

The Freethinker

Volume LXXXI—No. 1

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

A FAMOUS FRENCH PROFESSOR was accustomed to cite theological authorities in the course of his lectures. And it was noticeable that whenever he referred to the Holy Trinity, he always went one better and said the "Most Holy Trinity". It would not perhaps, be impossible today to find his type amongst some of our own Rationalists of the more reverent type. However, be that as it may, and whatever its correct designation, it is historically indisputable that the concept of a triune god—in the vernacular, the Trinity, has formed a leading concept in orthodox Christian theology since about 200 AD, and has been an official dogma of the faith since the end of the 4th century. Even today, all the major Churches of the Christian persuasion, both Catholic and Protestant alike, profess a belief in the "Holy and Indivisible Trinity" as one of their basic formulas, and belief in the Trinity, in "Three Persons and One God" is one of the basic dogmas which, unaffected by the Reformation, remains common to Catholics, the Eastern Churches and Protestants. (Most Modernists pay lip-service to it whilst in practice, interpreting it very freely.) A theological formula composed about 400 AD now known by the title of the Athanasian Creed (though probably not actually written by that famous Egyptian expert in the dubious science of Divinity) and still periodically recited during the services of the Church of England, even makes the peremptory declaration that without explicit belief in this Dogma (as defined in detail in the Creed in pseudo-philosophical jargon) a man cannot be saved; an explicit declaration which appears to spell *kaput* to all unbelievers, including expressly, Unitarian Theists and, presumably, also all reverent Rationalists, even if they do lecture like our French professor on the "Most Holy Trinity".

Pre-Christian Trinities

It is, of course, well-known to modern students of Comparative Religion (which, unlike confessional theology, represents a genuine science) that the Trinitarian concept is far older than the Athanasian Creed, or even than Christianity itself. In rather different forms it is found, probably independently, in view of certain differences, in India perhaps earlier than Christianity; and in Egypt certainly so. In India, at a period perhaps subsequent to the rise of the Buddhist heresy (500 BC), a kind of celestial limited company was amalgamated into the "Supreme Godhead" under the theological designation of the "Trimurti". This consisted of the three Great Gods, Brahma, Siva, Vishnu, metaphysically united as a collective Supreme Being. However, in the Indian, unlike the Christian Trinity, there does not seem to be any question of "dividing the substance", or of "confounding the persons", for Brahma, Siva and Vishnu, appear to retain some kind of individual godhead. (According to some Orientalists, these gods arbitrarily united in the Trimurti actually represent various races and cultural stages in the evolution of the Indian sub-Continent.) When we turn

from the Indian to the Egyptian Trinity, we also find three separately named deities, Osiris, Isis, and Horus, but with the distinction that one—i.e., Isis—is a goddess, a personification of the feminine principle in nature. Like its Indian equivalent, the Egyptian Trinity is of uncertain, but certainly pre-Christian date, probably one much earlier than its Hindu counterpart. Unlike the Indian Trimurti, which does not appear to have been known in the early Christian Church (though Clement of Alexandria refers to both Buddha and to the Brahmins) the Egyptian Trinity was undoubtedly familiar to them, and the Christian Trinity's origin, largely due to theologians of Egyptian origin such as

Athanasias and Cyril (both Patriarchs of Alexandria), is often described solely, or mainly to its source by the Nile.

The Origins of the Christian Trinity

It will be obvious to anyone who seeks seriously to penetrate into the earthly evolution of this "heavenly mystery", however, that the Trinity—Christian vintage—differs quite markedly from its Indian and Egyptian predecessors, and though similarities certainly exist, they ought not to be pressed to the point of identification as is sometimes done by anti-Christian authors. The Third Person of the Christian Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who originally represented, like his Egyptian predecessor the Goddess Isis, the feminine principle in the composite Godhead, has now been translated to the male sex, the earliest known (or unknown?) example of sex transition in cosmic history. The Dove, the special symbol of the Third Person was traditionally associated with goddesses rather than gods, whilst at least one early Christian heretical sect worshipped the Holy Spirit as feminine. As a result of this translation, the Christian Trinity, like the Hindu, but unlike the Egyptian one, is an all male set-up. This exclusively masculine cast is still noticeable in the Protestant Churches, whereas the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, with an instinct that is psychologically sound (since most of their clients are of the feminine sex), if theologially and historically dubious, have partially filled the celestial vacuum with the cult of the Virgin Mary who may even end up by becoming the Fourth Person of the Trinity and the Divine Successor of the goddess Isis, in name as well as fact. Her designation of "Star of the Sea" (*Stella Maris*) she has already assumed. However, the absence of a goddess is not the only distinction between the Christian Trinity and its Pagan precursor. For the Christian Trinity, if Three, are also One; dubious arithmetic, but theologially indispensable for salvation. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three Persons, but (as our authorities all insist) they are not three separate gods like Osiris, Isis and Horus, or their Hindu counterparts Brahma, Siva and Vishnu. Contrarily, the Christian Trinity is (or are?) "co-equal and co-eternal" for, as the Athanasian Creed explicitly informs us, "in this Trinity none is greater or less than one another". We shall probably find the origin of this conception, not in Egyptian

