

# The Freethinker

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ONE of the fundamental points on which Christian dogma clashes with the secular view of society is the disposal of the dead. In modern times, as the secular point of view again began to make itself heard after the long reign of the Church over civil life and legal practice, the clash has been a recurring feature in modern society. The traditional dogma of the resurrection of the body, held by Christian orthodoxy, conflicted directly with the view that the disposal of the dead is a purely civil matter. To the Christian Church, burial could never by definition be a purely civil rite directed by social and sanitary convenience. It had to be conducted with one supreme aim in mind, the preservation of the body until its resurrection and final judgement. During the long reign of the Church over European society theology not sanitation, was the science primarily concerned with burial.

## Pagan Funeral Rites

Among the Pagan societies which preceded the rise and establishment of Christianity, the dead were disposed of both by cremation and burial. Actually, distinctions of class seem to have played a large part in determining the precise form taken in disposing of the dead. In the poems of Homer, which depict Greek society about a thousand years before the Christian era, cremation with full military and/or priestly honours seems to have been reserved for the military leaders of an aristocratic society whose exploits take up the greater part of the Homeric poems. The Hoi Polloi, the rank and file, were only fit for common burial. The Homeric Greeks had little theology, and their conception of an after-life was of the shallowest kind. Their contemporaries, the Ancient Egyptians, were obsessed by theology and, in particular, by death. The pyramids were the eternal tombs of the dead, and the *Book of the Dead* not only described the underworld in great detail, but prescribed elaborate rites of mummification. Here again, the class and occupation of the deceased were important in determining both his posthumous abode and the form of his funeral. The Pharaohs, like the ancient world in general, lived a long time before "the century of the common man."

## The Resurrection of the Body

The Christian Church talked in Greek, but thought in Egyptian. From Egypt, where Christianity found so much, it derived its cardinal dogma of the Resurrection of the Body. Theology now took a hand at the graveside and ruled the funeral service for the next fifteen centuries. The body of man, taught the Church, is a sacred as his soul, both being immortal. Both will rise on the Last Day. At all costs the body must not be allowed to disappear. Incidentally, the dogma of bodily resurrection was never fully accepted in Greek Christianity, since it clashed with Plato's theory, inherited by the Church, of the immortality of the soul. But the Catholic West accepted it fully, and it remains to this day as a cardinal dogma, an article of faith

for both the Roman Catholic Church and orthodox Protestantism. It is in his own flesh, blood and bones that each will appear at the Day of Judgement to give account of his works, and it is in the same that the wicked shall depart into everlasting fire. Such was, and is, the orthodox Christian dogma.

The dogma had practical consequences, for the entire "Ages of Faith" the cremation fires were theologically extinguished. Where the R.C. Church had, or has, the power to stop it, cremation is illegal. Until quite recent times the same situation obtained in Protestant lands. The practice of burying the dead in holes in the ground, which, prior to Christianity, appears to have been reserved for the "lower orders," except in Egypt and perhaps among the Jews, henceforth

became the universal rule for kings and commoners alike. Christian emperors and kings were buried, not burned. The Church found other uses for fire, burning heretics for example! But all corpses, *except* those of heretics, whose post-mortem destiny was settled anyway, had to be buried, ready to rise again.

## Some Theological Inconsistencies

The ways of God—and of his interpreters—are proverbially mysterious, and they certainly appear to be so in this respect. For bodies decompose in earth as well as in fire; some 97%, we believe, of the human corpse decomposes into gas, and, as such, becomes transformed very quickly into plants, grass, and other forms of vegetable life. Is it any easier for God to reconstitute the buried body at the hypothetical Day of Judgement than it is for him to reassemble the charred ashes from the fire? And in any case, are not all things equally easy to an omnipotent God by definition? Learned theologians have attempted to answer these knotty points by suggesting that while God can of course resuscitate the corpse from ashes, as from the interior of a plant or a worm, yet it looks more difficult to a simple believer, and we must not create difficulties for him. It was in the light of such flimsy and illogical reasoning that Christianity buried its dead for nearly two thousand years.

## Cremation and Secularism

The modern, equally with its predecessor the classical civilisation of Graeco-Roman antiquity, is distinguished by its secular spirit, in which sense it is much closer in spirit to, say, the ancient Greeks than to the Christian "Ages of Faith." Nowhere, one may add, has the secular spirit clashed more directly with Christian theology than in this question of cremation. It is a clash in both theory and practice between the scientific spirit of secularism and the supernatural outlook of Christian dogma. To the secularist the disposal of the dead is entirely a matter of sanitation and social convenience; to the theologian the matter is one to be decided exclusively by reference to the fundamental dogma of Catholic and—at any rate until recently—Protestant Christianity. As long as the body eventually rises at the

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

## Cremation

versus

## Christianity

By F. A. RIDLEY

Last Day, what does it really matter if its decomposing remains scatter, meanwhile, the germs of disease among other equally imperishable bodies?

### The Battle for Cremation

The theoretical considerations have provoked some of the bitterest political and legal battles in modern times. For, while Protestantism appears to have modified its attitude to cremation—actually most Protestant theologians appear nowadays to accept the immortality of the soul alone—the Roman Catholic Church still bans cremation with an absolute rigour. Where the Church is still supreme, as in Spain or Eire, no crematoria are to be seen. The departed faithful wait inside their patient worms for the sound of the Last Trumpet, the signal for their resurrection. In Luxembourg to-day the Freethinkers are, just at present, trying to pass a law permitting cremation in this immemorably Catholic land, and similar clashes have occurred in the past in most lands still Catholic.

