

The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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IN A FAMOUS SPEECH delivered before the German Reichstag in the 'seventies of last century, Prince Bismarck, the "Iron Chancellor" of the great Protestant Empire of Hohenzollern Germany, used the significant words: "We will not go to Canossa!"

By this historical allusion the great Protestant statesman wished to indicate that, under no circumstances would the greatest European Protestant power of the era agree to repeat the disastrous experience undergone by its Roman Catholic predecessor, the medieval German "Holy Roman Empire," which found its dramatic culmination at Canossa, where the Emperor Henry the Fourth was compelled to make an ignominious submission to the mighty Pope, Gregory the Seventh, in the year 1077. It is well known how the German Kaiser was forced to prostrate himself in his shirt in the snow outside the castle of Canossa until the Pope accepted his submission. The date 1077 marks the apogee of the power of the Papacy vis-a-vis the Secular State and constitutes a nostalgic memory for the modern Papacy. For ever since that date the term "Canossa" has signified the most extreme subordination of the Secular State before the Catholic Church: a red-letter day in the annals of Catholic sociology—the highest point ever yet attained in its relationship with the secular political world.

Medieval Church and State

Prior to the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century which, from one point of view at least, may be regarded as a successful revolt of the national secular power against the spiritual dictatorship of the cosmopolitan Catholic Church, there was, strictly speaking, no such thing as a *concordat* between Church and State; that is, an agreement between equals guaranteeing the respective relationships between the contracting parties, the Medieval Church and the Secular State. Ambitious Medieval rulers such as King Edward I of England, in his Statute of *Præmunire*, did put some check on Papal interference in national administration; but in general "Europe" and "Christendom" were synonymous terms; and every Medieval Christian ruler was the more or less submissive vassal of the Church. The famous dogma of the "Two Swords," put forward by the Roman canonists, by which the "Secular Arm" wielded its temporal sword on behalf of and in obedience to the authority of the Church, represented the theory and, to a large extent at least, the practice of Medieval Christianity in relation to secular politics. For example, the Inquisition had no legal power to pass sentence of death: all it did was to "relax" the condemned heretic to the Secular Power, which, however, was under a canonical obligation to inflict capital punishment when this was demanded by the Inquisition. In the classic formula of the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes (17th century), "The Papacy is the ghost of the Roman Empire

sitting crowned on the grave thereof, for so did first start up this great ecclesiastical power!" To borrow another aphorism from the same thinker, the life of any Medieval ruler who effectively sought to curb the overall domination of the Church was likely to prove "nasty, brutish, desolate, and short." The natural simile beloved by the Roman canonists that the Papacy represented the sun, and the

Secular Power, the moon, was broadly true, so much so that the exceptions only proved the rule in Church and State throughout the Medieval "Ages of Faith."

The Reformation and the Principle of "Indirect Power"

The Reformation put an end both to the unity of Medieval Christendom and to the universal jurisdiction of Rome vis-a-vis the Secular State. From one point of view, at least, the Reformation stood effectively for revolutionary nationalism in its revolt against the theocratic world empire of the Papacy and this aspect of the Reformation was not confined to the States which went over to the Reformation and effected their *Los von Rome*. For example, even the "most Christian" Kings of France, the traditional eldest child of the Church, yet asserted the claims of Gallican autonomy against the centralising despotism of the Papacy. The national European states resented the claims of the Papacy arbitrarily to dispose of the "new worlds" in East and West, made available by the voyages of discovery in the 15th and 16th centuries. We recall in this connection the *bon mot* of King Francis I of France anent the celebrated decree of the Borgia Pope, Alexander VI (1493) dividing the New World between Spain and Portugal; when the French monarch expressed the desire to see "the clause in the Will of Adam" which decreed such a division. Faced with the secession, or threatened secession, of so many Catholic States to the Reformation, Rome, which is a worldly-wise institution, had to give ground. From about the end of the sixteenth century only the Papacy accepted the theory of "Indirect Power" as propounded by the famous Jesuit canonist, Cardinal Bellarmine. Henceforth, Church and State were to be recognised as more or less equal partners; each of which ruled by Divine authority in its own sphere.

The Jesuits in Paraguay—the *Summum Bonum* of Catholic Sociology

Bellarmino was a Jesuit and, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Jesuits effectively led the Roman Catholic Church particularly in connection with the political sphere. To recall the apt metaphor of the Protestant historian Professor Kruger, during this period the Papacy was the "king" of the chess-board but was effectively manipulated by the artful Jesuits. It was during this period that there transpired the famous Jesuit "Republic" of Paraguay, where the Jesuit Order ruled an American Indian state on collectivist and authoritarian lines: the means of (economic) production as well as the state power being entirely monopolised by Loyola's Order.

VIEWS and OPINIONS

Problems of Church and State - 1

By F. A. RIDLEY

It was of this famous experiment in clerical "socialism" that some wit or other—like so many other *bon mots* it has been ascribed to the contemporary Voltaire—stated that, "In Paraguay perfect communism existed: the Jesuits shared all the wealth whilst the Indians shared all the work!" However, whilst the Jesuitical experiment in Paraguay proved to be short-lived, it constitutes a factor of permanent importance in Catholic sociology particularly in regard to future relationships between the Catholic Church and the Secular State. For the Jesuit "Republic" of Paraguay may be said to have constituted the *summum bonum* of Catholic sociology, the *complete* domination, political, economic and cultural, of the Church *over* the State. Not even Hildebrand at Canossa effected so complete a domination of the secular state, as was effected by the sons of Loyola when they established their "Reductions" amid the primeval forest and the trackless wilderness. This was the highest point ever reached by clerical ascendancy over a secular society. In a collectivist era as is that of the 20th century, we have perhaps *not* heard the last of such experiments in "Christian Socialism."