VIEWS and OPINIONS

The Most Holy Trinity

By F. A. RIDLEY

theology, but in the Roman history and politics of the 4th century AD, that decisive century in Christian evolution. The Roman Empire (of which the Christian theologians were subjects) was simultaneously ruled by two or more Emperors, none of whom was "greater or less than another" in official precedence or in actual political power, and whose legal writ ran again simultaneously throughout the entire Roman Empire. In view of this, we are perhaps entitled to infer that the Christian Fathers of the 4th century, modelled the Celestial hierarchy upon its terrestrial prototype, the Roman Byzantine administration as remodelled by Diocletian and his Imperial successors. In both the Eastern and Western Empires, anyone would undoubtedly have been damned if he had dared to call into question the Divine and co-equal authority of any of the Roman Emperors of this era. As so often since the days of the Pharaohs, the government of Heaven was consciously modelled on the then current administration

of earth.

Modern Trinities

As Reinach has aptly noted, in the modern Roman Catholic Church, the Jesuitical formula "J.M.J." (Jesus, Mary, Joseph), has virtually superseded the older, still official Trinity in popular devotions, though not in the theological text books; whilst in modernist circles, the old dogma has been re-interpreted following the example of St. Thomas Aquinas, who would probably have been a Rationalist had he lived in the 20th century and not the 13th century. St Thomas defined the Holy Spirit as "the love that binds the Father to the Son"—hardly a "Person". Between these two rival tendencies, the historic Trinity, as defined in the 4th century at the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (380) where the Third Person was officially added to the first two already defined at Nicaea, appears to be headed for the Museum of Theological Antiquities!

The Dance

By FRANCIS ANGOLD

BEING AWARE OF POWERS beyond his understanding, man has long indulged in various forms of magic, and conducted certain ritualistic performances in the hope of securing the good offices of such powers. It matters little whether we allude to such observances, which in the main would be conducted on a communal basis, by the term magic or natural religion. With increasing knowledge all such would tend to die out, and cannot in consequence be regarded as being frustrative of human development.

One of the most ancient forms of self-expression is the dance. We may rest assured that man knew how to dance before he learned to march. It may well be that by the skilful use of his body, he was able to become proficient in mimetic exhibition before he acquired the power of self expression in song. The dance, virtually, is man in action. It was no accident of chance, that the festival of the grape and the Bacchanalia employed to such an extent the dance as the medium of rejoicing. We have only to observe some of the animal dances of the so-called primitive peoples, to discover the importance given to the dance as the most virile form of expressive activity. Whatever the motive of expression as exemplified in the various dance forms, the core of the whole thing was life itself, and in consequence its propagation.

The dance entered into every aspect of social and communal existence. In fact it would be true to say that the various phases of human life were depicted by terpsichorean expression. There were dances associated with war, with sowing and with harvest. An expedition would be sanctified by a communal dance. The visit of an important person would be marked by the performance of dancing. The dance became the medium for the choice of a suitable mate, and the wedding of those thus chosen, would be made more fertile by the due performance of the suitable dances. In a phrase the dance was the symbol of life; the ritual invoking of fecundity, for crops, cattle and no less for humans. Viewed in its proper significance, life became the cycle of birth, maturity and decay, so beautifully enacted in the slow-fast-slow, rhythmic movements of the dance.

It is not only in the primitive state that we discover this devotion to the dance. It has its place no less in Hinduism, with its trinity of Brahma, Siva and Vishnu, again symbolising the cyclic process of life to which reference has already been made. It is when we come to what passes

for Christianity that we discover such strong objection to the dance. Such a practice we are told is associated with sex. It is designed to be illustrative of life and without the propagation of such, we should merely degenerate into the negation of existence. The Church which represents the highest form of organised religion, is in consequence the agent of frustration.

For this reason it is interesting to observe the manner and extent to which the dance in some form or other has tended to assert itself in the history of man.

There have even been branches of Christianity which have given themselves over to forms of dancing as part of their prescribed mode of worship; the "Shakers" being a notable example. The fact that at the present time, we are witnessing the introduction of more virile forms of the dance, merely substantiates the view, that when life becomes repressive, the dance asserts itself still more effectively perhaps even aggressively.

It is a curious commentary on the Church, that while she claims to proclaim the greatest event of all time, instead of inviting due devotion in song and dance, she seeks to inculcate a form of worship, devoid of meaning because it is in fact the denial of life. Life is a joyous thing, and a virile experience; the dance is both visual education and sensory participation.

So mundane has existence become, and so effective the frustrating teaching of the Church, that under normal conditions even our dances have ceased to be expressive. A visit to a ballroom, graced by the notables, merely provides the spectacle of decorous peregrinations, executed in conformance with the standards of good taste, and sanctioned by the Church. It is sad to think that it appears necessary under modern conditions, to become intoxicated in order to dance in a manner expressive of life in full and free abandon. Organised religion has been of the greatest assistance to the State in encouraging an attitude of subservience. At the same time and for this very reason, organised religion is responsible for the frustration of human development; a retrograde movement clearly seen in the repression of the dance of life.

