

The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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RECENTLY, by turning on my radio on a momentary impulse, I was fortunate enough to hear a Bishop of the Anglican Church, the Right Reverend Dr. F. A. Cockin, of Bristol, deliver himself of a lengthy discourse on one of the most fundamental—and most mysterious!—dogmas of orthodox Christianity, the once cardinal dogma of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — “Three Persons and One God.” Nowadays, the Trinity appears to represent one of those dogmas which, like Hell-fire and the Virgin Birth, the Christian theologians usually shy away from! It was, accordingly, with considerable interest that I listened to his Bristol Lordship’s attempt to throw some light on the formidable problem of the arithmetical theology — three in one and one in three.

Incomprehensible

It might appear to be bold, if not positively heretical, for even a Bishop to try to *explain* the metaphysical dogma of the Trinity. Does not the Athanasian Creed specifically inform us that the whole formula is “incomprehensible” and *ipso facto* beyond the scope of human reason? Does not the famous creed inform us explicitly: “the Father incomprehensible; the Son incomprehensible; and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible”? That sounds plain enough! In fact, it is, perhaps, the only clause in the entire Athanasian Creed with which pretty well all Rationalists will wholeheartedly agree. However, Bishop Cockin apparently doesn’t. For he started his talk by stating that if he, or the BBC producers, had really agreed that the dogma of the Trinity was incomprehensible, it would not have appeared in the series of broadcasts. *Athanasius contra Mundum* (Athanasius against the World) and against the Bishop of Bristol. The Bishop then proceeded to devote the remainder of his talk to a rather involved series of human analogies with the Divine mystery: God is simultaneously love, wisdom, power — and so on. It became obscure even to the point of being impressive! But it really did not throw much light on the precise nature and functions of the Most Holy Trinity. In our opinion, the obvious difference, as to the nature of the Trinitarian dogma which divides Dr. Cockin from Athanasius — or whoever wrote the creed that bears his name — is now definitely decided in favour of Athanasius: the Trinity, *after* Dr. Cockin’s talk, remains incomprehensible. One up for Athanasius!

A Japanese Definition

Metaphysics — and this includes metaphysical theology — has been aptly defined as “the art of mistaking words for things.” This definition was particularly applicable in relation to the Bishop of Bristol’s talk. How on earth — or even in Heaven — can one *prove* that three make one, and one, three? As Voltaire said long ago, it is celestial arithmetic based on rules unknown to more mundane mathematicians! Dr. Cockin made great play with the Latin theological term, *persona* which, as far as the present writer

recalls, was a Roman *legal* term introduced into Christian theology by the ex-lawyer, Tertullian. Dr. Cockin argued at length that this term did not imply personality in the modern sense of the term. And so — what? If the “persons” of the Trinity are not separate persons, what is the sense behind the accepted formula, “three in one and one in three”? What else can this mean but that there are three gods, later united in a sort of limited or unlimited (?) company? Dr. Cockin, I hasten to add, did *not* use this illustration! Actually, the most intelligible, if not the most orthodox, definition of the Trinity, was that spontaneously evolved by the Japanese heathen, to whom the missionaries were laboriously explaining the famous dogma: “Three in One and One in Three — I understand, a committee!”

Again, Dr. Cockin did not use *that* analogy. But it is much more intelligible, at least, than his own somewhat longwinded explanation.

An Egyptian Dogma

The truth is that the Christian Trinity is not the original article. As has often been pointed out, the Trinity represented an “article of faith” in Egyptian theology long before the Christian set out to supersede its prototype on the banks of the Nile. Already in prehistoric times, before the advent of written history, the Egyptian priests had evolved a mystical theosophy which centred around the adoration of the original Trinity, Osiris, Horus, Isis, the Father, the Son and the Virgin Mother. The Egyptian theologians spun an esoteric web around this Trinity, and fiercely resisted the attempt of the heretic Pharaoh, Akhnaton, to displace it in favour of his Unitarian solar monotheism (c. 1400 B.C.). It is not an accident that the formulations of the Christian mystery of the Trinity were also Egyptian: Origen and, above all, Athanasius, *the* theologian of the Trinity *par excellence* who, at the cost of almost splitting Christianity asunder, succeeded in imposing the formula of the Trinity on the Christian Church at the famous Council of Nicea, A.D. 325.

The Egyptian and Christian Trinities

“Three in one and one in three”: the self-same formula holds for both trinities: the Egyptian one of Osiris, Horus and Isis, and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The only real difference is in the entirely *masculine* character of the Christian Trinity, in contrast to the Egyptian one, which included the Goddess, Isis. Later on, of course, the Virgin Mary came to take over many of the attributes of Isis, “the Star of the Sea.” However, though she *may* end up there, the “fourth person of the Trinity” has not yet been admitted officially to the most exclusive of all societies; though that *may* come in time? However, the difference is more apparent than real. There are several indications that the present third person, the “Holy Spirit” (“Ghost” is surely archaic English nowadays) was originally *feminine*. The

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

A

Bishop on the Trinity

— By F. A. RIDLEY —

Dove, his unvarying symbol in Christian art, in pagan times, seems to have been usually the symbol of *goddesses*. In which connection, it is significant to recall, that an early Christian heretical sect, the Carpocratians, actually worshipped the Holy Spirit as a goddess! Perhaps, as so often in the checkered evolution of Christian theology, it was here the heretics who preserved the original Christian orthodoxy? If Dr. Cockin could be transported back in time to ancient Egypt, he would find much in common with the land of the ancient Pharaohs.