### Cremation in England

Nowadays Protestantism, even where still orthodox, seems to have relaxed its former total ban; it no longer insists unconditionally on burial. Christian modernists can always

fall back on that step-father of Christian theology, Plato, for the belief that only the soul is immortal, and that it does not matter what happens to the body. But, in England at any rate, this seems to be quite a recent attitude. It was actually not till after the famous judgement in the case of Dr. Price of Cardiff, who had cremated his child in 1884, that cremation was officially declared legal. All attempts, however, to put an act on the Statute Book which would legalise it beyond all possible doubt failed, until in 1902 the Cremation Act was passed. Between 1885 and 1944 the number of cremations annually in Britain rose from three to 39,016, and the number of crematoria from one to fifty-eight, an upward trend which has certainly continued, and a steep rise would probably be the case.

### Cremation and the Decline of Christian Dogma

The above spectacular change, which could probably be paralleled in other officially Protestant lands, indicates as clearly as anything the current decay of belief, the accelerating decline of Christian dogma both in actual belief and practical conduct. Cremation has actually become a practical embodiment of the rising influence of the free-thinking outlook and of the secularist movement.

## A Century of Fossil Finds

By G. H. TAYLOR

(continued from page 250)

1901. Pekin.

### CHINA

Curios bought in a drug store turned out to be fossil teeth. The area was earmarked for possible discoveries.

1922. Pekin. *Sinanthropus Pekinensis*.

Following a preliminary find of two teeth, this type was established finally in 1927.

From now onwards the discoveries were frequent in this area, with teeth, lower jaws, skulls and bones. A great deal of work has been put in on Peking Man by Davidson Black, Wiedenreich, Elliott Smith and others, and the opinion is that he was closely related to the famous Java Man, though in mental and physical ability well in advance of him. Whereas Java Man's claim to be called human rests on certain physical qualities, Peking Man fashioned tools and weapons, made fires and cooked his food.

1934-39. Hong Kong. Three teeth of a huge ape-man (*Gigantopithecus*) were for sale in a Chinese drug store.

### JAVA

1888. A skull was discovered at Wadjek, pro-australoid in character. 1891. Java Man, or *Pithecanthropus erectus* (=erect ape-man). The discoverer was Dr. Eugene Dubois of Amsterdam University, who found the remains of volcanic ash: he had been examining a deep hollow cut by the Solo River into the side of the ancient volcano, and many primitive mammalian fossil bones had come to light in the blue clays. The search was continued with eventual results of first importance. Fragments of jaw, skull cap, thigh bone and tooth were recovered, representing a creature that flourished almost a million years ago, the original bearer of the term "missing link" (between ape and man), after Haeckel's terminology.

Two kinds of controversy arose. One was a perfectly scientific one between scientists themselves as to the status of Java Man in the evolutionary tree. This went on till 1924 when he was finally classed as hominid, an endocranial cast having shown him more human than simian. The capacity is about 900 c.c., half way between the largest ape's and the smallest human's (the Australian aborigine's). This was apparently not big enough for anti-evolutionist writers

(the second sort of controversialists), who denied Java Man that "spiritual principle" so necessary for qualifying as a human being. Catholics in particular contended that there must be some barrier hidden to mere scientists (though doubtless revealed to His Holiness the Pope), which marked some final distinction between man and beast, the soulful and the soul-less. God somewhere entered the body of a sacred monkey (see *The Everlasting Man* by G. K. Chesterton). The latter loved to ridicule the Java remains as just a few bones in a handkerchief.

Sir Archibald Fleming criticised the fragments as follows:

There is not a shadow of proof that the four fragments of bone . . . belonged to one individual or were deposited in the ground at the same time. . . . Suppose anyone found in a field a bone button and a yard away another similar button and the top of an old bowler cap (sic.) and then fifty feet away part of one leg of a pair of trousers. Would it be legitimate to assert that all these fragments were parts of a single costume and to proceed to make a drawing of what the complete dress was like when it left the outfitter's shop, and to declare that long ago many people were arrayed in this fashion? (*Modern Anthropology versus Biblical Statements on Human Origin*.)

Dr. A. M. Davies answers him thus.

It depends entirely on the circumstances. In a country like England today, with a large population of untidy persons, whose principal method of disposing of unwanted bowler hats, trouser legs and buttons, is to drop them casually about the fields, the suggested inference would be a rash one. But if the finds were made in a tidy country, and if thorough search over a wide area of fields around revealed no other human clothes, only dog-collars and horseshoes, then surely Sherlock Holmes would be justified in adopting as a working hypothesis the unity of source of the relics. He would, of course, subject the hypothesis to every possible test, and if he found that the bowler fitted a small boy, while the trouser leg must have belonged to a six-foot man, he would at once abandon his hypothesis. But if he found no such discrepancy; if, on the contrary, he found indications that the hat and the trousers were bought in the same town, or had been smeared with the same coloured paint, he would feel confident that his theory was sound. It is by similar methods that palaeontologists from Cuvier downwards have striven to build up the perfect animal from its fragments. If the bone bed from which the fragments of *Pithecanthropus* were obtained were full of other bones of Primates from which these four were arbitrarily selected, then the reconstruction would have deserved Sir Archibald's censure. (*Evolution and its Modern Cities*.)

