

# The Freethinker

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THE press and radio recently announced an item of news of special interest to both Christians and non-Christian students of modern religious evolution. A "process"—to give it its correct technical name—has just been started in Birmingham, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of that metropolis, to canonise the late John Henry Newman, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church and one of its most eminent writers and thinkers. Newman was a Londoner by birth; actually he was born not very far from the present office of THE FREETHINKER in Holborn—a pure coincidence! But he founded a religious community in the surely rather incongruous industrial atmosphere of the Midland city, and it was in Birmingham that he eventually died. As is common knowledge, Newman was not born in the Roman Catholic communion, but was already an eminent Anglican cleric and Oxford Don when he finally "went over" to Rome at the mature age of 44, in 1845.

What is not so well known is that Newman, though tolerated by Rome on account of his immense intellectual services to Catholicism and of his tremendous contemporary reputation, was never altogether *persona grata* at the Vatican. As his best Catholic biographer quite frankly admits, Newman had a very stormy ecclesiastical career in the Church of Rome and, had he died at the normal age or, at least, at the age then normal, he would not only never have become a "Prince" of the Church, but would actually have died a disappointed man. He was nearly 80 when the astute Pope Leo 13th "cashed in" on the tremendous reputation of the most eminent living Catholic intellectual by making him a Cardinal in 1879. Newman survived his elevation by eleven years, dying in 1890 at the age of 89. If one considers the paucity of men of real intellectual and literary eminence in the Catholic Church in recent centuries, one must surely conclude that the Vatican had not been in any hurry to canonise one of its really illustrious adherents.

## An Eminent Victorian

Though often praised for the wrong reasons and qualities, John Henry Newman was unquestionably a man of outstanding ability, even if—or rather, though—one has to make the qualification that his cast of mind was medieval rather than modern in character. His scholarship was second-hand, and not really scientific. As his younger colleague in the priesthood, Father Anthony—alias Joseph McCabe—was later to point out, as a thinker he was subtle and suggestive, rather than really critical or accurate. There can, we should surmise, rarely have been a less scientific mind than his. On the other hand, the kind of talents appreciated in the medieval era—eloquence, subtlety, controversial skill and, above all, the ability to deduce an arsenal of logical *proof* from an almost invisible acorn of *fact*, of which the Schoolmen, Aquinas and Co., were the masterly exponents—were possessed by Newman to a greater degree than by any of his religious contempo-

aries. And, of course, he was a really magnificent writer, a master of literary lucidity, besides being a quite considerable religious poet. The author of *The Dream of Gerontius* and *Lead, Kindly Light*, ranks, perhaps, only a few degrees below his fellow Catholics, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Francis Thompson? None the less, and despite his remarkable equipment as a Catholic apologist and theologian, Newman was never at ease in the Catholic

Church, nor was the Church at ease with him! Which is perhaps why such a lengthy period has gone by between his death and the start of the process to elevate him. We do not know yet, of course, whether his Birmingham sponsors will be successful though, if New-

man ever does become a saint, he will raise the mental level of the celestial hierarchy. To judge from the kind of people upon whom the Vatican has in recent years seen fit to confer posthumous promotion—the Curé D'Arts, Thérèse de Lisieux, etc., etc.—"St. Newman" will find his heavenly confreres depressing.

## Newman as Theologian.

Newman was one of the authentic masters of English prose. But the Church is not likely to take that into account, if we may judge from the literary style of many of its current publications (we have never heard that anyone has proposed to canonise that devoutly unscrupulous Roman Catholic, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, on account of his undeniably excellent literary style). And there are certain obstacles to Newman's elevation. The most serious is that it might be difficult to show that Newman ever worked any *bona fide* "miracles," which is nowadays a technical but essential requirement in the case of every aspirant to sainthood. (Perhaps the present article, supporting Newman's candidature in THE FREETHINKER might be held to qualify as one?) It is Newman as a theologian that Rome is chiefly interested in, and diverse experts have pointed out from time to time that his theological orthodoxy is not above suspicion. He was much too fond of talking about the "inner light" of conscience. But the Church of Rome has enough worldly experience to know that conscience varies with individuals and is, at best, a tricky customer which, as often as not, leads to heretical conclusions. When Newman (in his book, *The Grammar of Assent*) tried to substitute what he termed the "Illative sense"—the subjective reactions of the human conscience—for St. Thomas's solid framework of objective logical proofs of the existence of God and the truth of Christianity, the theologians were not amused! Moreover, in his slashing reply to the Protestant Kingsley (his famous *Apologia*) Newman practically admitted that St. Alphonso Liguori was a liar: a thing which Catholic theologians are not supposed to say about a canonised saint who is also a Doctor of the Church. Such unguarded phrases showed that Newman was almost a Protestant. If his Catholic critics delved into his family history, they would not have been reassured: one brother, Francis, was a notable Deist, while the other, Charles, was

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

## St. Newman?

By F. A. RIDLEY



actually an Atheist—and a contributor to Freethought journals.