The French Revolution and the Age of Concordats

With the French Revolution of 1789-94 a new era dawned in the mutual relationships between Church and State. With the advent of the great Revolution, Europe, for the first time since the Rome of Julian "the Apostate" (sic) passed beyond Christianity whether that of the medieval Catholic Church or that engendered by the Protestant Reformation. The Confessional State *officially* associated

with a particular church, gave way to the "Laic"—secularist or non-confessional State. From the time of the French—perhaps we should actually say of the earlier American?—Revolution, the State did not regard the teaching of a particular type of religion, whether it be that of Rome or Geneva—as its primary function. The existence of other religions or even of no religion at all, had to be assumed in and by the makers of any *Concordat* between Rome and the Secular State. The first *Concordat* of this new type was that concluded in 1801 by Napoleon, then First Consul of the French Republic and Pope Pius VII. The essential features of this *Concordat* may be summarised by saying that it recognised Roman Catholicism as the *official* religion of France; but that the Church explicitly renounced any claim to effective *political* control over the French State; and also implicitly renounced any claim to coerce the non-Catholic minorities within that State. *De facto*, Rome recognised religious toleration—we shall return to this in a moment—and also recognised the autonomous competence of the Catholic State in its own political sphere. When, later in the century, Pope Leo XIII declared that Church and State were both institutions of Divine origin and nature, he was implicitly recognising the Divine nature of the French Revolution which had actually created the secular, non-confessional State! His Medieval predecessors, whether the Pope of Canossa or the Jesuit Provincial in Paraguay, would have protested very strongly against any such assumptions of equality by the Secular State.

(To be continued)

Psychological Truth

By O. C. DREWITT

(formerly FATHER NORBERT DREWITT, O.P., S.T.L. S.T.LIC.; of the Dominican Fathers, Blackfriars, Oxford.)

MR. PHILIP TOYNBEE, in the course of a review in *The Observer* for May 26th, called attention to the disastrous idea of "psychological truth." As a former priest who, after many years of study and observation, is convinced that religion is the most reactionary force in European society, I followed up the review with a letter. This has not been published, so I am venturing to express myself in THE FREETHINKER, because the concept of "psychological truth" is among those which have enabled "intellectuals" (including Catholic intellectuals) to serve up orthodoxy in a new, "libertarian" disguise.

"Psychological truth," in the hands of C. G. Jung and his following, has supplied apologists with a bridge over the gulf separating twentieth century science and medieval superstition. Frazer's Dying God has been turned from barbaric myth into a revived form of magic clothed with the jargon of bad psychology (*how* bad has been demonstrated by Edward Glover in his book, *Freud or Jung*). The entire paraphernalia of medieval mysticity the Virgin cult, the Mass, the cruel sex morality of the Middle Ages, are being put forward as "acceptable scientifically." Even those who do not admit the validity of the Nicene Creed, interpreted as the Church Fathers understood it, can safely accept it "psychologically"—and, we are told, *must* do so if they want to "experience Rebirth."

This is the novel theologico-scientific sandwich (the "synthesis") being sold at the present time in intellectual circles. It actually represents a dangerous break with science, a complete misunderstanding of unconscious processes, from the biological foundations of the Freudian *id*

to the part played by infantile sexuality in super-ego formation.

Philip Toynbee rightly attacks the psychological fraud implied in the concept of the "psychologically true." The only thing true of "psychological truth" is that mystical intuitions are the product of psychosomatic tensions. Even minute changes in the biological core (above all, psychosexual changes) alter the symbolic pattern and the accompanying affect. That is why the religious bodies fear revolutions in morality. Human character structure is altered by alterations in the rigid code whose purpose is to arm the organism from babyhood—to keep at bay all save a condoned handful of deformed sensations. The smallest modification of structure involves an automatic reorganisation of imagery and affect; philosophical and theological systems, which yesterday had a compulsive hold, today become meaningless and psychologically impotent.

There is no such thing as a "psychological truth." The only valid concept is that of a "psychobiological state," one more often than not pathological (and therefore expedient, because it serves as an anchorage for social deformity and compulsive obedience). "Psychologically true" boils down to "sociologically useful"; having arrived at which, one may legitimately ask: For the benefit of whom?

"Psychological truth" is one of those woolly notions which have turned philosophy into a literary game, a description of colourful attitudes. Abnormally repressed journalists find them more "psychologically rewarding" than the cold objectivity required to study Bertrand Russell, Darwin, or Freud—the true giants, in terms of whose work alone a rational interpretation of the universe will ever be worked out.

—NEXT WEEK—

"WHY BE MILITANT?"