More complete finds have turned up at Bupang, and there is evidence of an earhole very similar to that in young apes. 1941. Two incomplete jaws, with three teeth, were found, pointing to a giant ape or man (*Mebanthropus*).

(To be concluded)

## Underwriting the Atom

By LORD BOYD-ORR

[Re-printed by permission of *The Nation* (U.S.A.), which for over ninety years has represented the best of American democracy; and also with the consent of Lord Boyd-Orr, who was the first Director General of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation.] THE hydrogen bomb has given the world the biggest jolt since civilisation began. The two greatest military powers have the bomb. But neither can use it without itself going down in wholesale death and destruction. In the words of Sir Winston Churchill, "War would result in mutual annihilation."

The leaders of the great powers now realise that every effort must be made to avoid war and are talking about peaceful co-existence. But co-existence in an armament race, with both sides piling up hydrogen bombs, offers a precarious sort of peace. In the present inflamed political atmosphere some quite minor incident may cause the piled-up armaments to explode in a world war. That would mean the end of civilisation and perhaps of the human race.

We cannot go on peering over the rim of hell. We may become hypnotised and tumble in. Before we can have an assured permanent peace, we must have a *co-operative* co-existence—with all nations working for their mutual benefit in a world plan of Atoms for Peace—which will bring in the new wonder age of peace and plenty made possible by modern science. We are already moving in that direction. The United States has made an important advance in offering aid to other nations which want to produce nuclear energy to use for their peaceful economic development.

President Eisenhower said in 1953: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who are hungry and who are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed." This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

General Marshall once said that "the skyscrapers of America cannot exist in this now small world side by side with the ruined cities of Europe." It is equally true that the economic wealth of the industrialised countries cannot continue to exist side by side with the abysmal poverty of the majority of human beings. That poverty has to be seen to be believed. The average life of two-thirds of the population of the world is only thirty to forty years, as against the average of seventy in wealthy countries. Premature death results from the lack of the physical necessities of life.

We could supply the starving with abundance and in doing so preserve our own society. For there is a real danger: people are no longer content to die quietly. They will revolt, and unless something is done they will tear down these Western civilisations.

You have read about the African-Asian conference at Bandung. There the leaders of the coloured peoples met—men who wouldn't have been allowed inside a white man's club twenty years ago. They represented 1,400,000,000 people. They didn't make many decisions, but they did make one: that they would co-operate with each other for political freedom and would never be under the subjection of either the Kremlin or the Pentagon.

Japan with a population of 40,000,000 adopted Western technology and became one of the world's great powers. Today the Asian nations have all adopted Western technology. How soon will they develop their immense

potential power—these nations that contain the majority of the people of the world? The great question is: shall we co-operate with them in a friendly way to help them as quickly as possible to raise their standard of living and abolish poverty? Or shall we let them develop in hostility to our Western civilisation?

I am proud to say that the country to which I belong faced this question some time ago and gave up imperialism, offering complete freedom and independence to India, Ceylon, Burma, Pakistan. What has been the result? These new nations are all the greatest friends of the United Kingdom. We have increased the prestige of our country out of all proportion to its military power.

You will tell me that under Truman's Point Four the United States is giving economic assistance. The United Nations is supplying technical aid. The U.N. organisations—F.A.O., W.H.O., U.N.E.S.C.O.—are all doing excellent work. And the bulk of the money is coming from the United States.

All true. But you are not getting much for your money, and I will tell you why. You are not giving it in the right spirit. You want to stop the march of communism? You can't stop communism that way.

What we have all got to realise is that the trickle of money going out through these agencies is hopelessly insufficient. Your Mr. Reuther of the C.I.O. has estimated that if we are going to lift the world out of poverty in the near future, it will take something like ten to twelve billion dollars a year, a vast amount of money. How are we going to get it?

I can suggest a way to get it. If we are not going to have war, we must have gradual disarmament. To begin with we could say to all the nations: "We will all agree to reduce our expenditure on armaments by 10 per cent., and the money saved we will put into an International Development Fund under the U.N. to be used to develop the world's vast potential resources and eliminate poverty." No nation is so poor that it can't afford an army. Therefore, under this scheme, every nation would be able to contribute, and all would co-operate in a world effort.

You cannot help the poverty-stricken people of the world by charity. The countries that receive it only feel humiliated. You cannot develop the wealth of the world except through the business methods we have known for all these centuries. Any loans offered by any such international authority should be on a business basis, with the agreement that repayment would begin as soon as the standard of living had been raised to a level where no person was dying for lack of the necessities of life.

What would be the results of such an enterprise? One would be an end to the seething revolt against poverty that is taking place in Asia and in Africa.

I watched events in Europe. When things looked bad after the war, communism spread. Marshall Aid came in, good harvests, people feeling hopeful, better standards of living; communism receded.

Such a plan as I have suggested will allay unrest and save our Western civilisation. We Europeans must say to you Americans that we cannot exist except in friendship with you, and in our interest, as well as yours, we are going to help you put this thing through as a business proposition. It will do us as much good as it will you,

(Concluded on next page)

## This Believing World

It is a pity that, if only for once, the newspapers and the B.B.C. do not report who are the members of the British Association who do not go to Divine Service. We are always told about those who do. However, on the T.V., we were given three eminent members, Prof. Mott, Dr. Bronowski, and Mr. Ritchie Calder, answering questions from an invited audience; and naturally, some of the questions dealt with religion. It formed a perfect study in religious psychology to see how these eminent men reacted to the questions.