### "Development" and Papal Infallibility

On the ground of the above, and other, delinquencies, Newman was nearly excommunicated. Why, then, did he end up on earth as a Cardinal and, perhaps in Heaven as a saint? His contemporary reputation supplies a partial, but not a complete, explanation: his equally famous and much more influential colleague, Cardinal Manning, nearly became Pope—so did an earlier English Cardinal, Reginald Pole, but no one has proposed to canonise them. One reason was a technical one. Newman's greatest, though not his best-known, book was his *Development of Doctrine* (1845) in which he first expanded the theological theory which forms the only possible intellectual justification for modern Catholicism. Whereas, prior to Newman, it was universally held that, to be acceptable, a dogma of the Church must be shown to have been held (in the words of St. Vincent of Lerins, a famous authority in the early Church) "always, everywhere and by all," Newman argued that this was not really necessary. All that one need do was to prove that any particular dogma had been "implicit" in the theological system of early Christianity, and that it could be "developed" by the Church whenever this was deemed necessary.

All of which may sound very technical and unimportant! Actually the theory was a revolutionary one, and Newman, more than any other man, is to be regarded as the creator of modern Roman Catholicism. Take, for example, the Dogma of Papal Infallibility, only proclaimed in 1870. This could not possibly be justified on the older theory of Vincent of Lerins, for, though known in antiquity, it had not then been accepted "everywhere and by all." But it could be and *is* now defended as a development of an idea always known in the Church, not proclaimed dogmatically until particular circumstances made it necessary. The more recent Dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary represents another example of the way the "Development" theory has worked in practice. Cardinal Newman is, perhaps, to modern Catholic theology what St. Thomas was to medieval Catholicism.

### St. Newman

We do not wish to prejudice Newman's chances of posthumous promotion at the Vatican by supporting his elevation too openly! But we must say we think it would be an act of elementary gratitude on the part of the Church which Newman served with such conspicuous brilliance and devotion. Besides which, we are interested in raising Heaven's intellectual level, and we think that the great Cardinal would be an immense improvement on the average run of saints, whose celestial holiness is so often equalled by their terrestrial stupidity.

## GOD

WHAT, NOW, have people in mind when they speak about God? It would be strictly true to say of a very large number of people nowadays: Nothing at all. To most it serves as a narcotic rather than as offering any kind of explanation. The metaphysician beclouds the matter by talking of the Absolute, identifying it with the God of theology. The theistic physicist identifies it with some principle of force. Others are content to talk vaguely of some "Principle." . . . Can we conceive any really religious person praying to an abstract principle, or entering into communion with a characterless "Absolute"?—CHAPMAN COHEN.

I do not believe that any type of religion should ever be allowed to be introduced into the public schools of the United States.—THOMAS A. EDISON.

## Secularism

### Roman Catholic and Apostolic Variety

By PIERRE LAMARQUE

UPON THE 23RD OF MARCH LAST, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII addressed 15,000 Italians, his Roman compatriots.

"Some people," declared His Holiness, "fear that Christianity is not prepared to render unto Cæsar what Jesus Christ bids it concede; as though the legal and reasonable conduct of secular affairs by the State was not a fundamental principle of the Catholic Church."

Might we not conclude from statements of such a character that the Pope was about to apply for membership of our League for Secular Education on the international plane, so as to give full effect to the teaching of his Church? Up to the present time, however, his application had not yet been announced either by *Osservatore Romano* (the Vatican official journal) or by the Vatican radio.

But the *Syllabus* (1864) is still in force. There we shall find the following general principles energetically condemned: That the Church does not possess either direct or indirect Temporal Power. "The Church ought to be separated from the State, and the State from the Church." It is perhaps possible to admit that the Church does, by virtue of its influence over the masses, still retain an indirect power in secular affairs without directly affecting the secular character of the State, but how can we continue to assert the secular character of the State if the Church claims a direct Temporal Power?

Again, what are we to think when we read the Encyclical Letter *Humanum Generis*, in which Pope Leo XIII confirmed the *Syllabus*?

"The claim that the State should have no religious basis, and should administer secular society as though God did not exist, represents a monstrous assertion."

The conclusion of this argument cannot be too widely known!

"The complete administration of the public schools ought not to be entrusted solely to the civic power—public institutions of education, which specialise in higher education ought not to be completely divorced from the authority of the Church."

It is not only education which is included in this definition. The Catholic Church does not admit the possibility of a completely secularised civic State. We have already noted the opinion of the Professor of Canon Law, Nicholas Jung. As for the legal system, it must always be under the jurisdiction of the hierarchy. The Prato judges, who have sentenced Mgr. Fiordelli (Bishop of Prato) for defamation of character, are either excommunicated or under the threat of excommunication. If their wives go to confession at Easter, one groans—or perhaps smiles?—when one thinks what reactions they will get, as a result.

Hence, if the Church claims effective control of both popular education and civil law, besides exercising its own proper ecclesiastical jurisdiction, how much is left of the secular character of the State?

It is perhaps true that the Church still asserts that conception of the separation of powers which it used to recognise when, after casting out heretics from its bosom, it "relaxed" them to the secular power for the express purpose of removing them from this world. But among its present faithful adherents, are there not some who feel a nostalgic longing to return to this happy era?

[Translated by F. A. Ridley from *L'Action Laïque*, Journal of the French Secular Education League, May 1958.]