NEXT WEEK

THE BLACK INTERNATIONAL v. THE RED
By F. A. RIDLEY

The Door Darwin Opened

By COLIN McCALL

THE WINTER 1960 issue of *The Plain View* (from 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W.8, 2s. 6d.), contains a tercentenary tribute to Defoe and, just a little belatedly but very welcome, a centenary assessment of Darwin by George Gaylord Simpson, Professor of Vertebrate Palaeontology at Harvard University, as well as articles on Gilbert Murray by Paul West and on "The Foundations of Morality" by the Editor, H. J. Blackham. There are also various book reviews.

I have space here only to deal with Professor Simpson's "The World Into Which Darwin Led Us", the text of an address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Chicago at the end of 1959. But let me say right away that this is an article that all evolutionists should read. There were many tributes to Darwin during the centenary year of *The Origin of Species*; Professor Simpson confesses that he had a surfeit "approaching boredom" and doubts if it is possible to say anything fresh. I am not sure if he has succeeded in saying anything fresh, but I am sure that he has said many things in a fresh and enlightening way.

"The influence of Darwin, or more broadly of the concept of evolution", says Professor Simpson, ". . . has literally led us into a different world". And he contrasts the concept of the world of a group of uncivilised Indians in South America, the Kamarakoto, with our concept today. Theirs is unpredictable, haunted; a world in which anything might happen: animals may become men, and men become stones. For them, "there is neither limitation nor reason in the flux of nature. There is also a brooding evil in their world, a sense of wrongness and fatality that they call *kanaima* and see manifested in every unusual event and object".

Professor Simpson calls that "level of invalid perceptions" the "lower superstition". But he hastens to point out that it is "nevertheless superior in some respects to the higher superstitions celebrated weekly in every hamlet of the United States" and—we might add—Britain. Naive though the Indian beliefs be, they are not teleological. It would never occur to the Kamarakoto Indians that "the universe, so largely hostile, might have been created for their benefit". Their world, though, is not scientific as ours is. That is the great difference. Our concept of the cosmos is de-personal, more austere, but more dependable. "If the unusual happens, we need no longer blame *kanaima* (or a whimsical god or devil) but may look confidently for an unusual or hitherto unknown physical cause. That is, perhaps, an act of faith, but it is not superstition. Unlike recourse to the supernatural, it is validated by thousands of successful searches for verifiable causes."

By early Victorian times the physical world had been brought within the province of science, but the world of living things had not. Here, superstition still held sway: life was divinely created; species were changeless except for minor and obvious variations. And, not only was man distinct, apart from nature, the world itself was created for him—"a subtler and more warping concept", as Professor Simpson calls it. It might require considerable ingenuity to determine why, say, a louse was created for man, but "the ingenuity was not lacking".

It was into this world that *The Origin of Species* burst in 1859. Evolutionary ideas existed, it is true, and were slowly spreading among a minority. Indeed, practically all the ideas in the book had been dimly glimpsed, at

least, by someone or other before 1859. This is scarcely surprising, for:

Organisation, understanding, and conviction are the main contributions of theorists like Darwin, and obviously none ever succeeded until there already existed something to organise and to understand. It is, however, less obvious why Darwin was the first evolutionist ever to carry conviction to a majority of his fellow scientists . . .

The reason why *The Origin of Species* carried conviction was that it did supply sufficient evidence of evolution and also provided an explanation of the phenomena of evolution.

The explanation was incomplete, as Darwin himself was aware, but it was sufficient, for example, to turn Thomas Henry Huxley from anti-evolutionist to evolutionist. Now the "theory" of evolution is a fact. Not only is the evidence for it completely overwhelming, but we have "much more extensive explanations" built, it should be noted, "in large part on Darwin's". Parts of his complex theory have been discarded; there is little doubt that they were wrong. But "the more essential parts, those most stressed by Darwin, have been largely substantiated". That, as Professor Simpson says, is important.

The fact—not theory—that evolution has occurred, must of course be distinguished from the Darwinian theory as to how it has occurred. This is a distinction that needs constantly to be stressed because the two are confused in popular opinion. That living things evolved from non-living matter is beyond serious dispute: "the first steps in that process have already been repeated in several laboratories". As Professor Simpson says:

There is concerted study from geochemical, biochemical, and microbiological approaches. At a recent meeting in Chicago, a highly distinguished international panel of experts was polled. All considered the experimental production of life in the laboratory imminent, and one maintained that this has already been done—his opinion was not based on a disagreement about the facts but on a definition as to just where, in a continuous sequence, life can be said to begin.

(The number of times Freethinkers have made this point in written and spoken argument with Theists! The unique role of our movement in the popularisation of evolution is something of which we can be proud.)

Evolution is, then, a completely general principle of life [the Professor says] . . . a fully natural process, inherent in the physical properties of the universe, by which life arose in the first place and by which all living things, past or present, have since developed, divergently and progressively. And—again it cannot be too often emphasised—this world, the evolutionary world into which Darwin led us, "is certainly very different from the world of the higher superstition"—the world of Christianity or of Theism of any kind. Above all, to the chagrin of religionists:

In the world of Darwin man has no special status other than his definition as a distinct species of animal. He is in the fullest sense a part of nature and not apart from it. He is akin, not figuratively but literally, to every living thing, be it an amoeba, a tapeworm, a flea, a seaweed, an oak tree, or a monkey—even though the degrees of relationship are different and we may feel less empathy for forty-second cousins like the tapeworms than for, comparatively speaking, brothers like the monkeys. This is togetherness and brotherhood with a vengeance, beyond the wildest dreams of copy writers or of theologians.