"J-M-J"

Actually, I was, as I noted above, rather astonished at finding the dogma of the Trinity on the agenda of the BBC. For nowadays even orthodox theologians exhibit a marked tendency to steer clear of this obscure formula. In fact, like the contemporary Indian Trinity, the Christian one seems to be on the way out? God the Father seems a "has been," and the Holy Spirit never seems to have been quite acclimatised in Christian theology. Similarly, we hear that Brahma, the first person of the Hindu Trinity, now boasts of only one temple devoted exclusively to him in the whole of India. Nowadays, the Christian Trinity

appears to be becoming a purely academic proposition relegated to the text books. Protestantism seems to be steadily tending in the direction of Unitarianism. Even a Protestant "Fundamentalist" like Billy Graham appears to concentrate almost exclusively in practice upon *one* person, Jesus Christ. Whilst Protestant "Modernists" seem increasingly to regard, and reject, the Trinity as a pagan survival and to revert to simple Theism. Whilst in the Catholic Church the Jesuit formula, "J-M-J," that is, Jesus-Mary-Joseph, appears to have become the effective Trinity. At least as far as the rank and file believers are concerned. Incidentally, it is much more like the original Egyptian one, since it includes a *goddess*, the feminine principle. One of the most intriguing developments in modern Jesuitical Catholicism is represented by the steady elevation of Saint Joseph in the celestial hierarchy — there was even a rumour not long ago that Saint Joseph would soon be recognised as the incarnation of the Holy Spirit and as the *actual* father of Jesus Christ!

Perhaps it may not be long before *The Golden Bough* will be brought up to date with an additional chapter on the rise and fall of the Christian Trinity?

Some Honest Doubters

By VICTOR E. NEUBURG

THE LATEST of Professor Basil Willey's books dealing with the history of ideas and "climates of opinion" in England, is entitled *More Nineteenth Century Studies* (Chatto & Windus, 21s.).

The group—in no sense a homogeneous one—consists of Francis W. Newman, Tennyson, J. A. Froude, 'Mark Rutherford' (William Hale White), and John Morley. A separate chapter discusses the seven authors of *Essays and Reviews*, which set the orthodox world by the ears when it first appeared in 1860.

It would seem presumptuous to praise Professor Willey's critical writing. He is perhaps the greatest living English critic, and his book—as were its predecessors—is a model of what such a study ought to be. Yet it is impossible not to experience a slight feeling of disappointment after having read this book. The theme of Victorian religious doubt is both fascinating and important: it represented in one sense the culmination of the Deism of the eighteenth century, and in another, it was entirely the product of the Victorian Age.

Where then does this feeling of disappointment spring from? There can be no doubt that Professor Willey has thrown a great deal of light upon the evolution of Free-thought in England, and he writes with perception of the agonies of mind which beset J. A. Froude. The sketch of F. W. Newman is brilliantly written and one of the most positive virtues of this book lies in the fact that religious doubt is shown not as an easy release from the trammels of superstition, but often as a long and arduous process of mind and heart.

The clarity with which this is illustrated makes one wish that the impact of this doubt upon the popular mind. Jung's Collective Unconscious, had been discussed. The fact that it is nowhere mentioned, renders this book less interesting than it might have been. The standard of writing in such journals as *The Freethinker's Magazine* and *The National Reformer* leaves one in no doubt at all that these doubts concerning orthodoxy were very real and no less intense amongst those who had had neither the advantage of a university education nor leisured parents.

Within the narrow limits he has chosen, there can be no question at all that this is in every way an admirable

book, and while one may wonder sadly why he has kept to so restricted a field, one must admit that every writer dealt with is analysed with rare perception.

The final chapter deals with John Morley; in little more than fifty pages there is a completely balanced portrait of this Victorian "Liberal". Professor Willey says of him:

In this (i.e. *Diderot*, 1878), Morley's largest and most sustained contribution to the history of ideas, he devotes much thought to the problem he had raised in *Voltaire*, namely, whether "ideas" can be said to "cause" history. The Church appeared to think so when it persecuted heretics; the eighteenth century theologians appeared to think so when they persecuted De Prades for championing Locke against Descartes. Morley appeared to think that, from their own standpoint, the theologians were right; it really is the conclusions men reach on such questions as whether matter can think, or whether ideas are innate, "that determine the quality of the civil sentiment and the significance of political organisation."

This is a clear summary of Morley's position, and such passages, rich with insight are a characteristic of this book. Similar examples could be chosen from every chapter and it is the sheer excellence of its three hundred pages that makes one wish that the scope of his book had been wider. Mention too must be made of the chapter on Tennyson, which will be useful, even indispensable, to any reader who wishes to reach a balanced and mature estimate of Tennyson the poet. All too often he is regarded as the mouthpiece of a somewhat dull and ill-defined 'Victorianism'.

QUIZ

1. What is Hedonism?
2. Who were the Greek exponents of (a) Hedonism, (b) Stoicism, (c) Scepticism?
3. When was the first Chinese cardinal appointed by the Vatican?
4. Which famous writer of antiquity perished in the eruption of Vesuvius which overwhelmed Pompeii, and what was the date?
5. When did what Pope crown whom as the first Holy Roman Emperor of the West?
6. Who was the (mythical) founder of Pagan Rome?

(Answers on page 80)

Retreat from Reality

By REV. JOHN L. BROOM, M.A.

THE PSYCHOLOGY of religious conversion is a fascinating study. On the face of it, there seem to have been, throughout history, some extraordinary transformations. Since Saul, the persecutor of Christians, became the apostle Paul, there have been countless cases of apparently radical alterations in behaviour and belief. Our own day and age seems particularly to abound in them. The Salvation Army and the evangelical tradition from Wesley to Billy Graham, claim to have "saved" thousands of lost souls, while the number of "intellectuals" who have found refuge in the bosom of the Mother Church is formidable.