For example, Mr. Calder could hardly speak fast enough to assure everybody that, whatever members of the B.A. believed or disbelieved, there were no Atheists among them. There might be Agnostics but, thank Heaven, that was the limit of their incredulity. Dr. Bronowski very guardedly said he was not quite so sure as Mr. Calder, while Prof. Mott made it clear he would not touch upon so dangerous a subject. Perhaps the fate of Mr. Fred Hoyle (never asked again to broadcast after his scientific and anti-Christian lectures) was enough to make these eminent scientists censor themselves. It would never do to let the Religious Directors of the B.B.C. censor them first.

Yet the question remains. Here is a body of the greatest scientists in the country meeting every year and pouring out dozens of lectures. How many of them believe in a Son of God, in Miracles, in Devils, in Angels, and in Heaven and Hell? We have a right to expect a clear and unequivocal answer. Yet all we get—at least on the radio and in our newspapers—is a rush to cover, and a Mr. Ritchie Calder speaking for them as apologetically as a Christian almost always does when faced with genuine unbelief. What a timid lot of sheep are after all our famous scientists!

Another success was the Y.M.C.A. World Conference recently held in Paris and which was attended by young (and old) Christians from all over the world. The Rev. P. Guinness gave an enthusiastic talk on the radio about its wonderful success, for here were thousands of young men entirely devoted to the service of Christ Jesus, all thorough believers, all without a shred of suspicion that the Bible in general and the Gospels in particular, have been riddled to shreds by Christians themselves.

No one would suspect from the way Mr. Guinness talked that Thomas Paine had written the *Age of Reason* over 150 years ago, and that it is as unanswerable today as it was then. The Bible as God's Precious Word is invulnerable. It stands, as Gladstone boasted, as an impregnable rock easily withstanding the most destructive assaults from ignorant infidels. All members of the Y.M.C.A. (and also of the Y.W.C.A.) talk like that, and no doubt sincerely believe what they say. But what a commentary on our State Education! What have our science and history teachers to say about it?

In the well known "News Letter" conducted by Sir Stephen King-Hall, there appeared recently a letter on religion by a "perplexed" reader. We often wonder why so many religious people are perplexed. Either religion is true, or it is not. If true, there is no need to be perplexed; and if not true, the best thing is to get rid of it. This particular gentleman tells us (among other things equally silly) that "there seems to be very few books which give

really unbiassed accounts of Biblical history". And Paine's *Age of Reason* has been regularly published for over 150 years! Hasn't he ever heard of it?

Of course, it is not exactly "unbiassed." Nor is Foote's *Bible Romances*. But a careful study of both books will tell our perplexed gentleman more in a few minutes than a thousand Christian books in a few years. Either book will knock the word "perplexed" out of his vocabulary as far as the Bible is concerned.

In any case, the antidote is, according to Sir Stephen King-Hall, "the significance of what is Faith". He himself is no doubt cocksure about "Faith." It is obviously the wholehearted acceptance of Christianity with its Devils, Miracles, Hell, Heaven, and Angels. Any Christian will tell you that. And anybody who talks about Faith in these terms is beyond argument.

### UNDERWRITING THE ATOM

(Concluded from page 299)

because it will create an enormous extension of world markets.

President Truman once said, "If we could discuss with the Russians our common interests in world agriculture, it would be easier to discuss political problems." If you could get them to co-operate in a great concrete scheme of the kind I have suggested you would lay the foundation of a world order without which, as Churchill warned us, there is no hope for the future. We must build a new order from the bottom up by getting all nations to co-operate in a scheme to better the conditions of the people.

Some people say Russia would never come in. Did we ever ask them? If the Western nations, the whole group, said, "We are prepared to do this—gradually disarm, apply science for the welfare of all the people of the world, to abolish hunger and disease, and so on," any nation which didn't co-operate would be labelled an enemy of the human race. No nation could afford to stay out.

I would go further and suggest that the qualifications for admission to the United Nations should not be whether a country is capitalist or Communist or Socialist. The qualification should be: Is it prepared to co-operate with all other nations in applying modern science for the promotion of the welfare of all mankind?

You say it can't be done? It is being done. Attempts are being made. Just now we have had another offer from the President of the United States to set up reactors in other countries for the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. This is a great gesture that the world should follow. We must realise that the world is living in a totally new age. The question is whether our modern civilisation can adjust itself to the great forces now at large, or is going to do what other civilisations have done—disappear.

Another one of your Presidents said, "The day that all the common people of the world demand peace, we will get it." If we do not accept our responsibility for the world's survival, if we leave everything to the generals and politicians, we shall deserve the fate we get.

I hope each one of us here tonight will do his utmost to create a world-wide public opinion in favour of peace, in favour of the co-operation of nations, so that we may enter the new atomic age—an age based on Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, an age in which poverty and hunger will be eliminated, an age in which the whole human race can rise to a higher level of physical welfare and a higher level of culture than any privileged nation has ever reached in the past.

## THE FREETHINKER

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### 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.