G. I. BENNETT REPLIES TO H. CUTNER

There is no Half-Way House

By G. I. BENNETT

IN OUR GARDEN, tucked snugly near the top of a privet hedge, we had an attractive nest with four baby thrushes inside it. It was a pleasure to see mother thrush coming and going, foraging so diligently and indefatigably for her young, and looking after them as well as any loving mother can. Of course, she was but obeying her deepest instincts, and would not and could not have been happy doing anything else in the spring of the year. But that is no matter; it was a simple delight for us to see her busy attending to the needs of her healthy young family. Yet our pleasure was compounded with anxiety. Her wisdom in setting up home just there, pleasant and leafy sheltered spot though it seemed, was very questionable. The danger that marauding cats would detect it before very long and visit upon it sudden and violent death was all too probable, for access to it was only too easy once its situation was known. But you cannot in your superior human wisdom move the nest of wild birds to a safer place and expect mother bird to understand the goodness and soundness of your intentions. So we just had to watch day by day the progress of this young thrush family, hoping that somehow or other they would escape feline discovery until they had taken to wing. Alas! the worst happened. The marauders came, we think, by night, and left no living thing. The nest had obviously been disturbed and we found inside it only one poor, limp little body.

not find God there. And this man, who has felt with singular force the call of the devoted life, and who was once a pastor, can feel only vaguely and uncertainly that in the finer, nobler, humaner impulses of the human heart God is!

For me it is perennially a matter for wonder how successful most religious people are in turning a blind eye to the unpalatable facts of existence—or, at any rate, in not allowing those facts to disturb their faith in an almighty and all-merciful Creator. Not for them any anxious questioning how a God of goodness could create and control the world with all its attendant evils and cruelties, and yet remain worthy of their worship and thanksgiving.

“All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small;
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all . . .”

So run the lines of that hymn whose simple words and simpler sentiments have made it almost, I think, the Children’s Hymn. Yet do grown-ups treat it as a fable, like the story of Santa Claus, suitable for children but to be disbelieved by people of mature years? Not a bit of it! They themselves cherish those self-same sentiments, ascribing to God all that is just, noble, pure, lovely, and of good report; and in that connection ignoring, with enviable facility, all that is foul, ugly, loathsome, and morally revolting in the natural scheme of things.

Perhaps philosophers may long continue to debate the how, where, and whence of man and his world. But one matter at least no longer merits—if ever it did merit—discussion, because it is self-evidently and transparently false. I mean the question of a personal God. Such a Being does not exist. Now this does not, I know, directly impugn the theist’s conception of an impersonal God. Yet I sense it is the “thin end of the wedge”—even admitting, as I have hitherto freely done, that there may be more in heaven and earth than we in our imperfect knowledge, and therefore partial understanding, dream of. What kind of God is an impersonal God—one shorn of all personal qualities and characteristics? No one can even vaguely envisage, still less say. God, then, becomes a term without a meaning.

There is really no half-way house between theism and atheism.

The Press in Spain

ON the anniversary of Mussolini’s death, *Arriba*, the Falangist paper (Madrid) reminded Spaniards how much Spain owed him for supporting their fight against the dreaded enemies of Liberalism and Marxism. The gratitude of the nation was expressed for the thousands of Italians who died in Spain during the Civil War. Naturally, this excluded those Italians who died in the ranks of the International Brigade!

In a speech typical of the Catholic politician, Arias Salgado, Spanish Minister of Information, attacked Press liberalism, stating that lack of controls and censorship lead to “libertinism of information.”

He attacked those who were trying to disturb Spain’s internal order by diffusing “false news” (*i.e.* news unfavourable to the Franco régime). D.S.

My indignation was considerable. It momentarily got the better of me and I conceived a quite unphilosophical dislike of cats (which have never, in any case, been my favourite animals). I say my indignation “momentarily got the better of me,” because my habitual desire is to face facts as they are, and I know quite as well as anyone that the fate that overtook our little thrushes is but a trivial and common episode in a universal biological drama. It is inherent in the natural order of things for life to prey upon life; and it is doubtful whether there is, or has been, a species without its natural enemies. Indeed, our feathered friends, which so delight us visually and with their song, make relentless war upon worms, snails, grubs, and insects of all kinds. And to much of animal life we human beings in our collectivity are the greatest, most redoubtable foe of all! It is true that we must become diminishingly less so—diminishingly less creatures of prey—as our ethical sense grows. This ethical sense may make greater demands upon us than we at present realise. If, as I assume and undoubtedly hope, our species passes beyond its current mad and extraordinary urge to compass its own nuclear destruction, I think we shall become increasingly queasy about breeding animals for slaughter, and when we also see that flesh-eating is not necessary to good health we shall perhaps at last be content to live by the yields of the fields.

We human beings, then, have within us this unique thing, ethical conscience, as yet barely beyond its embryonic stage of development. To Nature it must surely be an anti-biological “sport”! In the state of Nature there is endless conflict and struggle—and not always for food, or the right to live. The stalking cat or cats that plundered our thrush’s nest were driven by neither motive. Albert Schweitzer, living for long years on the fringes of the African jungle, has had ample opportunity to study at firsthand the unedifying features of pristine life, and he knows—none better—how red in tooth and claw Nature really is. His thinking, if I understand him aright, is that it is useless to look for God in the outer external world, for we shall

This Believing World

So, after all, Gilbert Murray died a fully believing Roman Catholic. Who tells us this?—the Roman Catholic Church. His grandson, Philip Toynbee, called him "a militant agnostic" but he will now join the throng of "infidels" who, according to both the Protestant and Catholic Churches, accept Christ Jesus just as they are dying. While alive and in full maturity, they have nothing but contempt for Christianity. On their deathbeds they suddenly change and shriek for Jesus.