The fact that the form of Christianity represented by the Protestant saviours is at loggerheads with that of His Holiness Pius XII, while legitimately the cause of much ironic amusement among freethinkers, does not concern me at the moment. What I do wish to maintain, however, is that almost all so-called "conversions" are not conversions at all. No fundamental change in the basic pattern of attitude and conduct occurs. Saul did not abandon his persecuting activities when he "saw the light" on the road to Damascus (assuming for the sake of argument that the Biblical story is historically accurate — a large assumption I grant!), he merely transferred them from the Christians to their opponents. The drunkards who succumb to the hysterics of the evangelicals surrender their weak wills to Christ instead of to John Barleycorn. Those who take the road to Rome have either, like ex-Communists Douglas Hyde and Louis Budenz, simply exchanged one totalitarianism for another, or, like Chesterton, Knox and Lunn, always been of a religious (i.e. credulous) nature.

The subject of the present article, though claimed by many of the pious to be a convert from paganism to scepticism, is no exception to the above rules. It is true that in the twenties, Aldous Huxley appeared to be an apostle of extreme hedonism. Indeed, a collection of essays of that period was entitled *Do what you will*. But even then he was fully aware of the writings of the mystics, as can be seen in many of the speeches of Scogan and Calamy in *Those Barren Leaves* (1924). In *On the Margin* (1923) he wrote that "the mystical emotions enable the man who feels them to live his life with a serenity and confidence unknown to other men." Huxley's very hedonism, one always felt, sprang not from a natural impulse to enjoy himself, but from an elaborately reasoned conviction that the life of pleasure was morally right. The seeds of mystical emotionalism came to full fruition around 1936, when *Eyeless in Gaza* and *Ends and Means* appeared. Huxley's subsequent works, particularly the novel *Time Must Have a Stop* and *The Perennial Philosophy* (an anthology of mystical writings with a Huxleyan commentary) are all variations on a single theme — the necessity of union with what he calls the "Divine Ground" of existence.

As with most theists, Huxley's religion arises from a rejection of materialism. His chief argument against materialism is that all scientific hypotheses are based on faith in the uniformity of nature. Therefore, belief in God which involves faith is not *ipso facto* irrational. The plausibility of this line of thought rests on an ambiguous use of the word faith. The scientist's so-called faith is founded on empirical observation of nature, that of the theist on mere wishful thinking. To this, of course, Huxley replies that his "faith," like that of all mystics, rests on actual experience of the Godhead through contemplation and "spiritual insight." Unfortunately, as Prof. Leuba in his *Psychology of Religious Mysticism* has shown, this claim

will not stand the test of rational examination. The nature of the mystical vision clearly varies according to the experimenter's tradition and environment. The western Christian mystic comes into contact with a personal God of Love, the eastern non-Christian with an impersonal principle "beyond good and evil." These opposing conceptions can in no way be reconciled. Mr. Huxley, it is true, has attempted to find a "highest common factor" of mystical doctrine whether eastern or western, in his compilation *The Perennial Philosophy*. Now, clearly, it would be possible to "prove" that even Christianity is a consistent faith by means of carefully selected passages from Protestant and Roman Catholic writers. But the method is demonstrably dishonest. Thus, an opponent of Mr. Huxley's thesis could, with the necessary inclination and perseverance, produce a volume of quotations from eastern and western mystics, showing how profoundly they contradict each other.

It is difficult to know whether Mr. Huxley himself has ever achieved the mystical ecstasy by means of the necessary disciplines. In view of his fundamentally "intellectual" approach this seems doubtful, but he has induced in himself what appears to be a closely analogous state by the imbibing of a drug called mescaline. (An account of this experiment is contained in his *Doors of Perception*). Incidentally, Prof. Leuba in his above-mentioned work, long ago pointed out that the same drug had such an effect on the fakirs of India. Now, the very fact that the mere swallowing of a pill can transport one to realms seemingly beyond time and space surely points to the fact that the whole of the mystic vision is subjective. In other words, as I tried to show in considering Mr. Wilson's *Outsider*, it is an emotion not a perception, and can tell nothing about the nature of the universe.

Mr. Huxley is certainly not himself a conspicuously good example of the "benefits" accruing to man from the practice of mysticism of any form. Although he continually sneers at what he calls "the average sensual man" and condemns roundly the "sins of the flesh," sexual activities have for him a morbid fascination. Indeed, his obsessions in this field seem to have become more pronounced as his faith in mysticism has increased; compare, for example, the comparatively "innocent" *Those Barren Leaves* (1924) with the near-pornography of *After Many a Summer* (1939) and *Ape and Essence* (1950). I am the last to condemn frank literary descriptions of carnal pleasure. But the delightful pagan licentiousness of a Rabelais or Boccaccio is streets removed from the almost schoolboyish gloating over sexual perversion which characterises so much of the work of the later Huxley. In truth Huxley is basically a Puritan who regards sex as at best a painful necessity and at worst a "dirty little secret." And this warped view, be it noted, springs directly from his mystical philosophy which advocates the necessity of escaping from this world of carnal imperfection to the sexless "bliss" of Nirvana, where there is no marrying or giving in marriage.

Mr. Huxley, one fears, is a good man fallen among mystics. The life-denying doctrine he promulgates would result, if practised to any extent, in the creation of innumerable ivory-towers, wherein aspiring seers would work out their own salvations heedless of the problems of humanity at large. Fortunately, most citizens are too deeply in love with life to be seduced by Huxleyan escapism.