I can't hope to do justice to Professor Simpson's remarkable address in this short article. It will be seen that I have concentrated on his general, rather than his particular themes, and in twenty-two pages even he can only give a bald outline of his subject. But it is one of the best outlines I have come across. He deals succinctly

(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

Believers in the famous Design Argument, and particularly those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, should explain the almost unparalleled series of disasters and tragedies which preceded the Glad Tidings of Christmas Joys we have all been celebrated recently. Two air liners colliding in a blizzard, another crashing down in a crowded town, two tankers colliding, bursting into flames, and setting fire to another ship, another breaking in half, and so on—all resulting in an appalling loss of life. In addition, two days *before* Christmas, forty people lost their lives on the roads in motor accidents, to say nothing of hundreds injured. We wonder what the full count will be all over the world? In any case, God doeth all things well!

★

Our contemporary "Today" asked 19 prominent people to give their hopes for the New Year. Among them were Roman Catholics like Lady Pakenham and Sir Compton Mackenzie, stage celebrities like Jimmy Edwards and Alma Cogan, scientists like Dr. Bronowski, and so on. Yet in their nineteen "hopes" not one of them except Dr. Soper mentioned God, Jesus, the Pope, "Unity", or even Christianity. And even Dr. Soper left Jesus and God discretely out of his communication. He could only stress "unity", not only for the Church but for the Labour Party.

★

All this must have been a shock for the Editor of "Today". So he promptly rectified these impious omissions by heading the symposium, "Pray God for a New Chance"; and we can only hope that God will take heed. What the Lord must do, it seems, is to get Britain "to escape from the last decade of double-think and meaningless wrangle". If God Almighty understands what this means—we don't—let's hope he will. It's time God took heed of something (whatever it is) instead of ordering *us* about.

★

The late Dr. Inge's famous articles in the London *Evening Standard* were a great feature in that journal especially his "scepticism", which almost bordered on Freethought. It will be interesting to see how the Bishop of Southwark will fare now that he is taking Dr. Inge's place, particularly if he tries to do for its readers what he has been doing for "30 apprentices" the other week—to explain "to people brought up in a scientific age why it is reasonable to believe in God". Even Dr. Inge failed in that.

★

Dr. Stockwood found the apprentices "intelligent and hard-working", and he certainly did not find them particularly religious, or he would have said so. He found what they had to say a "tonic"—in other words, he found out that it was not at all easy to bring the Church "into closer touch with the people". And he admits "the existence of grave social problems" which the Church has failed to solve. We wonder whether the Bishop would be willing to follow in the footsteps of his Canon, the Rev. Stanley Evans, who is lecturing for the Marble Arch Branch of the National Secular Society on January 15th?

★

A correspondent in "South London Press" claims that the Churches should agree "on what Christianity is before they try to teach it"—which is exactly what Freethinkers have been saying for centuries though it is only recently that any of them has been allowed to say so in the columns of a newspaper. Well, here is the great chance for the Bishop of Southwark. Let him tell the readers of the

Evening Standard what it really is, and see how many Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Christian Scientists, Swedenborgians, and other weird Christian agree with him.

★

If the Churches have failed in capturing the people, they can always claim a tremendous triumph on the radio and TV. More than thirty programmes were religious ones this Christmas-time, and not even a smell of scepticism was allowed to undermine the full blast of primitive Christianity. Even in other items like the news, we were shown pictures of Bethlehem and the *exact place* where Angels met the shepherds in the year 1 AD! Obviously, in those days Angels were as common as sheep for no self-respecting shepherd could possibly have failed to recognise an angel!

More Scandal in Sicily

WE HAVE RECEIVED many appreciations of Adrian Pigott's series of articles on "The Scandal of Sicily" (December 2nd, 9th and 16th, 1960) and one, from Mr. A. Taylor of Salford, Lancs., supplemented Mr. Pigott's indictment with the following cutting from the *Manchester Evening News* (28/12/60):

Four monks of the Capuchin Order have been accused in Sicily of operating an extortion-murder ring with headquarters in a monastery.

The monks and four other men accused with them are to stand trial on charges of murder, extortion and robbery.

The police said that a typewriter used to write anonymous threatening letters was found buried under a tree in the monastery garden.

THE DOOR DARWIN OPENED

(Concluded from page 3)

with old and new naturalistic theories (Mutationism, he sees, not as an alternative to Neo-Darwinism, but as "a supplement to it"), the term "naturalist" being, to his mind, better than "materialist" because the latter has become a highly ambiguous and "in some circles a dirty" word. I would comment here, that such circles are precisely those of Professor Simpson's "higher superstitions" and should not be allowed to dictate our philosophic-scientific language (Freethinkers recall Bradlaugh's insistence that if the term "atheism" was misunderstood it was his task to clarify it); but few would quibble over "naturalism" and "materialism", they are virtually interchangeable and apparently are so in the Professor's vocabulary.