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Is the story of the deathbed conversion of Gilbert Murray true? How can one trust the lying Church? In his *Infidel Deathbeds*, the late G. W. Foote examined many of these stories of conversion and found them deliberate lies. But in any case, it is not what a man may say with his dying breath, in most cases quite unconsciously, but what he said during his life. And Gilbert Murray was then and always "a militant agnostic." And this is the view of his son, Stephen Murray—who said outright: "I have no reason to believe my father died other than as he lived, a reverent agnostic."

★

A parson, a knight, and an "average" man gave their views on illness and suffering the other Sunday for the BBC's "Meeting Point." They all personally applied to Christ and the result was that the parson was almost immediately cured of cancer, the knight can now bear his arthritis with the greatest ease, and the third sufferer appeared to be quite certain that all his prayers for relief were answered on the spot. The only point that worried them however was, why did a good and beneficent Almighty allow any suffering at all? To that, they had no answer whatever.

★

The truth is of course that there is no answer from a Christian standpoint to what everybody calls "the Problem of Evil." There is no answer to "Nature red in tooth and claw." The "balance of Nature" requires the killing of animals by each other mostly under horrible conditions to survive, while man has his own fight for survival against war, disease, heat, cold, floods, etc.—all impossible to reconcile with a good God. And no one need be surprised that the three gallant and all-believing Christians mentioned above gave up the problem with what looked suspiciously like despair.

★

More and more are our national newspapers going "religious"—for example, the *Sunday Times*. Every week we are given now a pen-picture of "People of the Gospel," with what a lot of people will no doubt believe are authentic portraits. The one of Peter looks like a bearded Arab growing a little bald, and the story accompanying it is a re-hash of the Gospel story as if that was really "Gospel Truth." As nothing at all has ever been discovered about Peter outside the New Testament, and Biblical criticism has riddled even that work, it is no wonder the writer does not say outright that Peter wrote the Epistles he is credited with. He calls them "the letters that bear his name"; and as for the "martyrdom" of Peter, he calls it a "tradition." Which shows how far the despised Freethought has carried the war into the enemy's camp.

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We are delighted to settle once for all the horrid scepticism about Shakespeare not writing his plays. An English medium, Leslie Flint, has been in (more or less) personal contact with the late Lionel Barrymore, who has, in his latest role as a spook, met the divine William. And Shakespeare told Barrymore, who has told Mr. Flint: "You can

take it from me that what you hear as Shakespeare's play—is Shakespeare's." In fact, "There is no doubt about it. he wrote his own plays." The Baconians, the Oxfordians, the Derbyites—what have they now to say?

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Yet in a book published some years ago by Percy Allen he was told, through the late Hester Dowden, another medium, that she was told by the Earl of Oxford's spook that it was he who wrote most of the plays. In fact, she recorded the Earl's exact words in proof. Perhaps they are still debating the problem in "Summerland." In any case, the fact remains that, according to Barrymore (or Leslie Flint), the orthodox Shakespeare is still writing plays, some even greater than *Hamlet*. What marvellous theatres they must have up—or it is down?—there!

From Hungary—4

My latest communication from Radio Budapest contains the following:—

"We both agree that religion is definitely harmful to humanity and the sooner its impact on man is removed the better it will be for the world. How to remove that impact is another matter. The problem differs according to the specific country. The Catholic religion has very deep roots in our country and the counter-action to it is very complicated. There are people like you who are impatient with us for not counteracting the Catholic religion strongly and firmly enough. Then there are those who accuse us of not allowing sufficient religious freedom. Either way we are under constant attack on this question—just as we have been on the question as to whether what took place here at the end of last year was revolution or counter-revolution. Frankly, we find that in our approach to these questions and to their solution we have to act in a manner best suited to our domestic situation and conditions, not too unmindful of public opinion, but always most mindful of the interests of our people.

It will take a long time to re-educate our people on the question of religion. Education is very important, but I still think the economic base is more important, the economic and the political as well. When people live in complete economic security, when people have no reason to fear each other, they will look less to some supernatural being for lifting their burdens. Therefore, it is my opinion that while we must use the weapon of education, we must also exert all our energies to wipe out the social base for superstition.

Gabi Timar, English Section, Radio Budapest, Hungary.

The White Book issued from Budapest, proved illuminating, but never have I known a government, having crushed a rebellion, praise their would-be deponents as sincere progressives! Although Mr. Gabi Timar apparently shares my anti-religious outlook, obviously we differ widely in belief as to how religious indoctrination should be combatted. Perhaps the gulf is only natural between an anti-authoritarian Freethinker and a pro-authoritarian Communist.

Mr. Timar believes the betterment of social conditions will lead eventually to the intellectual banishment of religion. In the meantime, any spontaneous rising will quickly find the backing of the Vatican. Rebellions make strange bedfellows and although libertarians, socialists, anarchists, and merely anti-State Capitalists may occasionally revolt, I feel they may become unwittingly pawns in a much bigger game.

My comparison of the Hungarian and Polish situations, in which I pointed out to him the re-emergence of the old Polish secular societies he has not remarked on. Thus I must assume that any attempt to form similar societies in Hungary has either not taken place or has not been permitted.

D. SHIPPER.

"There is no political alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts. All we can hope for is to draw men from the crowd." EMERSON.

THE FREETHINKER

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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.

R. HIGGS.—When organic chemical compounds were first isolated and observed, religionists were claiming that they could never be produced artificially. Thousands have now been made, including even some not found in nature.

