no expression of regret for the murder: all that the Bishop was concerned about was getting his man off, and he felt that there was no chance of doing this if the case were tried before a London jury. This is an admission of the intensity of feeling against the Church—in London, at any rate.

The case of Richard Hunne (thus the name is usually spelt nowadays) exemplifies one reason for this antagonism, namely, the constant financial demands of the Church. Hunne was a merchant tailor of good standing. His son, Stephen, died when five weeks old, and the parson, Thomas Dryfield, demanded a mortuary. A mortuary was a customary gift (usually the second best animal) paid to the parish priest on the death of a parishioner. In this instance, it was the child's christening robe. Hunne refused it on the ground that it was not the property of the child. The tenacious nature of these ecclesiastics is shown by the fact that Dryfield sued for it in the ecclesiastical court. Hunne replied with a writ of praemunire, that is, he charged Dryfield with asserting the authority and jurisdiction of the Pope in England. The Church detested to have this charge raised against her; Bishop Fitzjames trumped up a charge of heresy against Hunne and clapped him in the Lollards' Tower in the custody of his Chancellor, William Horsey. A few days later, Hunne was found hanging in his cell, dead. The coroner's jury rejected the clerics' plea of suicide.

Four years prior, in 1511, Dr. John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, London, had preached to the Convocation of Canterbury. He said:

"We are now threatened and troubled with heretics; but, alas! the most pernicious heresy is in the ill lives of the clergy."
 "... boys, blockheads and sots, do now reign and rule in the Church, instead of grave and wise and good men."

He inveighed against simony and non-residence, and clergymen who haunt taverns and keep company with suspected women.

It was in the following year that Dean Colet founded St. Paul's School. It is noteworthy that he appointed as governors, not ecclesiastics, but the London Company of Mercers.

In 1529, from the safe retreat of Germany, a lawyer of Gray's Inn named Simon Fish sent over his provocative pamphlet *A Supplication for the Beggars*. He pointed out that the number of needy and impotent people had so increased that all the alms of the well-disposed people was not half enough to keep the poor from dying of hunger.

"And this most pestilent mischief is come upon your said poor bedemen by the reason that in the time of your (Henry VIII's) noble predecessors craftily crept into this your realm an other sort of strong, puissant, and counterfeit holy and idle beggars and vagabonds . . . These are the Bishops, Abbots, Priors, Deacons, Archdeacons, Suffragans, Priests, Monks, Canons, Friars, Pardoners and Summoners."

They have begged into their hands more than a third part of all the Realm. Poor wives have to give up to them every tenth egg.

"Every man and child that is buried must pay somewhat for masses and diriges (dirges) to be sung for him or else they will accuse the dead's friends and executors of heresy."

Had not Richard Hunne commenced action of praemunire against a priest he had been yet alive and no heretic at all but an honest man."

The writer points out that there is no mention in Scripture of Purgatory, that was invented by these Beggars to gather to themselves all the wealth of the Kingdom. He then reverts to the Hunne case.

"Did not Doctor Horsey and his complices most heinously as all the world knoweth, murder in prison the honest merchant, Richard Hunne?"

. . . Set these sturdy loobies abroad in the world to get them wives of their own, to get their living with their labour in the sweat of their faces according to the commandment of God."

There is evidence that Henry VIII saw this powerful pamphlet. The wonderful Reformation that he instituted was mainly an economic and political matter. The Mercantilist movement was growing, and the King stopped the flow of money to Italy, and with some of the proceeds bought the support of some of the nobility. The censorship of books was taken from the Pope, but not removed, it was assumed by the King, who extended it to political writings. Doctrinally, Henry VIII did almost nothing to reduce the burden of superstition that the nation was forced to bear, nothing to introduce the practice of religious toleration, nothing to deflate the conjuring claims of the clerics that by a few invocations they could change bread and wine into flesh and blood. And there was nobody to call his bluff, for he worked in too close a conjunction with the headsman. It is said that 72,000 persons were executed in his reign. Was he not the Defender of the Faith?

ASK AT YOUR LIBRARY

(Concluded from page 244)

advanced by some earlier writers; in any case the clear statement of this fact is both opportune and important, and I understand that this view is strengthened by recent archaeological discoveries. Other points are the suggestion that certain of the Gospel incidents are related in the sequence in which they now stand from an earlier compilation of anecdotes and texts strung together, not by any historical or other link, but simply by chance verbal resemblances; the existence of earlier Jewish texts and the later Christian adoption of the same method as proof texts, which has been held as the explanation of the mixing of one text with another which frequently occurs. But the application of these suggestions to the formation of the Gospel narratives as they now stand is, I believe, entirely to the credit of the authors of the present book.