### Lecture Notices, Etc.

#### OUTDOOR

- Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Messrs. DAY, WHARRAD, NEWTON, SHEPPARD and MURPHY.
- Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Every Sunday at 8 p.m.: J. W. BARKER and E. MILLS.
- Manchester Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday, 3 p.m., Platt Fields: 7.30 p.m., St. Mary's Blitzed Site: Speakers, Messrs. McCALL, MILLS, or WOODCOCK. Every weekday, Deansgate Blitzed Site, 1 p.m.: G. A. WOODCOCK.
- Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Every Wednesday and Sunday at 8 p.m. Messrs. PARRY, THOMPSON, and other speakers.
- Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Every Friday at 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY. Sunday, September 25. 6.30 p.m.: Messrs. MORRELL, ELSMERE and MOSLEY.
- North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY and H. ARTHUR.
- West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday at the Marble Arch from 4 p.m.: Messrs. ARTHUR, EBURY and WOOD. *The Freethinker* on sale at Marble Arch.

#### INDOOR

- Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Trades Hall, Thurland Street).—Thursday, October 6. 7.30 p.m.: L. JACOBS, "Dialectical Materialism."
- South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, September 25: No Sunday Morning meeting. Reunion 3.30 p.m. Guest of Honour, Mrs. Margaret Knight. Speaker, Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe. Chairman, Mr. J. Hutton Hynd. Music and refreshments. 7 p.m.: Public Meeting in Large Hall. Mrs. MARGARET KNIGHT (lecturer, author and broadcaster), will speak on "Morals Without Religion." Chairman, Professor Barbara Wootton. All invited. Admission free.

### Notes and News

We trust all readers able to do so will attend the lecture given by Mrs. Margaret Knight at Conway Hall on September 25. Full particulars are given in our Lecture Notices above. There should be a crowded audience.

One of our oldest readers—perhaps the oldest—Mr. A. W. Davis of Beckenham in Kent, has just celebrated his golden wedding and we are delighted to congratulate the happy couple in having reached such a cherished ideal in married life. Mr. Davis has often contributed to our pages and both he and his wife are, we learn, still "tremendously active and wonderful people." Perhaps we may be happy enough to notice their diamond wedding.

### The Chapman Cohen Memorial Fund

Previously acknowledged: £940 6s. 10d.; A. Hancock, 1s.; H. Pollard, 3s.; A. Brooks, 5s.; H. G. Bluett, 2s. 6d.; I. Yettram, 6s.; M. B., 2s. 6d.; E. Swale, 18s.; F. Gallagher, U.S.A., 10s.; F. MacLeod, New Zealand, 6s. Total to date, £943 0s. 10d.

In spite of those who would wish us to believe that religion is having a comeback, various straws in the wind suggest this is not the case. The August issue of the Football Association Bulletin announces a change in their rule governing the playing of Sunday football by the players under their jurisdiction. It reads:—

"Players who take part in Sunday football will not now be subject to punishment by the F.A. At the same time it should be made clear that the F.A. does not intend to organise or take part in Sunday football in any way. The Council came to the conclusion that it was not their concern to say what any man might or might not do on a Sunday, but certainly such a conclusion does not mean that the governing body recognises Sunday football.

It probably means that some legislators do not wish to offend religious opinion more than necessary. By "not recognising" Sunday soccer they can only mean that such games (on English grounds) are in any case not those that call for inclusion, nothing is lost, so it becomes merely a cheap way of saving their face. British teams have played in foreign lands on the Sabbath and, of course, have had official recognition in the F.A. Year Book. So the comic position now is that Sunday football abroad, where English players are engaged, is officially recognisable, but in this country is not. But it cannot be stopped and is no longer punishable.

The Rev. J. L. Broom's letter in the *Evening News* (quoted in our issue of Sept. 16), attacking the Billy Graham crusade, had the effect of stirring up controversy.

Mr. Broom was given the last word to reply to his attackers, which he did on August 23, requesting them to search their consciences to discover whether they would willingly torture a child, no matter how much it had erred, in the manner of the Biblical Hell. Two other letters attacking Sunday observance have recently appeared from Mr. Broom in *The Scotsman*.

The Executive Committee of the World Union of Freethinkers held its annual meeting at Brussels on September 10—13, in the School of Advanced Studies at the famous University of Brussels, the intellectual headquarters of Belgian Freethought. Delegates attended from most European countries affiliated to the World Union. Mr. C. Bradlaugh Bonner presided, and Mme. Pardon acted as Secretary, as she has done for so many years. Mr. F. A. Ridley, President of the N.S.S., was present as an Executive Committee member. The main business before the Committee was the arrangement for the Amsterdam Congress next year, celebrating the centenary of the Dutch Freethought movement. Mr. Ridley expects to return to this country early in October.

NEXT WEEK

THE OUTLOOK OF ALBERT EINSTEIN

By G. I. BENNETT

## Jesus and Judas of Galilee

By H. CUTNER

AS is no doubt the case with other contributors to this journal, I am often asked questions some of which could easily be answered by the questioner if he looked up an authority or the Bible at his free library. For example, in "This Believing World" reference was made to the fact that the Gospel writers could not agree on all the names of the Apostles. Matthew calls one of them Lebbeus; Mark, Thaddeus; and Luke, Judas; while John does not name them at all. Any earnest Christian would comment on this as one of the unfortunate mysteries which they have to bear with—the path of the righteous being strewn with similar difficulties to be born with Christ-like fortitude. Yet, instead of looking up the Bible for himself (and thus cheering his soul even inadvertently) one reader the other day asked us to give him the lists.

A lady who saw *The Freethinker* for the first time recently, wrote me most interestingly. She was greatly hurt at my unbelief in the historicity of Jesus—though, as it happens, she does not believe in his historicity either. She has thrown him overboard quite as much as I, but she insists that he really was an historical personage called Judas of Galilee.