JOHN H. VERNON.—The injunction to "sit down before fact as a little child" came from T. H. Huxley.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Messrs DAY, CORINA, and SHEPPARD.

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Every Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MURRAY and SLEMEN.

Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street, Kingston, Surrey).—Every Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and E. MILLS.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, FINKEL, SMITH or CORSAIR.

Sunday, 3 p.m. (Platt Fields) Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS, etc.

Sunday 8 p.m. (Deansgate Blitzed Site): Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS, SMITH or WOOD.

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: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square) — Thursday, 1 p.m.: R. POWE. Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY and R. POWE

Wales and Western Branch (The Downs, Bristol).—Sunday, June 30th, 7 p.m.: D. SHIPPER: A Lecture.

West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday, at the Marble Arch, from 4 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools).—Sunday, July 7th, 7 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, "The Great Religious Orders."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, July 7th, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, B.A., "The Dilemma of Defence."

Notes and News

MR. C. SMITH, an old Manchester Branch member, sends us very full details of Musgrave Reade, whose "conversion" was the subject of an article in our June 7th issue. Mr. Smith knew Musgrave Reade personally some fifty years ago. Born into a wealthy aristocratic family, Musgrave Reade's intended role was the purchasing of an Army commission. Gladstone's Bill, however, stopped that procedure. At various stages of his career Reade flirted with Republicanism, Positivism, Marxism, Secularism, and even Mormonism. His only connection with the N.S.S. was that he joined the Manchester branch in 1883 for a few months.

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £227 16s. 9d.; A. Hancock, 2s.; E.C.R., 2s. 6d.; S. Clowes, 4s.; J. Buchanan, 10s.; A. J. Wood, 2s. 6d.; J.C Jones, 5s.; In memory of A. Brooks, 10s.—Total to date, June 28th, 1957, £229 12s. 9d.

TOURISM and twisting seem to be inseparable. No matter what country you visit, there will be someone out to "do" you. Italy is no exception, and the Vatican City is as bad as anywhere. But inside St. Peter's you feel safe—or should do. Yet even the holy precincts have been invaded by the petty racketeer (the great racket, of course, is as old as the Church itself). Next time you go in, take your camera with you; if you leave it with a keeper you might lose it, as a Swiss pilgrim did recently, according to the *Catholic Herald*. The Vatican has lifted the ban on cameras inside the church because of the organised racket. We wonder if the racketeers confess their sins and whether the penance varies with the venue!

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A SUDANESE official commission has recommended that the official religion of the Sudan should be Islam, but that the country should not have an Islamic Constitution.

As an Islamic Constitution would ensure a feudal state of Saudi Arabian type with, for instance, a penal code drawn from the savageries of the Koran, at least it appears that Moslem extremists are not being pandered to.

The religious fanatics contend that as all governmental authority comes from God, religion must be the primary concern of the State authorities.

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THE Czech Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge will, according to a report, be making anti-religious films later in the year. One is to portray the growth of Christianity from folklore and superstition, while two others will show something of anti-social clerical activities.

★

INTERESTING news comes from Lithuania, now one of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In Dukstos, East Lithuania, two R.C. bishops held Divine Service for 10,000 R.C.s who attended the inauguration of a new church. Even more interesting is the news that the recently-opened R.C. Priests' Seminary in Kaunas now has 70 students. Nice to know that all this Communist scientific education is having the desired effect!

★

THE new State of Ghana (ex-Gold Coast) numbers 525,000 R.C.s among its population, a tenth of Ghana's entire population. Funnily enough, in Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's Government, four Ministers out of 13 are R.C.s and four State Secretaries also! The shape of things to come?

★

JUST as South Viet-Nam is Vatican H.Q. for South-East Asia, Formosa (with the willing help of Chiang Kai-Shek and his Fascist feudalists) is now the H.Q. for Eastern Asia. In ten years the number of R.C. priests on the island has risen from 15 to 375, and among these black-clad parasites are 130 Jesuits.

★

In a parish magazine at Luton the Perpetual Curate, the Rev. R. Wesson, asks his parishioners to have their cars blessed with Holy Water. Noting that horses were once blessed in this way, he asserts that the blessing of motor cars proves that the Church is moving with the times. We now await news of a lower insurance rate for the owners of blessed cars, leaving the irreligious vehicles to redress the balance.

What Happened to John Stuart Mill?

by H. CUTNER

NO ONE CAN read Dr. Ruth Borchard's *John Stuart Mill the Man* (Watts & Co. 18/- net) without wondering not a little why he never actually fulfilled his early promise. He was one of the greatest of the nineteenth century "intellectuals" — he is always classed with Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, G. H. Lewes, and the rest, but with one or two exceptions, his books are hardly read these days.

One also feels a little sorry for him. The upbringing forced on to him by his father must have made his life a misery during those early formative days, while later, falling in love with a married lady — and a formidable one at that — could not have helped to further his happiness. Even when he married Mrs. Taylor, and looked upon her as the complete embodiment of everything known as feminine charm and intelligence, does he appear to have been much happier.

Dr. Borchard relates his story with every understanding and sympathy. Her book is not so much an account of his work as of the man himself. But it is rather a pity that she did not deal a little longer with Mill ardently embracing Malthusian doctrines of population and ready to preach "birth control to the fishwives of Billingsgate." No doubt he met very early in life Francis Place, who was one of the great pioneers of birth control when, in actual fact, little was known as to practical methods. The great work of Malthus had however taken root, and the early reformers saw in the Malthusian theory one method at least of combatting the frightful poverty which in the early years of last century was the lot of most working people. The swarms of unwanted children at a period when work for all of them later could not be found were mostly responsible for this poverty, and Place spent most of his long life in helping as many people as he could with practical advice even if not always successful. A "quiverful" was sent by God and nothing else mattered.