The Other Side of the Story, by B. Furneaux (Cassell 12s. 6d., 220 pp.), resembles the last-mentioned in having its strongest point in its negative side. By this I mean the evidence it brings forward in proof of the Christian tampering with documents and the suppression of everything not approved of by those in authority is sufficient in itself to render it a work that will be studied with profit by those interested in Christian origins. But it is when our author attempts to base his theory of the origin of Christianity on the Slavonic translation of Josephus's "Jewish War" that serious disagreement will arise, for the question of the importance to be attached to this text and even of its trustworthiness and the question as to whether it is an honest translation or a partisan re-hash of the original will long remain a disputed point, few scholars being competent to offer a first-hand opinion. Even so, the layman cannot but be conscious that when all this is admitted and the question of its genuineness tentatively allowed, there still remain the major divergencies from what is recorded in other sources and the elaborate reconstructions of the text by the advocates of the testimony to Jesus, so that one feels that any value claimed on its account must be heavily discounted. For the rest, the theme of the book under review is, like that of Graves, that Jesus was the leading figure in a revolt which failed, though, unlike the Jesus of Graves, he was a pacifist who refused to lead an armed revolt.

A Summary of Mohammedanism

By P. CAMPBELL

BORN in Mecca around the year A.D. 570, Mohammed, the founder of Islam, started life in poverty, was uneducated, and indeed it is thought never learned to write. Starting work first as a shepherd boy, he subsequently became a camel driver and married a wealthy widow for whom he worked. As the husband of a prosperous wife, he lived a particularly undistinguished life until he was forty, when he claimed to have received a revelation from heaven bidding him start a new religion. Mohammed knew much of the Jews and their religion and had seen Christian churches in Syria when away trading. He acknowledged Abraham and Moses and Christ as great prophets of God, but proclaimed himself to be the last and greatest of the prophets. The religion he taught was very simple; it was summed up in the Islamic creed: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet." He laid down certain rules of life for his followers; prayers to be made several times a day, etc., but would have no priesthood or sacrament, no altar or images of any kind; but insisted on the completed submission to the will of God.

The Bible of Mohammed is the Koran; it is the text book of faith and also social life. A book of 300 pages divided into 114 chapters, it is the record of those formal utterances and discourses which Mohammed and his followers accepted as directly inspired, regarding them as the literal word of God mediated through the angel Gabriel. The Koran asserts the existence of a supreme God (Allah) and argues that he is the only God—"there is no God but Allah." There are four practical tests demanded of the individual Moslem. The first is prayer or worship, which must be performed five times a day without fail. The second is alms-giving. The third obligation is fasting during the hours of daylight for a whole month of the year (the sick adherents are temporarily exempted!). This month is known as the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar year. Finally, the Mohammedan is required where possible to make at least once in his lifetime the pilgrimage to Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet.

The word Islam finally adopted by Mohammed as the distinctive name of the faith which he preached means "submitting oneself to God." The adherent of Islam is designated by the corresponding adjective Moslem. A Moslem is usually a fatalist, believing that everything happens because Allah wills it so. Although the beginnings of Islam go back to Mohammed's preaching in Mecca, the people of Mecca would not receive Mohammed's teachings, and in 622 he had to flee to the neighbouring town of Medina. This flight is known as the Hegira, and is regarded in much the same way as Easter Day is by the Christian Church. Eight years later he returned to Mecca with an army for the conquest of the city which had rejected him. This attack on Mecca was the beginning of the spread of the new religion. Islam has always been a great fighting creed. It has gained its converts not so much by persuasion as by the sword. To die in battle for his religion is to the Moslem a sure passport to paradise. Mohammed was now a "fighting" prophet, and led his followers on a series of raids and battles, mainly successful. After the death of his wife in his fiftieth year, he apparently developed a strong interest in the opposite sex, taking several wives and concubines; the subsequent complications of his establishment still require much explanation from the faithful! Mohammed died of fever at the age of sixty-two and was buried in Medina. The victorious Mohammedan armies, however, were still to conquer in all directions. Northwards they captured Syria, eastwards they spread through

Persia to India. Northern Africa was easily conquered, and shortly after 700 the Mohammedan forces crossed into Spain, over the Pyrenees and into Northern France, where they were eventually defeated by the Franks under Charles the Hammer. They were obliged to retreat to Spain, where they formed an important kingdom lasting throughout a great part of the Middle Ages.

Mohammedanism, originating among Arabs, spread among Iranians, Caucasians, Mediterranean Whites, Slavs, Turks and Tartars, Chinese, Indians, Indonesians, Bantus and West African Negroes. The total present adherents number one-seventh of the world population, and it is worth noting that Pakistan is the largest complete Muslim state with a population numbering about a hundred million. The influence of Islam soon spread over the vast area that they had conquered, but in fairness this much can be written in their favour—they were not destroyers, nor were they always intolerant of the beliefs of the people they conquered. Sometimes choice was given to the conquered of submission to the religion of Islam, or death; but, especially in their later history, they existed side by side with the religion of the conquered.