Now this is just one of those delightful difficulties which we Freethinkers always have to face. We spend many years studying Christian apologetics, particularly all the "evidence" which Christianity has to offer to prove that there really was a Jesus of Nazareth (as reverent Rationalists love to call him), and some of us reject this evidence. Then, like the lady referred to above, we are told we have been following the wrong trail. Of course Jesus of Nazareth is a myth; he wasn't called Jesus and wasn't born in Nazareth—but what about Judas of Galilee? It is he who was the real Jesus, the Gospel writers having deliberately concealed the truth.

Nothing intrigues me more than this line of approach. It confirms everything that Dupuis, Robert Taylor and John M. Robertson fought for, namely, that there never was a Jesus of Nazareth; and the above conclusion will upset our reverent Rationalists much more than the upholders of the myth theory. Personally, I feel it almost unnecessary to discuss the Gospel hero further, but I am sure there are many readers who are now asking who on earth is Judas of Galilee?

You will find him actually mentioned in Acts (5, 37) and if Josephus is to be relied upon, he certainly was an historical personage. But he performed no miracles, he was born even as a Freethinker is born, he never was carried about by a Devil and—as far as it is possible to judge—he never told his followers to hate their parents. He was quite unlike the picture of gentle Jesus, meek and mild, so graciously painted for us by hymn-writers; and the only resemblance I can see between the two stories is that both suffered violent deaths.

The fact is that the Bible writers went here, there, and everywhere, for their material. The story of the Deluge was lifted from the Babylonians; the story of Joseph and his naughty brothers is a well-known Egyptian fiction; the story of the Queen of Sheba was taken from the story of an Egyptian Queen who lived 500 years previously; and, as is well known, the story of the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, and the Virgin Birth, are all Pagan ideas worked up by monks and priests with Gnosticism at their base. There is but little new in the Bible stories—except by acci-

dent. Obviously, the many writers in the Bible *might* have invented something in the narratives but it wasn't much.

How the four Gospels were compiled is simply not known—though we do know that they were unknown before the year 150 A.D. at the earliest. They are not "biographies" but compilations; and their authors did not scruple to borrow (or cribbed) from all kinds of sources just as did the priestly compilers of the Holy Bible. One of these sources is Josephus, and there is very little doubt to anyone who reads the Jewish historian that quite a good deal of "Jesus of Nazareth" can be found in his pages. Not, of course, the notorious forgeries about him which have been given up even by Christians; but various individuals (some even called Jesus) described so vividly in the *Antiquities* and the *Wars of the Jews* provided the Gospel writers with many incidents promptly used by them when inventing Jesus of Nazareth.

One of these was certainly Judas of Galilee. Josephus describes some of the sects among the Jews and he says,

But of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy, Judas the Galilean was the author. These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty . . . A certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, prevailed on his countrymen to revolt . . . This was a teacher of a peculiar sect of his own and was not at all like the rest of those their leaders . . . In the meantime, one Manahem, the son of Judas who was called the Galilean (who was a very cunning sophister, and who had formerly reproached the Jews under Cyrenius, that after God they were subject to the Romans . . . broke open King Herod's armoury and gave arms, not only to his own people but to other robbers also . . .

Josephus describes in some detail all about Judas and his sons and he also describes quite a number of Jesuses, among them a Galilean Jesus who was

Jesus the son of Sapphias. He was ruler in Tiberias, a wicked man . . . a seditious person he was indeed . . . he took the law of Moses into his hands

And still another Jesus who was always shrieking "Woe! Woe!" who called himself "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds . . . a voice against this whole people." This Jesus was eventually taken to the Roman procurator and "he was whipped till his bones were laid bare . . . and he made no manner of reply . . . nor did he give ill words to those that beat him every day . . ." It was all magnificent grist to the mill—to the Gospel writers it provided splendid material for *their* Jesus. A bit here, a bit there, now from the Jews, then from the pagans, and hey presto! here was Jesus of Nazareth.

It did not matter that there was no Nazareth—at the time. When at last the Gospels were evolved, how could anybody know that their hero was a mythical being? On paper 150 years can be disposed of in a sentence; but it is a long time in *living* history. If we think 150 years back, we are in the days of Napoleon and Nelson, far indeed from our Atomic Age. Life moves very slowly, and without the printed word, in an age of fear, ignorance, credulity and superstition, is there any wonder that the composite picture of a God culled from so many sources should have impressed not merely the illiterate but the more intelligent of Greeks, Romans, and Jews? (Though not of course all Jews.)

I am not surprised that even now there are people who go to Josephus's account of rebels, reformers, etc., and imagine that they have found the true Jesus at last. If they stop to think, they must realise that whoever Josephus describes must have been *men*—not *Gods*; and men as such

(Concluded on next page)

## Archaeology Used as "Proving" the Bible

By MERRILL R. HOLSTE

(Concluded from page 291)

We may note that as we go further and further back into polytheistic times, "God," as we in our monotheistic way of thinking see it, becomes simply "gods." At the same time, the spirits of dead men assume more importance. As we go further back, spirits of dead men, ancestors, especially if they be important personages, heroes, or kings, are seen to be the originals of many gods.