And the world into which Darwin led us was essentially a naturalistic world. A world in which "man and all other living things have evolved, ultimately from the non-living, in accordance with entirely natural, material processes". The tragedy is, as Professor Simpson remarks, that even now, a hundred years after *The Origin of Species*, most people have not really entered that world. And he ends his splendid address with a warning. "It is characteristic of this world to which Darwin opened the door", he says, "that unless *most* of us do enter it and live maturely and rationally in it, the future of mankind is dim, indeed—if there is any future".

BETTER THAN EVER !!

NEW REVISED FOURTH EDITION

Adrian Pigott's **FREEDOM'S FOE: THE VATICAN**

A collection of Danger Signals for those who value Peace and Liberty. Now available, 3/- (plus 6d. postage).

THE FREETHINKER

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1

TELEPHONE: HOP 2717

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One year, £1 15s.; half-year, 17s. 6d.; three months, 8s. 9d. (In U.S.A. and Canada: One year, \$5.00; half-year, \$2.50; three months, \$1.25.)

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1

Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1. Members and visitors are welcome during normal office hours. Inquiries regarding Secular Funeral Services should also be made to the General Secretary, N.S.S.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

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

London (Tower Hill).—Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Thursday lunchtimes, THE FREETHINKER on sale, Piccadilly, near Queen Victoria Statue.)

Marble Arch Branch N.S.S. (Marble Arch).—Meetings every Sunday, from 4 p.m.; MESSRS. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD, D. TRIBE and J. P. MURACCIOLE.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

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, Nottingham).—Every Friday, 1 p.m., Every Sunday, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Tuesday, January 10th, 7.15 p.m.: PAUL WINNER and J. A. SKINNER, "Is World Government the Way Out?"

Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 8th, 6.30 p.m.: Film—"Religious Freedom in Russia".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (The Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1.) Sunday, January 8th, 7.15 p.m.: JAMES MCKIE, "Looking Back on 1960."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.) Sunday, January 8th, 11 a.m.: Dr. D. STARK MURRAY, "Health—Can We Get It For Nothing?"

Notes and News

EDEN PHILLPOTTS, who died on December 29th, 1960, had enjoyed a long and distinguished career as playwright and novelist. Not only did he live to be 98, he remained productive almost to the end, a sense of humour and of humanity characterising his work. Phillpotts was, of course, a Rationalist, and we shall treasure his tribute to our paper on its 75th birthday. "I am old enough", he wrote, "to have appreciated THE FREETHINKER's long and successful battle and wish you cordially many happy returns of the day".

WRITING IN THE *New Statesman* (17/12/60), Edward Hyams (translator, it will be remembered, of Peyrefitte's *The Keys of St. Peter*) did something to dispose of the Cowperian fallacy, "God made the country, and man made the town". "In the course of the last six or seven thousand years", Mr. Hyams pointed out, "we have created species of flora which, if not actually superior to the natural, are nearer to our heart's desire. The noble grasses which are at the foundation of every high civilisation—barley, wheat, rice and maize—are so remote from their wild progenitors because of the way in which the farmer has controlled and directed them along special evolutionary lines, that only a specialist can now identify the ancestor plants". As with arable crops, so with plantation crops: "our fruit-trees, and garden crops, both ornamental and 'econo-

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

W. Craigie, £1; J. Gordon, 10s.; F. G. M. £2 5s.; J. E. Ure, 7s. 6d.; A. E. Stringer, £3 5s.; C. Holmes, £1; K. Graham, 5s.; H. G. Bluett, 5s.; S. H. Hoddes, 10s. 6d.; J. Coffey, 2s. 6d.; B. S. Jones, 15s.; A. W. Laing, £1 8s.; W. Scarlett, £1; A. F. van der Merwe, 5s.;—Total to date January 6th, 1960. £12. 18s. 6d.

mic', are dependent for their propagation and continued being on the farmer and gardener". Man, in other words, has had a great deal to do with making the country as we know it.

★

"A 15-YEAR-OLD BOY who stabbed his father in the back with a knife because he would not let him go out one evening, said at Bolton Borough Juvenile Court today that he had no regrets. He said he could not promise that he would not do it again." (*Bolton Evening News*, 7/12/60). The boy's mother said that "he came from a religious family" and it was her view that the stabbing was the work of the "evil one"; "it was the Devil who was responsible".

★

IN AN ADDRESS to the Washington (DC) Ethical Society on November 6th, 1960 (noted in *Church and State*, December 1960), the Leader, Edward L. Ericson contrasted the American government's attitude towards Cuba with its attitude towards Spain. "Castro hasn't held a free election in 22 months", said Mr. Ericson, "so we boycott him. Francisco Franco hasn't held a free election in 22 years—so our President embraces him. Franco, of course, is a man of principle".

★

THE DECEMBER *Church and State* also quoted Fred Smith, Vice-President of the Prudential Life Insurance Co. on business problems. In Boston, said Mr. Smith, "where political splinter factions have political splinter factions, Cardinal Cushing is about the only common denominator there is". "Whenever we got in trouble, I made it a practice to talk to Cardinal Cushing", continued Mr. Smith, "I never knew what he did, but somehow the problems just disappeared".