In the arts of civilisation, for which to a great extent they were indebted to the Greeks, they were in many ways far in advance of the barbarians of Western Europe. The Arabs excelled particularly in mathematics, and are credited with "creating" and developing geometry and algebra; they made progress in the science of astronomy, building several observatories, and constructed many astronomical instruments, the like of which are still in use. Their knowledge of astronomy was undoubtedly considerable. At the time when medicine was forbidden by the Church in Europe (which expected cures to be effected by religious rites performed by the clergy!) the Arabs were well advanced in the science of medicine and chemistry. They worked in metals, manufactured textile fabrics of the finest quality, made glass, pottery and paper, practised scientific farming, irrigation, and excelled in horticulture. On the other hand, Mohammed had forbidden the making of the image of any living thing, for to do so, he considered, was idolatry: so there was no artistic development among the Mohammedans such as was found in Egypt and Greece. They did, however excel in building mosques and palaces of great architectural beauty, their style being extremely ornate, graceful and imposing. Much more of interest could be written of Mohammedanism, of the different leadership, of the breakaway Sufi group and other sects, but the writer has only attempted to present a brief survey for the Rationalist student, in the belief that we should not be ignorant of the past and contemporary strength of powerful religions such as Mohammedanism.

In digesting the hard fact that Islam has a total of over 350,000,000 adherents, mainly natives, it must be realised that it has taken 1350 years to reach that figure. Conversely, Rationalists, though small by comparison of numbers, can take strength in the knowledge that the spread and potentiality of Freethought, combined with the persistent pressure of scientific materialism, is helping that great corroder—Time—to write the concluding chapter in the Islamic and indeed all religions based on the supernatural.

—(From *New Zealand Rationalist*.)

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH. By Colonel Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1½d.

Correspondence

A VOICE FOR CHRISTIANITY

I am surprised that Mr. Bennett, in his article "The Necessary Stoicism," should state that the question of the early death of virtuous people is, to *the Christian*, unanswerable. Surely, the Christian, with his belief in a heavenly after-life, would regard a hasty departure from the earth as a divine reward. Perhaps Christians look upon God as a poet who has realised that the most beautiful poem must contain tragic, as well as comic, elements.

It might be asked why some people have to die of painful diseases in order to enter the after-life. But there are Christians who believe that God created man with Free Will in an independent universe. That is, He created matter and scientific laws for that matter to obey, and is therefore not responsible for earthquakes, floods, or diseases; these all result from natural causes, from the laws which He created. This seems to me to be as rational as any other Christian dogma! Therefore, no matter how ridiculous this idea of life being supported by love, and love being increased by tragedy may be, Mr. Bennett cannot accuse the *Christian* of having no answer.—Yours, etc.,

J. E. SUNLEY.

[The Christian may have a *reply*, but it is not an answer. An omniscient God would know in advance what results his laws would have. But in any case our correspondent appears to confuse natural law with civil law. It is the latter which presupposes a law-giver.—EDITOR.]

FROM A NEWCOMER

May I, as a relative newcomer to Freethought and the N.S.S. congratulate you on your decision to publish articles especially "For Newcomers." I hope it will, in the future, contain details of the rise of various sects.—Yours, etc.,

W. SCOTT.

A REJOINDER

As your paper is a non-party one, perhaps you will publish the following lines in reply to the ones on Sir Winston Churchill:—

The man we trusted when we fought the foe
We trust again in helping them to grow
Secure and strong against the Eastern threat,
To catch them in another tyrants' net.

Yours, etc.,

THOS. WILCOCK.

MIND

A correspondent asks for my definition of Mind. It is based on Eastern philosophy and implies that Mind is not just a function of the physical brain, but that it is a distinct vital force functioning through the medium of the brain. Surely it is quite irrational to suppose that any piece of chemical matter can *think*! We postulate a non-physical self, or ego, independent of the material self, which is but a reflection of the former in the physical world. We hold that directive and purposeful Mind-force governs all human activity and is given physical expression through the agency of the brain, but that it originates in the Mind itself.

The recordings of the Electroencephalograph do not illustrate the brain itself thinking and reasoning, but show the varied disturbances caused in the brain as it receives thought impulses from the Mind. We have, then, to expand our narrow conception of a five-sense, three-dimensional world of matter into a timeless and spaceless non-physical universe of mental cosmos where, by the interaction of vital forces, Energy is transformed into Mass and from which all creation emanates.—Yours, etc.,

W. H. WOOD.

[A "five-sense, three-dimensional universe" is rather obsolete. Physiologists now recognise at least 20 different receptor-elements in the human body, while Einstein's system of dimensions makes Mr. Wood's "three" look pretty sick. It used to be the "sixth sense" which was to reveal a "spirit world." It has now, no doubt, receded to the 27th. Vitalism is in retreat all the time.