According to the belief held in common by all the peoples in the Mediterranean lands, the spirits of the departed derived nourishment from the blood of both animals and man. This belief and some of the primitive customs deriving therefrom are described in remarkable detail by Homer in the 11th book of the *Odyssey*. Some pious Christians still repeat prayers before their meals. Often these prayers include the words, "Come, dear Lord Jesus, be our guest. . . ." The idea behind the Christian invitation to their Jesus to be present at their meal is still the same primitive idea that spiritual beings require nourishment for their welfare. It is the same belief that moved the Hebrews and related primitive Semites, the Greeks and others to feed their gods and the spirits of their departed with oblations of sacrificial blood.

The article, "*Archæology and Prophecy*," goes on to mention king Merneptah of Egypt and says the following: "However the scripture timetable (before 1400 B.C.) was corroborated by the discovery of a victory monument of King Merneptah of Egypt. . . King Ahab's "ivory house," mentioned in I Kings 22:39, was for many centuries ridiculed by the unbelievers as but a figure of speech." The close juxtaposition in the magazine article of the two unrelated ideas in the same short paragraph leads one to associate the two and to assume that Merneptah's monument must mention Ahab's ivory house. Actually, Ahab lived more than 300 years after Merneptah, consequently, could not be mentioned by Merneptah.

(Merneptah circa. 1,234 B.C. Ahab died in 897 B.C.)

All that was available in our local library was the conclusion of Merneptah's hymn of victory: "The kings are overthrown, saying: 'Peace!' Not one holds up his head among the foreign nations. Wasted is Libya, Hittite land is at peace, Plundered is the Canaan with every evil, Carried off is Ashkelon, Siezed upon is Gezer, Yanoam (near Damascus) is made as a thing not existing. Israel is desolated, his seed is not. Palestine (Kharu) has become a (defenceless) widow for Egypt." (Quoted from *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*.)

Instead of giving us an accurate idea of Israelite history, as the magazine article tries to make us believe, the monument of Merneptah would indicate that the Israelites had been exterminated and that their history had been ended for all time. Yet the magazine article imposes upon the credulity of simple believers by falsely implying that Merneptah's monument confirms much of the Bible version of history. The magazine article goes so far into the ridiculous as to try to induce the pious reader to believe that Merneptah confirms the existence of Ahab's "ivory house" which was not built till some 300 years after Merneptah's time. We wish our readers to observe how the magazine article has employed principles (1) and (2) of Christian Apologetics in its treatment of Merneptah's inscription.

The final archæological item mentioned in the magazine article is the "Dead Sea Scrolls." The claim is made that "The Isaiah Scroll is the first major biblical manuscript of great antiquity, older by more than a millennium than the Hebrew texts which are the basis of our recent translations. The article seeks to give the impression that the Dead Sea Scrolls will confirm our present ideas regarding the Bible. Not all authorities, however, seem to be so convinced. William F. Albright, head of the Oriental Seminar at Johns Hopkins University was quoted in *These Times* magazine, February 22nd, 1954, as saying: "All handbooks on the Bible, early Christianity and the history of Judaism will soon be in need of drastic revision." When the magazine article says, "The Isaiah Scroll is the first major Biblical manuscript of great antiquity, older by more than a millennium, etc.," they seem to be quoting from a statement to that effect made by the Very Reverend Monsignor Patrick W. Skehan, professor of Semitic and Egyptian languages at the Catholic University of America. This statement was reported in *Science News Letter* for July 24, 1954. Radio-carbon dating of the manuscripts has proved with considerable precision that the linen used in wrapping them was manufactured about A.D. 33, give or take 25 years. The result of the radio-carbon tests were reported in *Science Digest*, issue of August, 1952, in an article by Michael Amrine, managing editor of *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*. Undoubtedly the antiquity of the Dead Sea Scrolls is very great, but if they are a millennium older than any extant Bible manuscript, it is therefore shown that the texts which are the basis of our Biblical translations have had 1,000 years in which to accumulate errors in copying and by deliberate falsification. We favour Mr. Albright's opinion over that of the magazine article writer and we conclude that information eventually to be gained from study of the Dead Sea Scrolls will soon cause great changes in our ideas about the contents of the Hebrew-Christian Bible.

The proponents of the Christian superstition obviously have been forced into a very desperate and indefensible position by the advance of scientific knowledge if they must stoop to the use of unfounded assumption, deliberate misrepresentation, even outright lies to bolster their illogical superstition, as they have done in the article archæology in *These Times* magazine.

### ERRORS DIE HARD

Old conceptions are preserved to us in the very structure of language; the mass of mankind still preserves its childish imaginations; and everyone of us has repeated on a small scale the history of the race. We start as infants with fetish worship; we consider our nursery to be the centre of the universe; and learn but slowly and with difficulty to conform our imaginative constructions to scientific truths.—Sir Leslie Stephen.

### JESUS AND JUDAS OF GALILEE

(Concluded from page 302)

have never been worshipped. Jesus of Nazareth never was a man (except for our reverent Rationalists.) He was a God, and thus only can he be worshipped. And if we listen to our Billy Grahams, we can hear the authentic voices of those ancient monks and hermits calling the people to repent, to be saved, and to worship. It is the task of Freethought to expose this outrageous nonsense.

## Correspondence

### THE STARS AN AFTERTHOUGHT

When young I was taught via Genesis that "God made the great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser one to rule the night. He made the stars also." These last five words always seem to me to be one of the greatest Biblical jokes, as if these stars—which we now know to represent the greater part of the job—were in fact made one evening after tea, and were not included in the original contract.

F.C.C.