Mill had no doubt heard of the possibility of limiting one's family from his father, and if he met Place, he no doubt agreed that the remedy Malthus himself proposed — late marriage — was quite impracticable. Place was (as Prof. Norman Himes in his invaluable *History of Contraception* claims) "the real founder of English Neo-Malthusianism" and he certainly made disciples of Bentham, Grote, and Richard Carlile. Carlile's *Every Woman's Book* had a great circulation — for those days — and it is claimed that young Mill helped by giving many copies away. When he died *The Times* printed an obituary notice in which Mill was savagely attacked for the part he played in propagating Neo-Malthusianism. This was only to be expected, for in 1873 the famous Bradlaugh-Besant trial had not taken place. Before that, the very idea that there was any artificial contraception at all brought a shudder of horror to all good Christians.

In any case, Prof. Himes has made out a case for young Mill not only distributing Carlile's pamphlet, but also by the time he was eighteen, to have been "the author of some of the most brilliant essays on Neo-Malthusianism written in that early period." (Essay in the *Economic Journal*, January 1929.)

All the same, Mill later in life felt it necessary to repudiate the views on sex in Dr. G. Drysdale's *Element of Social Science* — views which were considered by the average Victorian society as being "bestial and revolting." Perhaps it is here that the hand of Mrs. Taylor when she became Mrs. Mill can be seen.

For once they were married, poor Mill appears to have submitted everything to her for approval — even what he thought of political economy. A Freethinker all his life, he even wrote in his *Three Essays on Religion* a lot of nonsense about Jesus which brought forth one of G. W. Foote's most vigorous replies. Foote had no illusions on that score, and quoted, when two friends asked Talleyrand to settle a dispute, his famous question, "Who is the woman?" There is no doubt whatever that the death of his adored wife disturbed Mill's judgment and thus gave Christian writers a marvellous eulogy of their Deity from which to quote.

But it is one thing to repudiate the "beggarly Elements" as they were called, and quite another to throw over Neo-Malthusianism; and there is plenty of evidence to show that he held it certainly to the last years of his life without being an active propagandist. But with an adored wife and Victorian respectability surrounding him, can we wonder that Mill preferred to keep quiet on two subjects, Freethought and contraception, considered the very height of ignorance and obscenity.

If the reader would like to know a little more about Mill, he should turn to the famous *Autobiography*, to the essay *On Liberty* and to the highly sentimentalised *Subjection of Women*. They show him as a great intellectual repressing many of man's natural instincts. It is perhaps idle to speculate as to whether his relations with his wife were no more than Froude once proclaimed about Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle. For that, if true, he had to thank his upbringing, and the attitude of Mrs. Mill. Her first husband found her "reactions rather trying," we are told, "particularly her habit of continuous arguing." Yet there is no doubt that she inspired Mill to write, and

the more Harriet saw of him and the better she came to know his pure and lucid mind, the more enraptured she became with this auburn-haired, clear-featured, and refined young man who was so obviously destined for greatness. . . . John carried his feeling for Harriet into all his occupations, and with Harriet it was the same. They became the heart of each other's existence. . . .

Mill's great work *A System of Logic*, came out in 1843, and Dr. Borchard points out it was the year which produced "an astonishing output of classics to be; Macaulay's *Essays*, Carlyle's *Past and Present*, Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Borrow's *Bible in Spain*, Lytton's *Last of the Barons*; Thackeray, Tennyson, Browning, Landor, Leigh Hunt, de Quincey, were all actively writing; James Wilson founded the *Economist*, and was soon joined by Herbert Spencer as sub-editor." What a treat of great literature is here exposed! Truly there were giants in those days.

Moreover, the first edition of Mill's *Logic* attained a great success, and was soon sold out. One wonders whether these days many publishers would expect, even if they published such a work, to sell out the first edition as quickly as Mill sold his? His fame soon reached the continent where, especially in France, Stuart Mill became one of the great names in philosophy and economics. But the influence of Harriet Taylor "can hardly be over estimated", says Dr. Borchard, "Whatever influence Mill exerted in his own time and over English history must be equally ascribed to Harriet. And the strong impetus given by his books towards socialism and the present welfare state must certainly be attributed more to Harriet than to Mill himself." Yet it is only fair to point out that "the great body of his writing is so decidedly liberal that his socialism has always seemed ambiguous" as Dr. Borchard admits.

Mill worked at the old India House and retired in 1858 on a pension of £1500 which, in those days, was decidedly generous. But towards the end of the year, his wife died and despairingly he cried, "The spring of my life is broken." He was to survive her for fifteen years, his fame gathering with the passing of time. One passage he wrote in his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* we Freethinkers should never forget. Dean Mansel claimed that we should worship "a supreme Being", and Mill retorted,

Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing which he shall not do; he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no being good, who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell will I go.

John Stuart Mill was known as the "Saint of Rationalism", and perhaps this book explains why; or perhaps it does not. It is worth reading nevertheless for Dr. Borchard has splendidly succeeded in painting him for us as a man and — in my opinion — not at all as a Saint.