This Believing World

Although hospitals and doctors have been using anæsthetics for over 100 years, it is great news to learn that the Pope is now going to allow them to do so with the Church's blessing. The Pope's message on anæsthetics, hypnosis and pain-killers has gone round the world, and no one can now say that the Vatican is not slap up-to-date in these matters. The only thing we missed was his solemn declaration that Jesus was the greatest anæsthetist the world has ever seen. But that is sure to come.

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Whether one uses the words "Immortality," "Survival," "Life after Death," or "Life Everlasting" — they all mean the same; and a Muslim like H.H. the Aga Khan is not going to allow "Immortality" to be the hope only of Christianity. So in his article on the subject in the *Sunday Times* recently, he shows (or tries to show) that under the religion of Islam you can be assured of living for ever and ever, just as you can under Christianity, Judaism and Spiritualism. The "Holy Prophet" said so, and what more proof is needed? There is no need of what the Aga Khan calls "materialistic" conceptions of a "resurrection" as in Christianity — or even of "materialisations" as in Spiritualism. All that is needed is complete faith in Muhammed, and you will live for ever. It is all so beautiful!

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The New Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Dr. Godfrey, has already set to work reforming, or attempting to reform, England by objecting to "sex" in our publications — as indeed a celibate priest should do. It must be galling for some people to see others enjoying themselves. As a matter of fact, in true Christian spirit, he objects altogether to our "cult of pleasure," as he calls it. Then there is our "materialistic outlook on life," and our attitude leading us away from "religion and the purity of life." All these heartbreaking moans and groans made the *Sunday Pictorial* reporter, who interviewed him, tell us that Dr. Godfrey is "a cheery sixty-seven"!

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But the Archbishop did let a little kitten out of the bag. It was that Britain was "going pagan." People appeared "to know little or nothing about Christianity." How true! If they really did know something about its origins and its bloody — we mean literally bloody — history, the lies and frauds and forgeries it has perpetrated for nearly 2,000 years, it would not be long for the final dissolution of "true" Christianity.

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That ineffable evangelist, the Rev. W. Graham — Billy for short — has found out the futility of prayer. Ever since he discovered Christ he has prayed for strength to evangelise everybody and everything, and now — alas! — he has announced that he has not "the strength to go on much longer" as an evangelist. He finds that even with God's help the work is "too exhausting." And what about the immense numbers of "converts" he made? They probably also find "belief" too exhausting; for, according to the Rev. J. R. W. Stott of Langham Place, they are "falling away," or lapsing, or perhaps are sick of it all. What a sad, weary materialistic world this is!

★

Those dear old days when the Salvation Army used proudly to exhibit its more notorious converts — the wife beaters, the child torturers, the drunks and burglars, are by no means things of the past. *The People*, for example, the other week related the conversion of a Teddy Boy —

one of those bright young hopefuls who would tell you "with relish" that he went to quod for assaulting a woman, and was eventually "kicked out" of the Army. He is now training to be a missionary — and if this takes him out of the country we are certain no one would shed a tear.

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The truth is that these "conversions" are always taking place, though they rarely achieve the success of the pretty Salvation Army girls with poke bonnets and a collection box — for indeed it is difficult to resist their imploring looks and often delightful smile. But how many of them — reformed convicts or Teddy Boys with razors — know anything whatever about the religion they accept? How much of Christianity does *The People's* Teddy Boy hero know?

Italy's Film under the Dead Hand

GLARING and quickly spent like a meteor, Italy's film industry flashed up after the war; today it appears moribund and doomed. Its killer is the Catholic Church.

Officially, there exists a Board of Censors; its members are mainly civil servants, who, since the days of Mussolini, have been entrusted to watch over the "People's Culture". Apart from this body, there is the unofficial Mafia of influential Jesuits and Dominicans whose discriminatory censorship is far more effective. Steno's *Casanova*, for instance, had been made with a great deal of financial sacrifices; and it was only then that the Mafia did not allow its showing. Mostly, however, the ban works before production starts. Every script goes to the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, the only institution authorised to allow a loan, and their decision is under the discretion of the hierarchy.

At first an adverse pronouncement by "Catholic Action" appeared to have good propaganda value; the hierarchy reacted by buying up a third of all Italian cinemas which means that a film the clerics do not want to be shown is banned from one third of the total circuit. Therefore the producers have to take good care of what the hierarchy disfavours. What the people have got to see are films for the glory of God and the political aspirations of their Christian Democratic Party, made known to the producers by Signor Brusasca, the responsible Under-Secretary. Neo-Realism, which led the Italian film to the top, is anathema to the Catholic Activists; to its social indictment they even prefer the feminine shapeliness of the Lollas and Lorens. However, the world market has been saturated with Hollywood makes, as far as lushness, violence, crime and sex appeal are concerned, so there is not much need for competitive brands. No wonder, producers go bankrupt and film actors are jobless.

RELIGION WITHOUT MORALS

My husband thinks I'm silly, and gets cross when I try to discuss my problem, so will you help me, please? Things disappear at our church — at a concert a dress went and was never seen again and this week it was a pair of gloves. It makes for an atmosphere of distrust, which is directed at me, I am so depressed. If anyone thinks I am responsible, I wish that person would ask me outright. —*Woman's Own.*

Ever thought of leaving the church?

—NEXT WEEK—

THE TWO CONTEMPORARIES

A STUDY OF CHAPMAN COHEN & JOSEPH McCABE

By H. CUTNER

THE FREETHINKER

41 GRAY'S INN ROAD, LONDON, W.C.1.
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All Articles and Correspondence should be addressed to THE EDITOR at the above address and not to individuals.

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Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1. Members and visitors are always welcome at the Office.

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.