### THE BASIC CAUSE OF WAR

In "The Basic Cause of War" (August 12), your contributor appears to cast his net too wide, by making religious neurosis responsible for so many undesirable things, but such a general use seems to deprive the term of any exact meaning. At one point it is described as "an irrational flight to worship death's antithesis," yet later on tedium and boredom are given as among the causes which induce it (though how this comes about is not explained). In the same paragraph, religious neurosis becomes the "foundation stone" of a whole list of calamities, including booms, slumps and trade cycles. Incidentally, it would be interesting to know if it is responsible for such things as forced labour in the mines at Vorkutu, in the U.S.S.R. (see J. Scholmer's book of that name for details).

Incidentally, he says, "The unimpeded growth of Mesozoic reptiles ended in their extinction." But *The Science of Life* (H. G. Wells, J. Huxley, G. P. Wells) has on page 451: "From the point of view of the Reptiles it was an accident that the climate grew cold and dry at the end of the Mesozoic. But for that, the Dinosaurs might have survived and evolved for many millions more of years."—Yours, etc.

G. W. CLARK.

### OVERPOPULATION

Mr. Crouch states that "so long as privileged and underprivileged classes exist, overpopulation exists." Let us rather say that so long as overpopulation exists, these class differences will remain. Privilege, in fact, today, as in the days of Ancient Egypt, depends for its existence on a superfluity of human beings all struggling for the same things. The larger their numbers, the more easily can they be played off against one another in order to neutralise tendencies inimical to the privileged. At the same time the use of propaganda to maintain the numbers of subject lives is made much easier.

It is naive, however, to suppose that the substitution of underprivileged for privileged will effect a cure—otherwise the first revolution of history would have righted matters. The cause of overpopulation (and hence of war) is much more fundamental than class differences—and it has its roots in all strata of the community—all being vulnerable to religious neurosis.

When collective human intelligence rises to the point where men and women live their sexual lives absolved from all obligation to procreate—when every child born is the result of foresight and not of accident—then Mr. Crouch will see his privileged and underprivileged classes vanish completely, a thing that has never yet been brought about by any change of regime, class war, or revolution of history.

R. READER.

### DETERMINATION AND FATALISM

A fairly extensive experience of controversy has taught me that people who use sweeping epithets like "nonsense" do so to cover up a rather shaky case. My most recent critic, Mr. Gratorex, appears to be committing this common error, since he accuses me of talking nonsense because I used the term "Astrological Determinism," and goes on to assert that there is no such thing. He then goes on to cite the late Mr. Cohen on the distinction between determinism and fatalism, as to which he asserts, quite erroneously, that I am ignorant. I quote the definition given in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1950), article *Fatalism* :

"Fatalism: strictly the doctrine that all things happen according to a pre-arranged fate, necessity or inescapable degree (Lat. *Fatum*, that which is spoken, decreed). It has frequently been confused with determinism, which, however, differs from it categorically in assigning a certain function to the will."

If he will look more closely into the subject of astrology he will find that astrologers, like other theologians, disagreed. Some were fatalistic; others, contrarily, were deterministic, viz., they allowed for "a certain function of the will" and the terrestrial environment as modifying factors.

I should, perhaps, have emphasised this distinction but one's space is unfortunately limited in a front-page article.

So I propose a compromise to Mr. Gratorex: let us divide the nonsense equally.

F. A. RIDLEY.

### DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT

On page 252 of *The Freethinker* (12/8/55) there was a paragraph by Foote; he said: "Evil always springs from the separation of the sexes." Why always? I admit that in a one-sex crowd there may be a few homosexuals but that's all. You can get a one-sex crowd where there aren't any homosexuals.

A. HANCOCK.

### THIS BELIEVING WORLD

When the well known evangelist, Gipsy Smith, visited Mardy, South Wales, during the 1904-5 revival, after hearing one of the favourite hymns of the time, "Tell Mother I'll be There," he could not resist getting up to speak about his visit to the place where his mother died. "We had no Bible then" and "We had no Christ at that time." But he added "My mother found Him, and so did her children afterwards." Evan Roberts later got up to speak. "I thought," said he, with his voice almost choked with sobs, "when Gipsy Smith was talking about his mother having dwelt and died in a tent, I thought of our Saviour in the manger, who had no place whereon to lay his head," and he could not proceed any further. Overcome by emotion, he sat down and sobbed aloud. So effective was the scene, seeing the two evangelists, Evan Roberts and Gipsy Smith in tears, that it moved the whole audience. Weeping and sighing were heard in all parts of the building and the chapel was full to capacity (1,400).

D.E.

### HOMOSEXUALITY

The traditional attitude to homosexuality, based on orthodox Christianity, can be stated as follows:—"Male" and "female" are sharply distinct entities standing in marked antithesis to each other. Consequently, there can be only one pattern for sexual behaviour, and he who departs from it is necessarily vicious and depraved.

The modern view is in complete diametrical opposition. In an article headed "Sex" in a "popular" (non-specialist) general encyclopaedia discussing the theories of Freud and his disciples, the article comments:—"It has been recognised in consequence of their (i.e., the Freudians) work that the characters of both sexes are in some degree present in every individual, and that human beings may exhibit almost every shade of gradation between the perfect male and the perfect female."

This principle provides the basis on which opponents of the official and legal outlook rest their case. Physiologists and psychologists can produce plenty of factual evidence in support of their contentions; traditionalists have only ecclesiastical dogmas and assertions to buttress their position.

S. W. BROOKS.

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