Review

Seeds of Life, by John Langdon-Davies (Watts and Co., 1957. 12s. 6d. net. 172 pages).

The works of John Langdon-Davies fall into two categories; those on science from the standpoint of an informed layman and those on European politics—particularly since he took up residence there, in regard to Spain.

This present work is one of the former class, and readers of his *Science and Common Sense*; *Man and His Universe*; *Inside the Atom*, etc. will wish to add this to their collection. The basic attitude of this author to science is a desire to take the brute facts by the scruff of the neck and interpret them according to the needs of the emotions. With the layman's characteristic respect for the findings and opinions of the expert, he accepts unreservedly the materialistic scheme of things offered by science, and then proceeds to ask, in the manner of Mr. Blackham and the Humanists, what can we *make* of the facts? Let us find inspiration in the only immortality we know possible, that of our present actions percolating down to infinity in the chain of causes we have helped to initiate in this life. Let us preserve the only God left for us, as a name for the Energy of the Universe.

One could, of course, point out that energy does not behave like the Bible God or any other God, and there is thus a hopeless confusion of terms. But in face of such criticism one can hear him protesting, "Stop explaining things! Start marvelling at them!" Explain the strange habits of the Pronuba moth? he asks on page 67, "Is it not better to wonder at them?"

Seeds of Life is the story of sex from the amoeba to man, and in 178 pages this can only be done by a method of rigorous elimination and selection. Oddities like the snail come in, as one would suppose, for special mention and the mechanism of courtship, pregnancy and reproduction are dealt with faithfully by an author with uncommon descriptive powers. For instance:

I remember one morning watching the behaviour of a battery of hens in a highgrade chicken farm. It was a lovely sight. There were about fifty superb snow-white hens, each with her bright red ornaments, looking like ballet dancers with coral earrings; and, among them, a snow-white cock of truly majestic size, shape, and with male scarlet head ornaments. The hens wandered about among themselves murmuring quietly and occasionally pecking at something on the ground, restless, aimless. Suddenly drawing a deep breath, raising his throat and head high above the crowd, the cock began to crow. Every hen was frozen in her place at the first sound; they listened with what seemed a mixture of terror and hope, a shudder went

through them and every pair of coral ear adornments waggled to and fro. Whether the cock is an expert at discriminating between one waggle and another, I do not know, but after a pause during which he seemed to see every hen out of the corner of his eye, he sprang at one and mated with her. At once life became normal again and remained so for five minutes, when the same piercing cock crow started them all through the same cycle once more.

This is no text book, or anything approaching one, but will give the general reader an interesting taste of a fascinating subject. Occasionally I wonder if he is apt to take the statements of individual scientists for "gospel", and I am far from convinced that "it is even possible to calculate how long it will take before the descendants of the terrible moment at Hiroshima reveal the delayed action of the atom bomb." (p.108) It is of course probable that Japanese who were exposed to the radioactivity are now carrying mutated spermatozoa. It is also even more probable that such mutations would be injurious and no doubt lethal. But an exact calculation of the time factor is another matter.

G. H. TAYLOR

The Wonder That Shall Be

By GORDON CAULFEILD

Surely any book which throws fresh light upon humanity's long struggle with life should be considered more worthy than diamonds, more prized than gold. Such a book shares with us the most thrilling of all quests, the search for new knowledge and helps us to see and to grasp and to better ourselves and our environment. Such a book surely is James Harvey Robinson's *The Mind in the Making* in the Thinker's Library. I have recently been rereading this fine book and would like to note some of Robinson's observations. Professor of History at Columbia University for many years and President of the American Historical Association, Robinson also organised the New School For Social Research in New York.

He observes how people today support their preconceptions and "uncritically accepted beliefs and customs" by trying to find reasons to justify them. They don't honestly examine them. Modern psychologists call this rationalizing which is "clearly only a new name for a very ancient thing." He suggests that perhaps almost all that now passes for social science, economics, ethics, may be brushed aside in the future as mainly rationalizing. He says that John Dewey in *Reconstructions In Philosophy* already has reached this conclusion concerning philosophy, and observes: "It will become apparent as we proceed that the fact that an idea is ancient and that it has been widely received is no argument in its favour, but should immediately suggest the necessity of carefully testing it as a probable instance of rationalization."

This certainly strengthens the view that speaking of the mere endurance of the Bible is no proof of goodness.

Of people blindly accepting social life, he says: "In every age the prevailing conditions of civilisation have appeared quite natural and inevitable to those who grew up in them." Charles Duff, in *This Human Nature*, gives us an extreme example of this acceptance. He speaks of the brutal butchery of fellow creatures at the ancient circuses in Rome, and yet the Latin writers of the time accepted this with either approval or indifference. Both the butchery and the writers grew out of the same social environment.

Not only the Bible but much of the totality of social thought today is false and unobservational. Robinson writes: "It is certain, as many anthropologists have pointed out, that customs, savage ideas, and primitive

sentiments have continued to form an important part of our own culture down even to the present day." Of course, the Bible is a prime example, and A. D. Howell Smith well shows (*In Search of the Real Bible*) its "savage ideas, and primitive sentiments." Of particular interest here are observations of Charles Duff, writing of a talk by an eminent psychiatrist, Dr. Brock Chisholm, to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. "In his [Chisholm's] view, our crisis was simply a crisis made acute by our long and steady refusal to recognise the primitive behaviour which is at the root of 'our method of competitive survival.'" Duff quotes: "The guides we use to human behaviour are uncertain charts, obsolete bearings resting on premises as naïve as a flat world, old folk-tales, the loyalties and magic we learned in our childhood."