STUDENT (No. 4).—See "How I became a Heretic" by the Rev. J. L. Broom in the 75th Birthday Number of THE FREETHINKER.
KRISTIAN HORN.—Beste hilsen til vore norske venner i deres kjemp.
S. TRENT.—Your Catholic friend will find all about the enormous number of pieces of the true Cross in Gibbon and in Calvin's *Treatise on Relics*.
ERIC MORE.—It was the distinguished anthropologist E. B. Tylor who said the fundamental division of human thought was between animism and materialism.
"PAN-GOD."—If you maintain there is a mysterious Power "behind" the Universe, you must first prove the Universe has a Behind. You must then deduce that it has a Head, and thus supplement your a posteriori reasoning by reasoning a priori.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Every Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MURRAY and SLEMEN.
Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, SMITH, CORSAIR and FINKEL. Sundays, 7.15 p.m.: Messrs. MILLS, WOODCOCK, and SMITH.
Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings most evenings of the week (often afternoons): Messrs. THOMPSON, SALISBURY, HOGAN, PARRY, HENRY and others.
North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.
Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square) — Thursday, 1 p.m.: R. POWE. Friday, 1 p.m.: R. POWE.
West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday, at the Marble Arch, from 4 p.m.: Messrs. ARTHUR and EBURY.

INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics Institute).—Sunday, March 10th, 6.45 p.m.: P. THOMPSON, "Freedom and the Press."
Central London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, off Edgware Road).—Sunday, March 10th, 7.15 p.m.: J. M. ALEXANDER, "The Frontiers of Science."
Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, March 12th, 7.15 p.m.: Miss KATHLEEN NOTT, "Margaret Mead's New Book, *New Lives for Old*."
Head Office N.S.S. (41 Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1).—Fridays: F. A. RIDLEY, "The History of Civilisation." No meeting this week. Next lecture on March 15th.
Leicester Secular Society (Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, March 10th, 6.30 p.m.: A. ROBERTSON, M.A., "Towards a Secular World."
Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Lesser Free Trade Hall, Peter Street).—Sunday, March 10th, 7 p.m.: J. ALLEGRO, M.A., "The Discovery, Editing, and Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls." (With slides.)
Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Hall, Parliament Street).—Sunday, March 10th, 2.30 p.m.: L. W. ELLIS (N.U.M.), "The New China."
Orpington Humanist Group (Sherry's Restaurant).—Sunday, March 10th, 7 p.m.: A. A. BURALL, "The Alleged Unchangeability of Human Nature."
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, March 10th, 11 a.m.: Dr. W. E. SWINTON, M.A., "Science and its Environment."

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £193 14s. 2d.; A. Hancock, 1s.; D. Harris, 3s. 6d.; In memory of Wm. Ingram, Winnipeg, £2; V. Kilpatrick, £1; W. A. Millard, 2s. 6d.—Total to date, March 1st, 1957, £197 1s. 2d.

Notes and News

A FINAL reminder to readers, members of the N.S.S., and others that the Social Evening organised by the Humanist Council takes place on Friday evening, March 8th, at 7 p.m. Refreshments and entertainment are provided, and tickets, 2s. each, can be obtained from the N.S.S. at 41 Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1. We hope everybody who can will attend and make this function a well-deserved success.

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Two noteworthy meetings have been arranged in March by widely separated National Secular Society branches. At home, the Manchester Branch, in conjunction with the Manchester Humanist Fellowship, will have the Manchester University lecturer, John Allegro, M.A., to give an illustrated lecture on "The Discovery, Editing, and Significance of the Dea Sea Scrolls." Mr. Allegro is the author of the Pelican book on the Scrolls, and has spoken about them on ITV and the BBC Home Service. This promises to be a most interesting and authoritative lecture on an important subject, and it deserves the support of all readers in the Manchester area. It will be held in the Lesser Free Trade Hall, Peter Street, on Sunday, March 10th, at 7 p.m. Reserved seats at 1s. each will be supplied by Mrs. H. M. Rogals, 25 Derby Road, Manchester, 20.

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ON the last Sunday in March (the 31st) Fyzabad (West Indies) Branch will hear a lecture on "Birth Control in the World Today" by H. B. Wright, M.B., F.R.C.S., of the Shell Hospital, Port Fortin, Trinidad. Dr. Wright is in charge of a Birth Control Clinic on the island, and recently replied strongly in the *Trinidad Guardian* to his Roman Catholic and other critics. Mr. John T. Jules, an enthusiastic N.S.S. member, is mainly responsible for arranging this meeting, and we send him our best wishes for its success. West Indian readers may obtain further details by writing to Mr. Jules at Delhi Road, Fyzabad.

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THE Education Authority of Pembrokeshire has, by a majority of three, decided to ask applicants for teaching appointments the question: "What do you do on Sundays?" It is to be hoped that all freethinking school-teachers will make a point of applying for posts in Pembrokeshire just for the sake of receiving one of these precious application forms, on which they can tell these bigoted nitwits and medieval relics exactly how they propose to spend the Lord's Day. We are glad to see that the *Teachers' World* (January 23rd) expresses contempt and surprise that "any L.E.A. in the middle of the 20th century should contemplate asking" such a question.

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THE Leicester Secular Society have gained added publicity by being listed in the Directory of the *Leicester Diary*. Perhaps N.S.S. branches in other towns could take up this idea.

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THE celebration of Mother's Day in Spain, says *Informacion Española*, is "gaining in popularity each year." This is quite understandable as, with the present Catholic teaching on family life, there are more to celebrate each year.