We don't postulate a "mind" inside the heart to make it beat, so why should we assume a detached entity in the brain to make it think? Mind (a general term for conscious behaviour linked with brain-events) is a function of the organism at the cerebral level.—EDITOR.]

LOGIC AND CAUSALITY

On the recommendation, through your columns, of Mr. W. H. Wood, I have read *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga* by Dr. Paul Brunton. You may appreciate a few remarks.

The greater part of the book is devoted to elementary writing on mysticism, religion, science, reason, philosophy, and language, and is not here pertinent.

Beginning the argument that is to demonstrate his world-view, Dr. Brunton describes many illusions, not only the optical ones produced by various shapes and figures, but also certain others revealed by science. Amongst these last are colour (which is not

the retina), space and time (relativity shows them to be variable), composition (objects are not really solid but are atomic in structure—really a property of objects), size (nothing can really be bigger than

It will be seen from this list that Dr. Brunton's use of the term "illusion" is very broad indeed, and because of this he is able to introduce a further instance of common error. We are aware of the world only through our minds, all our awareness being in the form of sensations. Therefore the external world is not actually experienced but is merely inferred from these sensations. Thus, tripping lightly from illusion to inference, Dr. Brunton secures his case.

The mentalistic system's irremediable weakness lies in its refusal to grant the validity of inference. In showing that all things are ideas (i.e. sensations) Dr. Brunton ignores the fact that the inferences made from these are likewise ideas and consequently of similar worth. In fairness to the author it must be said that he intends the book as an introduction; but personally I find it virtually worthless and it would be pointless to criticise further.

I must attempt to anticipate the mentalist's procedure. In maintaining his position he cannot possibly retain causality as an element of his world-view. The sequence object, light, eye, nerve, brain, revealing as it does the dependence of the mind on external activity, must be discarded. But if there is no causality there can be no logic, and without logic one cannot prove anything; in particular, one cannot prove the validity of mentalism.—Yours, etc.,

D. G. HOLLIDAY.

IN DEFENCE OF THE UNIVERSE

The great secret of the rise of Christianity as a major religion was its deliverance of its converts from the subconscious fear of ordinary death. The most horrible of human inventions, "eternal-Hell-torture," so mightily outweighed men's natural fear of death that even temporary torture causing "worldly death" seemed to its Christian victims a sort of fanatical privilege and honour.

Christianity has caused more insanity, more acute mental anguish, more despicable misconduct among its supposedly "good" leaders, than any other form of superstitious enslavement foisted upon the minds of unfortunate humanity. Pretending "the best," its real record proves, it the worst.

To remain sanely immune from its evangelical hypnosis, we always remember that for every "good" in the old and new Testaments of the Christian Bible, there exists more than enough contradictory "evils" which both annul and disgrace its every claim to "Divine Inspiration."

Christianity's Eternal Hell is its "sand" foundation. That same "Hell" will bring about its entire annihilation, for it stands to-day as the greatest of insults that mankind has as yet flung into the face of our Natural Universe!

The mistaken "glory of the Christian martyrs" is sadly dimmed by the unanswerable fact that all of Nero's persecutions could not make one single Bible falsehood turn into an unerring Truth. Men died for the lies in other and far older religions, long before the commercialised Christian-system was, as inhumanly devised.—Yours, etc.,

WALT KENT.

WORLD DOMINION

"But if freedom is threatened by such a mighty foe, it is imperilled by other no less powerful enemies, of which one of the most dangerous is undoubtedly the Catholic Church. To speak of Catholic tyranny in a century rocked by gigantic political dictatorships may seem pitiable and naive. Yet Catholic terror is not a myth. It is ruthless reality, here in the present."

—From Avro Manhattan's *Terror Over Yugoslavia* (1953).

THE B.B.C. AND RELIGION

From our contemporary *Freedom*:—

"Organisations like the Secular Society have made repeated attempts to have their point of view expressed on the air, but this has been refused on the grounds that there is no demand for such programmes. It is quite clear that it is the controversial nature of minority views, striking as they often do at the very root of the 'Christian way of life,' which make them undesirable from the standpoint of the B.B.C. and all it stands for."

—NEXT WEEK—

"HOW TO READ THE NEWSPAPERS"

ROBERT TAYLOR. *The Devil's Chaplain* (1784-1844). By H. Cutner. A detailed account of a remarkable Free-thinker and his work. Price 1s. 6d.; postage 2d.