★

THE DETAILS OF Dr. Denys Tucker's dismissal from his post as principal scientific officer at the British Museum (Natural History) are not yet clear and, as the Institute of Professional Civil Servants is demanding a public inquiry into the matter, we don't propose to pass judgment at this stage. One point does call for comment, however. Dr. Tucker reported an interview with the Chairman of the Trustees' Standing Committee, the Archbishop of Canterbury. "I am a practising heathen", said Dr. Tucker (*The Guardian*, 14/12/60) "but the Archbishop . . . considers that scientific problems have to be considered with a Christian interpretation". The absurdity of having an Archbishop as Chairman of a Natural History Museum should be patent to all. Fortunately he seems to have little to do with the actual running of the place. Indeed, Dr. Tucker "had never set eyes on a trustee in 10 years" until his interview with Dr. Fisher. But the absurdity remains—and probably will as long as we have a State Church.

★

THE SECRETARY of the National Secular Society was recently interviewed by the North American Service of the BBC in connection with a programme on "Borough High Street" in a series under the general heading, "Post-mark UK", to be broadcast in Canada about the end of January. Canadian readers who wish to hear the interview should get in touch with their nearest CBC Station, who will be able to give the exact date.

Freethought and Catholic Pressure

By Dr. J. V. DUHIG

IN MANY WAYS Colin McCall's review article on Emmett McLoughlin's *American Culture and Catholic Schools* (THE FREETHINKER, 21/10/60) is sad reading for rational liberals like ourselves; the obscurantist, socially dangerous tyranny of Roman Catholic fraud and reaction in USA is a threat not only to Reason but to Democracy. But the temporary triumph of this tyranny in USA as in Australia or Great Britain or anywhere else is due almost as much to secularist pusillanimity and indifference to vital social problems as to Catholic arrogance and impudence. The endless huge display of Catholic power, based on an apparently impregnable unity, seems to produce a feeling of defeatism in Rationalist minds, and tolerance of Roman Catholic claims goes too far by default. But both McLoughlin and McCall make it clear in places that all this display is just a facade behind which are serious, indeed fatal, weaknesses of which we should make use.

When I publicly announced my one-way departure from the Catholic Church, I feared reprisals from the vast sodden mass of ignorance of the Roman clergy and laity. This happened, but was little more than a temporary slight nuisance. What I lost by a Catholic boycott was more than made up by freedom from clerical blackmail levied as large contributions to such a vast number of projects that they amounted to a considerable addition to Income Tax.

At the local Rationalist meetings I gave lectures on scientific subjects with an anti-religious slant about four times a year. This brought occasional anonymous letters, in the abusive style of Catholics for whom this is a favourite controversial weapon. I felt that if a person of ordinary courage called the bluff of Holy Mother Church, she, poor dear, having no logical or rational comeback, would have to sit by in stolid pained silence. I gave a lecture on the Evolution of Modern Medicine and, naturally, the Catholic opposition to progress got a mauling. The Roman Catholic archbishop, my uncle, heard about it and expressed marked displeasure. I immediately sent a copy to the editor of the better, but not, official, Catholic weekly, offering it for free publication with an invitation for criticism of readers for two issues provided I had the right of final reply. The editor applied to the Archbishop for a *nilhil obstat* but met a peremptory refusal. Obviously it was feared my reply to Catholic criticism would be a defeat for the Church. Since then I have never had the slightest trouble.

I was a close personal friend of the best and most brilliant newspaper editor Australia has ever had, the late Brian Penton, of the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*. He wrote two of the best novels of Australian life, and was anti-clerical. Anything I wrote made the editorial page. About 1942 or '43 when newsprint was rationed, and advertising space was scarce and costly, I did him some articles with oblique but obvious references to Lamb's blood baths, Theophagy and Ritual Cannibalism, Human Parthenogenesis, Birth Control, Euthanasia, etc. Penton told me that he got buckets of stock-letters, attacking me and obviously dictated to whole classes of school kids by a priest: these were immediately sent to the garbage can as the trick was far too stale. But he also had angry telephone calls from Roman Catholic advertisers threatening to withdraw their advertisements if I was not silenced. He replied that, as advertising space was scarce, he could sell their space at twice the fee and would they kindly

withdraw their ads as quickly as possible as there was a mile-long queue waiting for it. That ended the planned campaign against me. No ads were withdrawn. When their bluff is called Roman Catholics collapse.

Recently a howl was set up by the Churches, mostly for State endowment of their segregated schools. This was taken seriously by both Labour and Tory parties, but I wrote to the Labour Party weekly that State aid to poor pupils going to religious schools (secondary), mostly Catholics, already amounted to £400,000 and that that Church, by an infamous pact with a Labour Government, had swapped Catholic support of the Labour Party for exemption from rates of priests' homes, a shameless swindle. Roman Catholic clergy also pay no income tax. I said: "These handouts cost the taxpayers very large sums which could be better devoted to sewerage, which the large majority of homes in Brisbane have to go without, and to libraries for children, parks, playgrounds, etc. Now the Churches are asking for more. Could greed go further?". This protest has been followed by a deathly silence from the Catholics. In all, so says the State Treasurer, exemptions are worth to the Churches not "hundreds of thousands but millions in exemptions and permits". State Aid is now a dead issue.