# The Problem of Catholic Criminality

By DR. J. V. DUHIG

AT THE CATHOLIC secondary boarding school I attended, run by a community of Holy Brothers, in the same year we had, at the school, four boys who were later guilty of very serious crime. They went to Mass every morning, to Confession and Communion every month, said all the necessary prayers, fasted on Fridays, attended a "Retreat" once a year and had weekly religious instruction. If, then, religion has any good effect, this should have been *it*. But the four boys ended as follows: W was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death a year or two after he left school. He served a commuted life sentence of nearly 40 years. X became a habitual criminal, being addicted to robbery with violence, and spent most of his useless life in gaol. Y got 14 years for embezzlement of trust funds—he was a solicitor—and served the sentence. On discharge he arrived in Brisbane with a roll of suiting material stolen from the prison tailor shop. Within two years he was back in gaol for a further sally into the embezzlement field. Z, also a solicitor, was a trustee for a fund set up in North Queensland—with a very numerous Italian population on the canefields—by Mussolini for settlement of Italian Fascist Catholics. The R.C. bishop received the money and handed it over to the solicitor Z. This latter embezzled the lot and judicial proceedings were started against him. He came to Brisbane and saw me with a view, I presume, of swinging some political influence in his favour. I naturally did nothing for him beyond receiving an old classmate cordially. At any rate, the charges were dropped, because, I heard, of the big chance of scandal developing out of the receipt of money by the bishop from an Axis power on the eve of World War II.

At this school, lying and theft were not only commonplace but part of the boys' routine activity. My own teacher tried many times to seduce me homosexually and used to come into class next day very much under the influence of whisky and bash me across the teeth for (invariably) repulsing his advances. The Brothers regularly encouraged the boys to play as footballers well over age in teams supposed to be below a certain age limit, the most flagrant dishonesty in this line being the entry of a grossly faked sport record on behalf of a candidate for a Rhodes Scholarship. A rigged quarter-mile race was run for him with all the other entrants instructed to run "dead"; he was entered as College quarter-mile champion, although he had never run in a race in his life; a good runner could have walked the distance faster than he ran it. He got the Rhodes Scholarship sure enough and later became an Australian Chief Justice.

Catholics seem to be particularly prone to lying and theft. Very often, in embezzlement cases before the courts, either as trustee or bailee, the offender seems to have an Irish name, indicating that he has had the "inestimable advantage of a sound Catholic religious training."

Now it is evident from the figures from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Leeds, Holland, U.S.A., New Zealand, Victoria and New South Wales that the Catholic religion, if it does not actually promote crime, does nothing to prevent it. The Glasgow brutal multi-murderer Manuel has a very devout Catholic mother. The phenomenon of Catholic criminality is world-wide. What is the reason?

Primarily it is threefold. First, all the Catholic is required to do is to conform to Catholic belief as best he can—a difficult feat, since not a priest or a bishop knows

exactly what it is—but at least there are certain set observances which if carried out are guaranteed to protect the Catholic against the "wiles of the devil." With these observances, morality begins and ends. With weak-minded persons, and Catholics as a whole are not noted for their brain-power, an assumption of total duty would coincide with ritual and prayer; all that matters is "salvation." In all this, Confession plays an important and sinister part. A crime or wrong committed can be wiped out on Saturday afternoon and a new start is thus possible. And the new start in crime frequently starts, as the crime statistics unequivocally indicate. The miraculous medals and the indulgences absolve the faithful from serious thought of consequences; so that the whole set-up seems as if specially designed to promote anti-social conduct, the normal social inhibitions not operating in the case of Catholics.

Second, the perilous habit of bishops and priests of segregating Catholics from the general population in social clubs, sport, cultural activity, so that Catholics never have a chance of learning the common idea of popular morality on which Common Law is based. And Catholics never see themselves as pariahs but as a class privileged by their god.

And lastly, the influence of women. In most countries women are less well educated and informed than men; they have most to do with children and seem instinctively prone to believe in magic. I have questioned many Catholic women as to why they believe in the wretched system and the unvaried reply is that the priest knows more than they do—to me a very doubtful proposition—and they are prepared to take his word. When I point out that the priest lives in a fine house, has plenty of liquor and girls if he wants them, with no responsibility incurred, of course, a fine motor-car, and that there never was a priest on the dole, as against the slum home, the mass of kids to feed and educate, the hopeless future without any amenities and not the remotest hope of a car, the women shrug and say, "Anyhow, he can bring me and my kids luck in the hereafter." Women are incurable believers in the Cinderella legend and they all think they one day may be Cinderella with a fairy prince and a coach and six and that the priest will make good magic for them. So the mothers are the moulders of their children's thoughts and morality, if any. Of what use as an ethical guide is a superstitious, ignorant, slum-dwelling mother? These are the recruits to Catholicism and their material misery and the pie-in-the-sky outlook must produce a high proportion of delinquents and criminals; they have no idea of morality outside the narrow, anti-human talk of the priests.

When, at the top, we find the Pope getting his nephew financial directorships and huge financial gains and getting him made Ambassador for Costa Rica to the Vatican, thereby avoiding, by diplomatic privilege, payment of Italian income tax, we can believe that, in the field of morality, anything is possible for a Catholic.

One of the worst frauds of Catholicism is that here in Queensland, the R.C. Church, to escape heavy debts for municipal rates during the depression, made a dirty deal with a Labour government, in return for the Catholic block vote, to abolish all rates of any description whatever on all and every Church property. This criminal con-

(Concluded on next page)



## This Believing World

**Extraordinary what peculiar ideas** eminent men sometimes have of Atheism. In a number of *Forum*, which is published by the World Congress of Faiths, Sir John Marshall, M.A., a well-known archæologist and a Gold Medallist, tells us that "as often as not" an Atheist "will tell you he cannot believe in a merciful and loving God" who permits pain and suffering to mankind. The fact is that Atheists do not believe in a God because there is no evidence whatever for his existence. The questions and problems of pain and suffering come into the argument, of course, but only because people like Sir John try to enthuse over what he calls "the glory of Christianity," and the undying faith of Christians in "the all-loving God revealed by Jesus Christ."