"The chief strength of the Greeks," observes Robinson, "lay in their freedom from hampering intellectual tradition. They had no venerated classics, no holy books, no dead languages to master, no authorities to check their free speculation. As Lord Bacon reminds us, they had no antiquity of knowledge and no knowledge of antiquity." Perhaps modern society does not begin to realise what an incredible overall price it is paying for its continued adherence to Biblical and other false and unobservational myths. The losses are so terrible and the potential gains so great and wonderful, that surely we should do everything we can to try to clear our minds of all myths.

The humanist, the rationalist, the secularist, is the true harbinger of humankind's new Spring of Life.

Tom Mosley Hits Back

THE N.S.S.'s popular Vice-President, Mr. T. M. Mosley, like so many of our readers, often takes part in the correspondence columns of local newspapers. Here are both the letter in the journal which occasioned his reply and the crushing rejoinder:

ABSURD?

Will Mr. Mosley please answer these questions:

- (1) By what authority he claims that religion is an "absurd theology"?
- (2) Does he believe in a Supreme Being?
- (3) After studying the wonders of the universe, can he honestly say that his knowledge is so vast that he has the right to say that anything is an "absurd theology"?

By the same token others can say his is an absurd theology.
Stapleford. R.A.

THREE ANSWERS

In reply to the three questions by your correspondent R.A.:

- (1) My authority for saying theologies are absurd is my own reasonings and reflections after reading many textbooks of different theological systems. They do not deal with objective realities.
- (2) The term Supreme Being is vague and may mean many things from the Anthropomorphic God of a Billy Graham to the Pantheistic Deity of Spinoza. Einstein, who was an atheist, once admitted he could accept the God of Spinoza, which is just a name for the sum total of the All.
- (3) The "Wonders of the Universe" include cancer and T.B. germs, the many loathsome creatures in nature which destroy millions of human lives. This cannot be squared with Theism. Agnostics do not talk about the "vastness of their knowledge" but leave that to the theologians who pretend to go beyond natural forces and "explain" to us the supernatural. This is why theologies are just words—meaningless phrascologies.
T. M. MOSLEY.

63 Valley Road, Carlton.

CORRESPONDENCE

DISENDOWMENT

Still retaining "Disendowment of the State Church" as one of the aims of the N.S.S., we are 20 years behind the times as the Church has not been endowed since the Tithe Act (1936).

No Secularist should be satisfied at protesting against *State* endowment of religion while raising no criticism of *private* endow-

ment which is the chief source of the wealth of all religions. Surely, if we object to the minds of the living generation being determined by the wealth left by generations dead and gone, then we must also be critical of *private endowment in perpetuity* of any belief. All wealth, whether in land, property, or stocks, should after a certain period revert to public ownership. The Uthwait Report suggested for land a period of 99 years, which seems fair.
JAMES R. HOWES.

FROM A PARSON

I have recently read a pamphlet written by Chapman Cohen, entitled "Did Jesus Christ Exist?" Allow me, please, to make one or two comments on statements in this pamphlet. Whatever criticisms are levelled at the N.T. Gospels, these are generally accepted by scholars of repute as historical documents. Mr. Cohen must be unaware of the evidence in the writings of a non-Christian historian who witnessed the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70—Josephus. This Jew faithfully chronicles the life and character of Jesus of Nazareth. Allow me to correct Mr. Cohen's assertion that the inspiration of the N.T. was decided by majority vote. The Church simply came with universal conviction to unanimously and officially recognise as Canonical those books which for considerable time had proved to be without doubt authentic.

Concerning the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, Dr. Stanley Jones has rightly observed that "The Virgin life of Christ proves his Virgin birth." A supernatural life necessitates a supernatural birth. If it be allowed that hundreds of gods were born of virgins on December 25th, these do not of necessity or logically negative the veracity of the Christmas Story of the Gospels. Because thousands of people were born on November 16th, this in no way makes my own birth on that day as fictitious.
ROLAND H. MEYER.

[It is interesting to note that a virgin life proves a virgin birth. By the same token we must suppose all bachelors to be born of bachelors. As for others being born on Mr. Meyer's birthday, does Mr. Meyer's life accurately duplicate theirs, and do they duplicate one another, in many important particulars? If not, where is the parallel?—Ed.]

OCH AYE!

Mr. F. A. Ridley states that "England conquered Scotland, and therefore became a colony of the English Empire." One wonders where he got his information it certainly could not have been from any reliable source. The Union of 1707 gave Scotland equal rights, but that has been ignored by England on numerous occasions. In a way I am sorry this subject was brought up, but in the interest of truth I could not ignore Mr. Ridley's point regarding the so-called English (British) Empire. It would be much better for the human race if we all forgot our nationality and became citizens of the world.
J. STEWART.

[Mr. F. A. Ridley informs us that he is in complete agreement with Mr. Stewart's concluding sentence and sentiments.—Ed.]

HOLY ANTISEPTICS

I see that the Vatican is being sprayed with antiseptics to protect the Pope from 'flu. Surely a prayer to God from such an important source would be more efficacious! It shows singularly little trust in the Almighty. Rather like the clergyman in a boat during a storm who said the only thing to do was trust in God, at which a passenger cried "Are things as bad as all that?"
MAY A. WATSON.

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