Again, once the bluff is called they cease to squeak.

But in addition to this firm and attacking reply to Catholic claims, I would advise complete avoidance of doctrinal arguments, as Jesuits can smother everything in dense black clouds of verbiage and are such slick talkers of pseudo-philosophic dialectic that they always appear to win. We must always stick to verifiable facts, especially about Catholic criminality which damns all their claims to teach morality and is unanswerable. Also Catholic lies in other fields should be exposed if the evidence of falsehood is irrefutable as it usually is. The Lourdes, Fatima and La Salette swindles are examples.

And in particular we should never cease to tell Catholic parents of the terrible risk of moral ruin for their children in attendance at a Catholic school. We should publish pamphlets on Roman Catholic Criminality, Prostitution and Delinquency with a cover caption "Catholic Parents, do you want your child to risk being a Delinquent, Criminal or Prostitute? At a Catholic school, they run a bigger risk than children at State schools. Read the facts herein and make your choice. Their future here and, if you so believe, hereafter, is in your own hands. Read this, pause and think". Figures from many quarters are available, not the least valuable being those in *The Bertrand Russell Case*, Edited by John Dewey and Horace M. Kallen (Viking Press, New York). The huge amount of positive and completely damning evidence cannot fail to make a deep impact and cannot be refuted. The vast majority of parents do really care about their children's future.

We have the facts; let the parents know too. That would be a decisive blow at Catholic arrogance and impudence.

Calling the Catholic bluff is dead easy; let us all try it: I know, because I have proved, that it works.

SPECIAL OFFER

THE AMAZING WORLD OF JOHN SCARNE

Published at 35/-; for 12/6 (plus 1/6 postage)
In *The Amazing World of John Scarne* will be found scores of pages devoted to unmasking swindles of all kinds.—H. CUTNER.

On Controversial Questions—6

By H. CUTNER

SOME YEARS AGO I poked a little fun in "This Believing World" at the belief held by many people in the reality of "flying saucers", and naturally was called to task by two or three rather angry readers for my unblushing scepticism. "Flying Saucers" were then in the air (so to speak) and people all over the world were ready to believe in them on "unimpeachable evidence"—indeed, some "observers" had even photographed them, and what better evidence could there be than that?

I did not pursue the discussion as I should have liked to do then, but an article in a recent number of *Today* has forced me to do so. It is by Derek Dempster, described as a University man and as a vice-chairman of the British Planetary Society; and its heading is "Are we being watched from OUTER SPACE?"—its conclusion being that we are.

It appears that "experts" have been "investigating" reports of "a mysterious flying object", and of course I read on to find out who these "experts" were. They were two "eminent scientists", R. L. Johnson, Director of Adler Planetarium in Chicago, and F. Hemming, his assistant. Whether these gentlemen are really "experts" however is not quite clear, though when it comes to telling us what they, or what such a body quoted by Mr. Dempster as "the National Space Surveillance Control Centre Massachusetts" says, some of us would like to know who or what they are? That is, are they *officially* accepted as scientific bodies all over the world whose findings have to be accepted, or at least discussed, by let us say our own Astronomer Royal or by such an expert as Sir Bernard Lovell?

I am not saying that there is not or was not a "mysterious flying object"; but I certainly do question any assertion which, based on inability to account for such an object, immediately tells us that it may well be something from another world "watching us". This is exactly the line taken by many "experts" (particularly scientists) who, not being able to explain "phenomena" of some kind produced by a "medium", immediately agree that they were due to "spirits".

We are told by Mr. Dempster that "Richard Hall, secretary of the Aerial Phenomena Committee" tells us that "many identified flying objects had been seen and tracked for months". By whom, and what were the qualifications of the gentlemen who did the tracking? Another statement we are supposed to accept is,

Experts on aerial phenomena agree that the latest sighting is "neither man-made nor a shooting star . . .". The Grumman Aircraft Corporation of Long Island told the crew of its special tracking camera to watch out for the New Unidentified Flying Object. The crew were lucky, and at 9.51 p.m. on August 25th, they obtained their first photograph.

And of course "a flood of sighting reports then dropped in on Grumman from the United States and elsewhere". I love the "elsewhere". We are also assured that "American scientists have cautiously stated" that the flying object was not a piece of space junk like an "old rocket". The preciseness or the vagueness of all this could hardly be more amusing.

But Mr. Dempster's clear statement that "today, no scientist worthy of the name can deny the existence of life elsewhere in the universe" deserves a little more consideration.

In the first place, he does not define exactly what he

means by "life". As there are, he admits, "one hundred and fifty thousand million stars" in our galaxy alone, and thousands at least of other and similar galaxies there is nothing wonderful in any scientist admitting that "life" can exist somewhere. But what kind of life? Plants? Insects? Fish? or what?