Catholic Concessions to Science

By COLIN MCCALL

THE CHURCH OF ROME — we do well to remember — is an extremely shrewd political organisation which today rarely stakes all on a single political policy. It aims to share the spoils, no matter which political party emerges victorious in any country and, as Mr. F. A. Ridley has indicated, it might even be prepared to come to terms with its present arch-enemy, Communism, as it has already done with its former foe, Liberalism. Indeed, there are good reasons to believe that Roman Catholicism is learning to adapt itself more readily to social change than was formerly the case. In theological matters, too, the Church is being forced to adapt itself in order to survive, though, here, the process is noticeably slower: a good deal slower than many Catholics would wish. The dead hand of the past weighs heavier on theology than sociology. Nevertheless, some remarkable results have to be recorded.

In the United States, a momentous little booklet has recently been published by the Paulist Fathers of New York. Entitled *The Origin of Man*, it carries the *imprimatur* of the Church and is sold in Catholic bookshops. Imagine the shock that some of the faithful will experience to see in it a reproduction of a painting of Neanderthal Man! Greater shocks are in store, though, for the booklet acclaims that "One of the most important discoveries formulated by science in the last 150 years is the principle of organic evolution."

Evolution — it goes on to say — "represents a progressive march from simple, rudimentary, homogenous, organisms, to higher, complex, heterogeneous organisms with specialised organs for different functions." And "It [evolution] gives unity and significance to data in such widely different fields as palæontology, embryology, comparative anatomy, and biology which otherwise would be incoherent and meaningless."

True, the Paulist Fathers pay token tribute to the deity in declaring that "Evolution is God's method of Creation," but they make it quite clear that "Old estimates of the age of the earth and life upon it must be revised radically in the light of the most recent computations based on the rate of radium emanations. A period of approximately two billion years has elapsed since the earth attained its present diameter." And they state that resemblances in the development of the human fetus "to some of the principal ancestral forms from which the species is descended . . . have little meaning or coherence save on the postulate of an evolutionary past." Pertinently, if somewhat cynically, it might be asked why God's infallible Church should lag a century and a half (or more) behind biology, but my present role is that of recorder, not critic.

It could hardly be expected that Pope Pius XII would be as revolutionary as the Paulist Fathers when he issued a revised version of the Catholic view on anaesthetics. But, at least, he showed himself aware that *some* revision was necessary. On the whole, the ex-Cardinal Pacelli had previously displayed an ultra-conservatism in theology and morals. His pontificate has been chiefly notable for the elevation of the status of his predecessors and of the Blessed Virgin Mary; while his declaration to Catholic doctors on childbirth was hardly a progressive one!

Now, however, he has acknowledged the impact of medical science. On Sunday, February 24th, he pronounced to an international group of doctors in audience at the Vatican that there was no religious objection to their using anaesthetics, hypnosis or other pain-killing methods, so long as the methods themselves were not immoral. The

old Christian notion that pain purifies has been knocked for six, if not beaten to death, by the declaration that suffering may "produce harmful effects and hinder a greater good." "The patient desirous of avoiding or of soothing the pain can," said the Pope, "without disquiet of conscience, make use of the means discovered by science and which, in themselves, are not immoral."

For the benefit of Catholic doctors, Pope Pius XII even declared that it was "lawful" to administer drugs when these would bring about "two distinct effects — the one the relief of pain, the other the shortening of life." And, if a sick man "persists in asking to be made unconscious the doctor can consent to it without rendering himself guilty of formal co-operation in the sin committed."

There were, of course, qualifications in the Pope's pronouncement, and there was a specific condemnation of "direct euthanasia . . . because, in that case, a claim is being made to dispose directly of life." Even so, the concessions to modern medical practice are remarkable. Catholic mothers will no longer be expected to bring forth children in sorrow: they may avail themselves of the advantages already enjoyed by others. Furthermore, the legitimate fears of non-Catholic expectant mothers that a Catholic doctor may be less ready to administer a pain-killing drug or anaesthetics, will be dispelled. Whether Dr. Noel Browne will be reinstated as Minister of Health in Eire, with a public apology from Government and Catholic hierarchy, is open to doubt.

The *Manchester Guardian* Medical Correspondent might well express astonishment that "anaesthetists from all over the world should have been in doubt over the acceptability of their speciality," and satisfaction on being informed that "there is nothing contrary to Catholic teaching in the everyday administration and acceptance of anaesthetics." The plain facts are that the former question was surrounded by considerable "doubt" and that the latter was contrary to Catholic teaching until the Pope decreed otherwise on February 24th.

In this extraordinary Papal pronouncement we see a sometimes-disputed contention of Mr. F. A. Ridley vindicated. Namely, that the dogma of Papal Infallibility did not necessarily represent a backward step—as many writers thought—but, on the contrary, enabled the Church of Rome, whenever the hierarchy deemed it desirable, to burn its boats behind it. This is what has happened in the pronouncement referred to above. Of course, Pius XII could not surrender previously-held positions unconditionally. Hence the qualifications. These are, I should think, quite impracticable, supplying mere camouflage whereby the simple Catholic might mistake retreat for moral victory. "The dying person cannot allow, still less ask, a doctor to make him unconscious if he thereby renders himself incapable of fulfilling some serious moral duties"; and "a conscientious doctor will not countenance it, especially if he is a Christian, without having invited the patient first to carry out his obligations."

Papal language is traditionally vague, and a dying man's obligations may cover nothing more than receiving the last rites. But, whatever they mean, or are supposed to mean, they conjure up a picture that is manifestly absurd; that of a doctor and his patient indulging in a death-bed dialogue. In practice, the qualification is useless. A doctor attending a dying man is concerned with medicine and not morals, Catholic or otherwise.

The Sage of Monticello

By LEON SPAIN (U.S.A.)