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**The truth is that while most** if not all Atheists have an intimate knowledge of Christianity—and of other religions as well—the champions of Christianity appear to have only the haziest ideas of Atheism; and they really think that their puerile arguments in favour of "our Lord" are unanswerable. In this they are supported by the BBC and ITA, who now can so easily "demolish" Freethought with their programmes "about" religion, always taking care that under no circumstances *outright* unbelievers are allowed to appear.

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**In this connection it is interesting** to note that Miss Sarah Jenkins of the *News Chronicle* was "surprised to read that according to the chairman of the BBC, Sir Arthur Forde, in the BBC staffs there was 'a complete belief in the importance of the love of God'"—and surprised Miss Jenkins asks, "Does that mean atheists are barred from Broadcasting House?" She should have answered her own question—of course they are, as far as it is humanly possible. But it just is *not* possible.

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**The "News Chronicle" TV expert, Philip Purser,** has no doubt of it. He admits that the question as to whether the conglomeration of Salvation Army bands with Roman Catholic High Mass and pop style hymns really serves religion or not "is a matter sometimes disputed," but "few Churchmen invited to appear on TV refuse." Their job is to keep their jobs as God's elect on earth, and the BBC's producer, Michael Beddington, is doing so well with religion that even that imbecile "Lift Up Your Hearts" programme on sound radio "gets a terrific mail." It looks as if Bradlaugh, Foote, and Co. in the old days had an easy task compared with the religious publicity modern Freethought has to face.

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**All the same, some people are never satisfied.** For here we have the Archbishop of York, Dr. Ramsey, publicly stating that the Church "ought to be making a greater impact upon the modern outlook which put Christianity out of the picture." He objected to people going to cinemas, listening to the radio, reading novels, "on the assumption that religion and God have no place on the map." If this is really true, what about the "terrific mail" the BBC gets about "Lift Up Your Hearts"? Somebody is not telling the truth.

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**The Bishop of Coventry has just found out** that "there is a lot of paganism in this country," and that people without Faith "are just rag and bones." Well, what does he think of Shakespeare? J. H. Green says of him, "It is hard indeed to say whether he had any religious belief or no . . .

on the deeper grounds of religious faith his silence is significant." So the greatest writer of all time must be, for the gallant Bishop, just mere "rag and bones"! Still, Dr. Bardsley is full of hope, for he is quite certain that "a full-scale theological revival" is coming. But even with the full-scale backing of the BBC, TV, and ITV, his prophecy looks like being falsified. No prophecies have ever failed like those prophesying modern religious revivals.

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**The Mother of God was singularly negligent** towards five girls from her convent at Upper Norwood, London, during a bathing episode at Brighton on June 24th. The girls got out of their depth, were swept away, and were being pounded against the Palace Pier supports. Fortunately, men showed more promptitude than Our Lady, and the girls were rescued, given artificial respiration, and then taken to hospital. We have little doubt, though, that the Mother Superior and her nuns will express thanks to God and the B.V.M. for the girls' escape.

## A Scientist on the Supernatural

"I CANNOT ACCEPT THE VIEW, which has found favour in some quarters, that the operation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics constitutes scientific evidence for a supernatural creation at a particular time in a not infinitely distant past. Such a view would indeed dispose of our problem, but not, to my mind, in a legitimate way. Our object in science is to give a natural, rational account of things, not to invoke inscrutable, *ad hoc* powers to explain them away. No one would admit the validity of accounting separately for every observation we make as a supernatural result of the divine will. Such an explanation would be rejected, not necessarily because it was felt to be 'untrue,' but because it would be irrelevant. If, then, we postulate a supernatural creation on scientific grounds, it can only be because we have got into a difficulty from which we can see no escape. The proper course in that case is to try again, or else admit that we are beaten. It is not fair to insist on a rational explanation of easy things and fall back upon supernaturalism for the difficult ones. If we bring in supernatural agencies at one point, we may as well bring them in at all points, and save ourselves the trouble of constructing a trivial man-made rational order." —(From the Halley Lecture, 1944, by Professor Herbert Dingle.)

### THE PROBLEM OF CATHOLIC CRIMINALITY

(Concluded from page 211)

spiracy means the theft, in effect of thousands of pounds yearly from the coffers of the local authorities throughout the huge State of Queensland.

The primary citizen duty of contributing to communal expenditure for amenities abdicates before the predatory avarice of a criminal religion. I am not surprised that in a Prisons Department Report, it is recorded that half the criminals in Duke Street Prison, Glasgow, are Catholics: they just would not know any better either from the teaching or the example of their priests.

—NEXT WEEK—

**MATERIALISM OR "EVOLUTIONISM"?**

By G. H. TAYLOR



# THE FREETHINKER

41 GRAY'S INN ROAD, LONDON, W.C.1.

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN 2601.

Hon. Managing Editor: W. GRIFFITHS.

Hon. Editorial Committee:

F. A. HORNIBROOK, COLIN MCCALL and G. H. TAYLOR.

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 welcome during normal office hours.

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Birmingham Institute Cinema, 2nd Floor, Room 8, Ratcliffe Place, Paradise Street).—Sunday, July 6th, 7 p.m.: T. DAWES SMITH, "Dramatic Discoveries."  
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, July 6th, 11 a.m.: W. E. SWINTON, PH.D., "Darwin: Scientific Revolutionary." (Discussing Darwin's Autobiography.)

### OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Every Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MURRAY and SLEMEN.  
Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Every Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. F. HAMILTON, E. MILLS and J. W. BARKER.  
London (Tower Hill).—Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.  
Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: G. WOODCOCK. Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS and WOOD.  
Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Every Wednesday, 1 p.m.; every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Various speakers.  
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).—Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY. Sunday, 11.30 a.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.  
Wales and Western Branch N.S.S. (The Downs, Bristol).—Every Sunday, 6.30 p.m. D. SHIPPER.  
West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday at the Marble Arch from 5 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

## Notes and News

A SMALL party of National Secular Society members visited Northampton on Saturday, June 21st, where they were met at the newly renovated Bradlaugh statue by the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress, Aldermen, Councillors, Librarians and newspapermen. The party was entertained to tea by the genial Alderman Adams, and then adjourned to the Public Library, where a special Bradlaugh exhibition had been arranged. This proved extraordinarily interesting, not surprisingly, considering the stature of the founder of the N.S.S. Time passed quickly and, far too soon the party had to bid reluctant good-byes to their friendly hosts and hostesses, with a firm resolve to return. The party, led by Mr. C. Bradlaugh Bonner, grandson of Bradlaugh, included two people with strong Northampton associations: Mr. F. E. Garley, whose father was Bradlaugh's agent and who himself remembers being victimised at school because of this fact, and Mrs. C. N. Tole of Tonbridge, who was likewise born in the city.

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All Society members should by now have received the National Secular Society's Annual Report (approved at the Whitsuntide Conference)—Branch members from their Honorary Secretaries, Individual members direct from

Head Office. If any have gone astray, please inform the General Secretary at 41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1. A few copies of Mr. R. S. W. Pollard's *Abolish the Blasphemy Laws* are also available for free distribution. Readers particularly interested in this subject should send 3d. in stamps, again to the General Secretary. Supplies of this pamphlet are, it must be emphasised, very limited.

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MR. COLIN MCCALL has received a very nice letter from M. Roger Peyrefitte, author of the superb satire on the Church of Rome, *The Keys of St. Peter*. "Your article, 'Roman Scandals,' and that of Mr. Du Cann on 'The Holy Prepuce,' delighted me," M. Peyrefitte writes. "You and your colleague have said all that I might hope." On the session of the Holy Office on the Holy Prepuce (see Correspondence, April 25th, 1958) M. Peyrefitte says that it is imaginary, but related on the positive instructions of one who was attached to that Supreme Congregation, and so all the details are exact. The rest, he continues, "is built from the diverse positions taken towards that relic by the religious orders and I put each one on the lips of their representatives in the Supreme Congregation." "No one, but me, knows the work asked by those special researches"—he adds—"but the result is encouraging... if someone shows me the text of that 'very old session' (referred to by Mr. Bernard Wall), I'll pay for it very 'cher.'" Readers who have not yet come by *The Keys of St. Peter* should beg, borrow or buy one immediately. Otherwise they are missing a delight of modern literature.

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THE Prime Minister is, it seems, not the only persuasive member of the Macmillan family. In November his brother, Mr. Arthur Macmillan, induced the House of Laity of the Church of England to pass a resolution whereby the Apocrypha was included in the word "Bible" in canon law. And would it be too much to suggest that both brothers have some disdain for the experts? At least, the Steering Committee, consisting mainly of experts on canon law, had sent a message back to the House of Laity stating that "they did not feel this to be necessary to the canon." It availed them nought: the House preferred Mr. Macmillan to the experts and the resolution stands. How many people care? is a question that Mr. Macmillan has probably never asked.

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OTHER features of the House of Laity meeting (June 16th) were the defence of women by Colonels! Colonel G. T. H. Capron of Peterborough thought reference to the conducting of morning and evening prayers by deaconesses "in case of need" was unfortunate. The phrase carried a suggestion of inferiority. Colonel B. St. J. Storrs (Exeter) said the canon regarding "women workers" equated them with charwomen. For once, however, colonels were in advance of their times (a situation perhaps confined to the sphere of religion!) and the strange fact emerged that the Church of England does regard women as inferior to men!

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NOBODY has worked more devotedly for Secularism than Mr. George A. Woodcock, until lately the Literature Secretary of the Manchester Branch of the National Secular Society. Every weekday, rain or fine, for many years now, Mr. Woodcock has brought his platform and case of literature some 15 miles into the centre of Manchester for the lunchtime meetings on the blitzed site at St. Mary's Gate. Now he is having to retire through ill-health. As the Manchester Branch Secretary, Mrs. Hilda Rogals, says, "I don't know what we would have done without him to keep the platform and the literature in the public eye. He will not be easy to replace."



# The Origins of Lourdes

By DR. GUY VALOT

(Concluded from page 208)

I consequently hoped to heaven that the Catholic camp would publish the documents, when I was unable to do it. My dream has come true. The Abbé Laurentin has just issued, through the publishing-house Lethielleux, the first volume of *Authentic Documents on Lourdes*. This book, which costs 1,200 francs (around £1) has been worth its weight in gold to me. Coming from the adverse party, it is in reality, a work which proves that the brilliant history of Lourdes really took root on the dunghill of pious begging and among the contortions of falsehood.