Thomas Jefferson, On Democracy, edited by Saul K. Padover, and published by the New American Library, is a first-rate compilation of memorable quotations taken from his works and letters. Mr. Padover, a Jefferson scholar of the highest order, is to be commended for his diligent research into the copious writings of Jefferson, which left an indelible mark in the annals of human thought.

The book is divided into the following chapters: The Natural Rights of Man, The Constitution, Political Economy, Social Welfare, Religion, and Foreign Affairs, with the Appendix containing axioms and dicta attributed to Jefferson, and the opinions of him by his contemporaries. In the century which produced the freethought classics of Voltaire, Diderot, Hume, Montesquieu, Condorcet, Paine, D'Holbach, and a host of other scholarly luminaries of the first order, the name of Thomas Jefferson rightfully merits his due place in the intellectual firmament studded by such names. His evaluations of many aspects of the Old and New Testaments were very direct and highly critical, and it must be remembered that his analysis and understanding of many aspects of the religious outlook was limited to the social context of his day and age, since Biblical research of the Higher Criticism had scarcely emerged. The historicity and divine personality of Jesus was unquestioned, and the theory of organic evolution, in whatever form considered, limited to such thinkers as Erasmus Darwin, Buffon, and Lamarck, whose biological findings and knowledge of natural history were relatively few and incomplete.

Thomas Jefferson was never acknowledged to be a public speaker even of the second order. However, his best thoughts were expressed in the long and copious correspondence which he carried on during his long and eventful life with the leading statesmen and scholars of his time, at home and throughout the world.

Writing to John Adams in 1813, Jefferson commented, with reference to Platonic Mysticism:

"It is too late in the day for men of sincerity to pretend that they believe in the Platonic mysticisms that three are one, and one is three; and yet that the one is not three, and that the three are not one. . . . But this constitutes the craft, the power and profit of the priests. Sweep away their gossamer fabrics of fictitious religion, and they would catch no more flies."

Referring to Presbyterians, in a letter in 1820, Jefferson unmincingly states:

"The Presbyterian clergy are the loudest; the most intolerant of all sects, the most tyrannical and ambitious; ready at the word of a lawgiver, if such a word could be now obtained, to put the torch to the pile, and to rekindle in this virgin hemisphere the flames in which their oracle Calvin consumed the poor Servetus, because he could not find in his Euclid the proposition that demonstrated that three are one and one is three."

There was always the danger that the laws pertaining to the separation of Church and State would be undermined by various subterfuges and devious methods by the numerous champions of the revealed word, in order to enlist the aid of the State in foisting their particular brand of obscurantism in any of the original states, and future states in the American Union. Prior to the inclusion of the laws in the United States constitution enacting the separation of Church and State, and similar provisions enacted in various state constitutions, numerous religious tests and qualifications for settlement in the early American colonies existed. To forestall such a future possibility, Jefferson explained the following in a letter to the Rev. Samuel Miller, written in 1808:

"... I do not believe it is for the interest of religion to invite the civil magistrate to direct its civil exercises, its discipline or

doctrines. . . . Everyone must act according to dictates of his own reason, and mine tells me that civil powers alone have been given to the President of the United States and no authority to direct the religious exercises of his constituents."

This is certainly a pertinent criticism which could most aptly be applied to many religious leaders today, who, while not openly daring to advocate the imposition of their particular brand of theology upon the people, have concertedly prevailed upon statesmen to legislate that allegiance to God be written into the national motto, that "In God we trust" be engraved upon postage stamps, and that God be included in the oath of allegiance. Thus, in effect, officially committing the nation to a vague form of theism, at least.

Referring to the unintelligible dogmas of the various schools of theology, and in the inevitable harm resulting from them, Jefferson wrote to a Mr. Carey, in 1816, what the history of religious controversy undeniably confirms:

"On the dogmas of religion, as distinguished from moral principles, all mankind from the beginning of the world to this day, have been quarrelling, fighting, burning and torturing one another, for abstractions unintelligible to themselves and to all others, and absolutely beyond the comprehension of the human mind. Were I to enter on that arena I should only add another unit to the number of Bedlamites."

Jefferson was a confirmed believer in the existence of the central figure of Christianity, Jesus Christ, and the morality attributed to him, which he considered to be of the highest. But this should not in the least detract from the invaluable services which he rendered in emancipating the human intellect from theological and ecclesiastical tyranny. Jefferson was the scourge of the fundamentalists of his day for his open and forthright attack upon their unquestioned dogmas, and his books were ordered to be removed from the shelves of the Philadelphia Public Library because of the heresies and "subversions" they contained.

Monarchy or Republic?

By A. D. CORRICK

UNDER the heading of "Royalism in Britain" Mr. C. H. Norman states that Republicanism is almost dead in Britain, and I gather that he would like to see it revived. My own feeling is that a modern republic would be a much worse fate than our limited monarchy. It may soon become an important question.

Mr. Norman also expresses the opinion that the Queen, the Queen-Mother, Princess Margaret, and the Duchess of Kent, exercise a good deal of backdoor influence. What this means is not quite clear, but I doubt whether these ladies have the slightest influence in the political world. It would be desirable, though, for the crown to be brought within the democratic ambit, especially as the present heir to the throne is a child. It is irrational to credit a particular family as being superior to the rest of mankind, even to the extent that the succession is reserved for them.

My own modest suggestion to alter this is that upon a vacancy occurring, Parliament should appoint a successor to the throne, and reduce the powers now invested therein to social duties only, such as the ceremonial opening of buildings, attending non-political functions, visiting commonwealth and foreign countries. A popular attractive figure would be required to fill the position.