It is difficult to determine the motives which induced the Bishopric, after a delay of one hundred years, to publish its documents; it is probably because the story is so well established, so neatly arranged, that the Bishopric regards it as henceforth invulnerable.

A Jesuit, Fr. Cros, began to entertain doubts about the historicity of the Lasserre "facts"; he had tried to write a history of Lourdes. As a good Jesuit should (*perinde ac cadaver*—just like a corpse) he had a rock-like faith in the miracles of Lourdes, but he thought that Lasserre's falsehoods might recoil upon Lourdes. Ill-luck befell him, the Bishopric withholding the *imprimatur* for eight years. When the *imprimatur* was finally given, most of the best parts had been expunged, nevertheless it had a small sale at Lourdes. I am of the opinion that the worthy Fathers bought up the edition in order to have it destroyed. Fr. Cros wrote, in fact, that in the file of "documents" associated with Henri Lasserre, there was "practically nothing which could be of any use in writing a truthfully objective history of the apparitions."

The Abbé Laurentin is a pious zealot, a member of the International Marian Academy, where one wallows in the most edifying and simple-minded Mariology. A detached mystic, the Abbé Laurentin was unaware that his work would win him the Freethought award of "Simpleton of Honour." It provides us with some priceless gems. Let us quote one. Napoleon I said, "My prefects, my bishops, my policemen." Napoleon III was filled with the same kindly spirit.

But we will collect no further gems, and confine ourselves to examining what new information it contains which can throw light on the cases of Jacomet and Dozous.

## JACOMET CASE

When Commissioner Jacomet left Lourdes on December 14th, 1858, he took away the dossier on the apparitions in his briefcase. He died very piously in Paris in 1873, without having seen anything more than pious fraud in the Lourdes affair. Fr. Cros sought out his widow, but he got a poor reception. The widow Jacomet recalled that Renau had offered her husband the sum of forty thousand gold francs in 1869, but that her husband declined this advantageous offer, saying that Renau was an enemy of religion. Fr. Cros returned empty-handed.

Jacomet's son (after being awarded a prize for catechism) became a teacher in the free education system (Catholic). He bequeathed his father's notes to a priest, who subsequently bequeathed them to another priest, Canon Pasquier, who, before entering a sanatorium, published the dossier on Lourdes "in filial homage to the Holy Virgin." It must be regretted that these have fallen into rather uncatholic hands.<sup>1</sup> The Abbé Laurentin does not inform us that he has published everything, he even declares that he has corrected the spelling mistakes, which, though

numerous, are without documentary interest. Knowing the Abbé Laurentin through his pietistic book, *The Sense of Lourdes*, this passage made me wonder.

On the occasion of her first interrogation on February 21st, 1858, Bernadette Soubirous declared to Jacomet that, at the time of the first apparition, she was going to look for bones, and the Imperial Attorney further elucidated the fact that these bones were to be sold for a few sous, to be used for making animal charcoal. In short, in looking for one vendable commodity, Bernadette stumbled upon another—the Holy Virgin! It was considered much more poetic to write that she had gone out to look for firewood. Truth is stranger than fiction.

At the end of her interrogation of February 21st, while Jacomet was advising her to discontinue her visits to the Grotto, Bernadette replied "All right, I promise not to go back to the Grotto again, but," she said to me, weeping copiously, 'I want to ask you a favour. Papa and Mamma are against you in this, so you must forbid them to force me to go to the Grotto, I am fed up with it, and don't want to go there any more.'"

We likewise note that in his report to the prefect of March 24th, 1858, Jacomet wrote: "The fountain, to which marvellous cures are credited, is besieged by healthy people who come to draw the water to carry it away, and by sick people, of all ages and of both sexes, who have themselves bathed and rubbed on the affected parts. Needless to say, sir, that up to the present, it has been impossible to detect the slightest favourable effect produced by this water on the sick who use it."

## THE DOZOUS CASE

Evidently something very different was written at a later period by Dr. Dozous, the contriver of the spurious miracle-cure of the blindness of Louis Bouriette on February 27th, 1858.

I have noted a passage in a letter in the National Archives, dated April 14th, 1858, and written by the very pious imperial attorney of Lourdes Latour to his superior, the Attorney General, Falconnet. "Dr. Dozous, formerly physician at the Lourdes Hospice, was dismissed from his position two years ago. He has nursed, we are informed, a very strong resentment over this... M. Dozous, who formerly expressed opinions which were anything but favourable on the visions, which he called farces, and on the visionary, who, according to him, was nothing but a hussy, suddenly changed his line."

I have no further information on Dr. Dozous, nor do I need any, because, if he had been unfairly dismissed, he had thus found an opportunity of taking his revenge, and if he had been justly dismissed, it would prove that he was a despicable person. The Abbé Laurentin does not publish Dr. Dozous' chief literary performance, a small work published at Tarbes in 1853, entitled *A Letter on the Use of the Sulphurous Thermal Waters of Cauterets*, which was nothing more than a prefiguration of the later use of the Lourdes water as a panacea. As early as 1853, the waters of Cauterets could cure 90% of all human ills, according to the illustrious Dozous.

Understandably enough, all Catholic authors maintain a complete silence about this book, and describe Dr. Dozous as an atheist physician. An atheist! What unmitigated humbug! Dr. Dozous was physician to the Seminary of Saint Pé. Is this a position which an atheist physician



would be given? The question answers itself.