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of Speaker of the House of Commons, the House appoints a successor without any religious fuss, or anointing with oil, and this

procedure could be applied to the choosing of a king or queen, whose title should be changed to a more fitting description.

The House of Commons, and not the Queen, ought likewise to choose the Prime Minister, and decide when a general election should be held. As the House is elected for only five years, it should normally govern the country for that period. The House of Lords? Well, it is dying in any case, and the passage of time will bring about its complete quietus. The Queen's assent to Acts of Parliament is a formality only and can be dispensed with.

The charges made upon the nation for the maintenance of the royal family, royal castles, etc., should be investigated. I am informed that the royal yacht *Britannia* costs us £2,500 per day! Isn't this a scandalous expense considering the first class transport that is available? Many of us deplore the state of affairs whereby the nation is called upon to finance the royal relatives, aunts and uncles. In no other high office of state does his remarkable and expensive custom prevail.

I have often wondered what republicanism entails beyond a grand protest against the monarchy! However, in this country we have arrived at the stage when our monarchs are neutral and peaceful, and if the changes above-described are introduced they are likely to remain that way. In the days of Charles Bradlaugh and G. W. Foote, eighty years ago, our sovereigns inclined to assume dictatorial powers, which, fortunately, have not developed in modern times. I see no reason to plunge Britain into presidential elections and republican activities, which cause so much strife and bloodshed in other countries.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. The belief that the pursuit of happiness should be man's goal. 2. (a) Epicurus, (b) Zeno the Stoic, (c) Pyrrho. 3. In 1946. 4. Pliny the Elder, 79 A.D. 5. 800 A.D.; Leo III; Charlemagne. 6. Romulus. G.H.T.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE BIBLE IN BED

It is a frequent experience of mine to find Bibles in hotel bedrooms where I have many occasions to stay in the course of my work as a technical representative.

Many times I feel like inserting some comment in these Bibles but I hesitate to mutilate any book—even a Bible. However, it seems to me that there is an excellent opportunity of putting over some of our own propaganda by the insertion of printed slips indicating some of the many undesirable parts of the "good book" in the way this is shown in our well-known *Bible Handbook*.

I would find slips of this nature with appropriate references very useful in the course of discussion when I am unable to remember texts. G. CAPLAN.

RATE RELIEF FOR PARSONS

We were interested in the question of the rating of parsonages. It is a scandal that these houses should get an exemption and relief which is not open to other people. Apparently, the privilege is only granted in some areas. It was refused recently at Mirfield, where the Anglican monastery has to pay full rates. Does it pertain in London and, if so, do Bishops' houses come under it? Over recent years, the Church Commissioners have taken over some of the historic dwellings, fitted them up for various purposes, and left the Bishop with a nicely appointed flat inside. Lambeth and Fulham Palaces were alike so treated. Does Dr. Fisher pay full rates for his flat in the former building? And what about the flat in the latter which is occupied by the elderly and devout one of whom we have heard much recently in *THE FREETHINKER*—the Bishop of London? A*PEARSE.

SOPER-IFIC

That gallant, swashbuckling Sir Galahad of the religious world, the Rev. Donald Soper, is making hay where the sun shines, and currently the sun is over the *Tribune*. Much to our reverent warrior's satisfaction, no clouds, in the shape of Freethinkers, have gathered to disturb his harvesting; nothing so much as a "reverent Rationalist" has dimmed his horizon. From his privileged position

he has thus defended the Pope's Christmas message: "The trouble is that His Holiness has the best of intentions. He is unquestionably a profoundly good man..." Our Christian Pacifist puts on his best "Judge ye not" attitude to apologise for his holy accomplice. In contrast, recall his scathing attack on his fundamentalist companions-in-Jesus not many months ago: "Bibliolatry is basically dishonest... This stupid and dangerous doctrine of Biblical inerrancy..."

What a brave man Mr. Soper is! How he stands up to the full fury of those terrible, powerful fundamentalists. How, like a Robin Hood, he befriends the lowly Vatican!

But if that is a pearl of hypocrisy, here comes a diamond. In the *Tribune* of January 25th he accuses the Tories of hypocrisy in that they suppressed any tendencies to mutiny in order to keep in power. He comes to the "hard conclusion" that "the Tories would rather patch up their differences than lose their seats."

Take a look in the mirror, Donald—at Christianity!

E. F. CROSSWELL.

THE BOTTOMLEY MYTH

As an appendix to Mr. Cutner's article "The Bottomley Myth," perhaps the following extract from St. John Ervine's biography of Bernard Shaw may be of interest.

"In the first week of March 1885 he went with John M. Robertson to meet Mrs. Besant and Horatio Bottomley coming back from Northampton... saw them into cab, etc. The fact that Bottomley was Mrs. Besant's companion will seem odd to a generation which knows him only as the orator and founder of *John Bull* and as a shady speculator and gaol-bird, but it will seem less inexplicable to those who remember that he was generally reputed to be Charles Bradlaugh's bastard."

"Generally"! I was in my 'teens in the 'eighties and keenly interested in secular literature, reading all I could get on the subject, but I never heard or read of this "generally" known bit of scandal till years after Bradlaugh's death, when, I think, Bottomley himself disseminated it. A. W. DAVIS.

OBITUARY

Mrs. E. A. HEWSON, of West Bowling, Bradford, was a quiet lady, but strong in her Freethought convictions. She had been a member of the Bradford Branch N.S.S. for well over a decade, and she was a regular attender at lectures. Mrs. Hewson died recently, a few weeks after her 81st birthday, and will be sadly missed by other Branch members. We send our condolences to her daughter, Miss B. M. Hewson, who is also a Branch member. W.B.

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