In 1848, the beginning of Dr. Dozous' misfortunes, the Mayor of Lourdes and the Hospice Commission of Lourdes demanded his dismissal. For eight years Dr. Dozous clung on like a leech, and accumulated false certificates and testimonials. He had himself sent away on sick-leave, but this was a ruse. He went to Cauterets, not as a patient, but to study and practise. He tried to launch the waters of Cauterets as a panacea. The venture failed. He provoked Captain Martin to a duel, and then refused to fight. According to the report of the sub-prefect Duloé, Dr. Dozous' conduct had been "tortuous, disloyal and indelicate in the highest degree," and although he had accused the mayor of being an erstwhile republican (and therefore his political enemy), his dismissal after eight years of delays was finally irrevocable.

Such is the disquieting figure of the creator of Lourdes, the famous Dr. Dozous, devout Catholic, devoted Bonapartist, but so corrupt, so simoniacal that no one would have the temerity to defend him. The temple merchants will, however, have their rake-off, amounting to 35 thousand million francs (around £30,000,000), according to official forecasts, a magnificent sum, and I am hereby filing the claim that one of the streets of Lourdes should be named after Dr. Dozous. Believe me, it is hardly likely to happen for some time yet.

<sup>1</sup>We remark that the manuscripts from the Dead Sea are entirely in the hands of religious believers (Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Mahomedans). These manuscripts contain material which could overthrow conventional Christology, and, along with it, Catholicism and Protestantism, and some apprehension may be felt that the more compromising passages (on the prefiguration of Christ) may be in danger of being destroyed by pious hands.

[Translated from the French Freethought paper, *La Raison*, by D. Joseph.]

## Angry God

By A. R. WILLIAMS

ANGRY GODS of Greece, Rome and Scandinavia were capable of fierce retribution upon those who offended them, as Jove hurling his thunderbolts or Thor smiting with his hammer. Ancient mythologies abound with examples of theocratic revenge for slights of deific power.

Jehovah of the Bible boasts of being a jealous God, but more often he was an angry one. His punishments of transgressors were richly varied in range, as drowning the whole populace of the world except one family of eight persons; raining down fire from heaven upon cities, and sending pestilence to afflict the inhabitants of a country.

All manner of instruments were employed by angry Jehovah. Once he sent a lion to kill a disobedient prophet, while the ass upon which he rode remained untouched. On reading the Old Testament one finds asses to have been used on other occasions as implements of God's policy, as Balaam's ass saw the sword-armed angel barring his passage before his rider did. One can decide that the silly ass was a favourite of God.

Those who seek further horrific or entertaining details should read the Bible and study the angry God in full performance.

Coming to Christian times the angry deity seems to operate differently. As one of his poets put it

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform."

In medieval days he signalled his wrath through the agency of the dominant Church. Thus Crusaders and Spanish cavaliers slaughtered infidels; Holy Inquisition rooted out, tortured and burnt Jews and heretics; recalcitrant Albigenes were exterminated; Massacre of Saint Bartholomew taught stiffnecked Protestants what to

expect; and Teutonic Knight of Christ harried and plundered Central Europe. Other playful instances of God's anger as expressed through Mother Church can be found.

The naval expedition to bring England back into the fold of the faithful went badly astray, only a few of Philip the Second's Armada limping back to Spanish ports. In an access of inside theological knowledge Elizabeth and her Ministers announced "God blew, and they were scattered."

Was he angry then, or tired of the whole business, or contemptuous of the claims upon his prerogative? Because it is notable that of recent years God's anger has become very much modified.

In the Book of Common Prayer the Anglican Church still has "A Commination, That Is, A Denouncing Of God's Anger And Judgments Against Sinners." Nowadays one may read it with a good deal of merriment.

In modern practice God's anger appears singularly feeble, if not inept, and shockingly capricious. He is angry if one buys a pint of beer in Wales on Sunday, but not so in England. Sunday games in Scotland anger him, but he permits the English to sport nearly unrestricted. A number of other instances may be given wherein it is noticeable that God gets angrier with Celts and Afrikaners than he does with Englishmen.

Why should God be so good-tempered toward the English instead of angry with them? Is it because they stay away from his Church so much?

## When did Immortality Begin?

By LEONARD MARTIN (S. AFRICA)

AT WHAT STAGE in man's evolution do Christians suppose immortality commenced? It must have been suddenly if at all! Obviously one cannot be *partly* immortal; it is one of those things that either are or are not.

Then if mankind is assumed to live for ever after death, how about animals? They are as alive as we are. And if the Christian is prepared to grant the survival of death in the animal realm, exactly how many, and which, are to enjoy the privilege of immortality? Surely they will jib at granting a future life to a flea or a tapeworm in some bodiless state.

It can be understood how the illusion of immortality has arisen. No one can think of himself as dead. How, then, did this fact of death make itself manifest? It was from observing the death of other beings, either human or animal. Suppose a man had grown up quite alone and had never witnessed death. The probability is that, if he reflected upon it at all, he would conclude that his life, which was all the life he knew, would simply go on and on and on. But the fact of death enters his visual experience. He infers his own future death from that of his fellows. "I, like them, am a human being," he will argue, "so, like them, I must one day die."

If they had died through sheer old age, which few ever do, the position might be different. But they died before they had realised their hopes, fulfilled their tasks or travelled all their journey. Hence the longing for a future time in which to put things right.

The whole orthodox Christian religion depends on the belief that Christ died and rose again. No resurrection, no Christianity. After the crucifixion and forty more days on earth, so the superstition goes, Christ rose to Heaven in the sight of his followers. He was conveniently taken up by being "swallowed up into a cloud" and was not seen again. How convenient is that cloud! Suppose there had been no cloud. Christ would have been seen getting smaller



and smaller as he ascended until finally too small to be seen. What would be his destination? We are told nothing of the freezing temperatures he would certainly encounter. The compilers of the story could know nothing of these difficulties besetting their narrative, or about the atmosphere getting thinner. The story is typical of the times and of the ignorance of physical facts.

Believers will, of course, be told he was a miracle-working God. But the whole point of the Gospel story is that Jesus was a human being like the rest of us. So you have to take it both ways as suits the occasion: man on one occasion, god on another, according to convenience.

Nor did they consider space as without boundary. Heaven, Earth and Hell were like three simple storeys of a building. If you rose up so far you were, *ipso facto*, in Heaven. But the physical Heaven is dead, even in many Churches; it has become "a state," not a place. Yet every year the Churches continue to celebrate or commemorate the physical ascension as if humanity had not learnt any astronomy.

Now that the physical side has proved untenable the immortality school has abandoned that aspect and retreated into the spiritual and invisible—and therefore less obviously refutable!

## CORRESPONDENCE

### ROBERT BLATCHFORD

In reply to the query as to whether Blatchford ever changed the materialistic views enunciated in *God and My Neighbour*, the answer is a definite *no*. It is true that after going to a Spiritualistic seance on the death of his wife, he thought he heard her speaking, but he refused to go to another, and, according to his biographer, did eventually give up whatever he thought of Spiritualism. If Robert Blatchford were alive today, he would consider his *God and My Neighbour* still unanswered and unanswerable. That is my own opinion too.

H. CUTNER.

### THE RESURRECTION AND HISTORY

In reply to Mr. Cutner, quotations from the one or two writers who "doubt" the historicity of Zoroaster and Buddha do nothing to *prove* their non-existence. All they offer is "doubt," and I am quite entitled to "doubt" the validity of their conclusions.

If the association of extravagant stories with a person's name automatically renders that person "unhistorical," then the legend of Drake's Drum renders him fictitious. I am unable to understand Mr. Cutner's reference to "the modern American language." As far as I know, Americans employ for their literary purposes standard English with minor and unimportant variations. No Church is likely to authorise a translation of the Bible into Bowery slang or "wild west" dialect.

"Our Authorised Version is written in a special kind of language which nobody ever spoke." Somewhat peremptory and sweeping perhaps, but true enough of the rendering of Hebrew idioms with dogged literalness, a characteristic feature of the A.V. Modern translators allow themselves more freedom, but to assert point-blank that they "simply cannot" be read reverently is sheer dogmatism.

As for "personalities"! Let Mr. Cutner re-read his recent articles and replies to critics; practically every paragraph contains a sneer or a facetious epithet or an arrogant reference to someone's "hopeless ignorance." "Where do the marvels and legends come from?" asks Mr. Cutner. They come, my dear sir, from mankind's love of tall tales about its heroes; the more remote the period, the taller the tales.

I cannot tell Mr. Cutner how Samuel's ghost was able to speak to Saul. I am not arguing for the historical truth of the story or the reality of ghosts. All I am concerned with is to give things their right names; and the Biblical account describes necromancy, not grave-robbing. To conjure is to "invoke a spirit" and that is what the witch of Endor is said to have done. A "shade" of a departed person was spoken of as his bodily "double," but was regarded as insubstantial, impalpable and intangible. All ghosts are supposed to appear in their habitual garments, but these are likewise insubstantial. I do not believe in the reality of these things any more than Mr. Cutner does; I am merely giving the traditional lore.

His tone is that of an exhibitionist cheapjack vendor who is trying to smother criticism of his wares by calling the crowd's

attention to the critic's red hair or big ears or what have you. Mr. Cutner protests that he is *not* a crude Bible-smasher. When he is able to produce a moderate and controlled article devoid of bad taste, juvenile jeers, exaggerated descriptions and supercilious remarks about other people's ignorance, I will believe him.

S. W. BROOKS.

## N.S.S. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18TH.—Present: Messrs. F. A. Ridley (Chair), Alexander, Arthur, Barker, Corstorphine, Ebury, Gordon, Hornbrook, Johnson, Moore, Shepherd, Taylor, Mrs. Trask, Mrs. Venton, the Treasurer (Mr. Griffiths) and the Secretary. Report of sale of premises at auction was given and Committee of Mr. Barker, Treasurer and Secretary were instructed to look out for alternative accommodation. New members were admitted to Blackburn, Nottingham, West London and Worthing Branches, which with individual members totalled 10. Benevolent Fund and Conference and Standing Orders Sub-committees were elected. Further steps in connection with Conference resolutions were considered. It was decided to affiliate to the National Council for Civil Liberties. Expenses for two speakers to Birmingham Branch and three to Wales and Western would be met by the E.C., as would the deficit on Bradford's recent O. C. Drewitt meeting. Report of good progress by San Juan (Trinidad) Branch was received. Glasgow Secular Society's Balance Sheet was presented to the meeting and congratulations to that Society were expressed.

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