One has only to go to an "aquarium" either at a Zoo or some museum to see the extraordinary variety of fish the sea abounds with, and there is no need to go to an aquarium. If we just think of the difference between a shark and a tiddler (on earth), between a sixty feet long Brontosaurus and a kitten, we can see something of the variety of life even our own comparatively small planet can produce.

I am pretty certain however that what Mr. Dempster means by "life" is a sort of magnified human who is so far advanced in the course of evolution that it is child's play for him to design "unidentified" objects capable of terrific speed, which are therefore "watching us" from "outer space"—what for, the Lord knows for I don't. It is quite impossible to "deny" that life might well exist on some distant planet—but why should we assume it must be the kind of life we are used to on Earth?

For me, our Earth is *unique*, and unless conditions on other planets were or are the same as ours, I can see no reason to accept the theory that "life" on them is like ours, or that they are so far advanced that they can build flying saucers or whatever you like to call them.

It is possible, so far for us, to send some flying object shot out of a rocket on to the moon, and no doubt we shall eventually go much further. But this is quite a different thing from saying that therefore Man himself will one day go to the moon or to Venus or Mars or even to Pluto. We men and women have been evolved over millions of years in a special atmosphere with a "gravitation" quite different from that, for instance, of the moon. I have read a good deal about the moon—it has no atmosphere, and if it is possible for us to go there, we would (I understand) be able to jump about quite easily—at least twenty feet at a time. But how could we breathe on the moon? Would we be forced to take our atmosphere with us?

Nobody really *knows* what conditions are like on the surface of the moon, or how man would react if it were possible to reach it. As no doubt many of our readers give particular heed to what the Russians say here is an item from the *Daily Express* for October 4th last which might have escaped them:—

Russia has not put a man 60 to 230 miles into space, but has the ability to do so, says academician N. Sisakian in the Moscow newspaper *Izvestia*. He said flights of such distances could not give tangible scientific information about the conditions of manned cosmic flights.

That is, "earth" man cannot so far go beyond 60 miles into the atmosphere. Yet without a particle of ascertainable evidence, we are told that "unidentified objects" are or may be watching us—meaning of course that beings much like ourselves have reached a "civilisation" so much greater than ours that they can build flying aircraft capable of fantastic speeds coming from planets which may be millions of light years away reckoning such distances from our very limited point of view. For me this is all just incredible nonsense.

That it is quite impossible to prophesy what science may discover as sources of terrific energy in the future

may be true; and quite possibly within a hundred years from now, man will be able to fly to Pluto or even beyond and come back quite safely. Perhaps this or something like it may be what is happening to the "beings" on other planets. I do not know, and I am quite certain nobody else knows.

But I should like the reader to remember what Professor Lovell our biggest expert on these things says. In an interview in *John Bull* (Nov. 14th, 1959), he claimed that

Even if you put fantastic chances against it, there is still the possibility of life on billions of other planets, not only in the Milky Way . . . It is entirely theoretical. I mean, to signal to some human beings who might exist on a planet in the Andromeda nebula, for instance, would take two million years. And it would take the same time for a reply to come back.

Professor Lovell moreover is quite uncertain if life on other planets would be "two-legged". He pointed out that "evolution on earth has pursued a particular path. In a different environment other organisms might have evolved . . .". But naturally when we are dealing with billions of planets, it is just impossible to say what might happen in the course of thousands of billions of years. Perhaps I should say in the course of eternity.

CORRESPONDENCE

BAPTISM

Around the teachings of Jesus many controversies and disputes have raged, but one thing is perfectly clear, he was a lover of children. Yet for nearly 2,000 years his followers have gone on teaching that if a child should die unbaptised it can never reach heaven. A soul too young to sin will be punished because the parents, through common sense generally, or for some other reason, have omitted to allow a priest to mumble an incantation and to sprinkle water on the child's head. Young children who die do not suffer because of this idiocy taught by the Churchmen, but things take on a more ugly aspect when the child becomes old enough to be taught it in Sunday school. He may be made afraid and unhappy—or, perhaps, be filled with an ungodly pride if made to believe that he has become one of the elect.

Some Church doctrines are nonsense. The belief in baptism is, I'm afraid, far worse than non-sensical; it is definitely evil.

The more enlightened theologians of to-day, I have no doubt, have little belief in the virtues or inherent power of baptism, or the literal existence of hell-fire. Nevertheless, these superstitions are still perpetuated and practised.

Do archbishops, bishops and all the leaders of the Church believe that there is the smallest tittle of difference between the treatment given to baptised and unbaptised children when they die? If they do not, why do they allow their priests and parsons to preach it?

WILLIAM SMALL.

DIFFERENT THINGS

If we are not exactly "automata" (Dr. J. V. Duhig, 16/12/60) we are certainly creatures of habit, and anyone is forgiven for assuming that some reflexes appear "to the total exclusion" of any rational estimate of their import. For years we have had statistics of religious criminality. If religion does not nurture virtues, the obvious retort is, does atheism? It certainly does, but such claims are seldom printed in our literature. Atheism is logical and rational; religion is neither. Class for class, unbelievers are better and more intelligent than believers. Time was when scarcely anyone could think of being without religion, so, "To do good is my Religion" were the best words, because if analysed, they leave out Church and Priests. But we should know that goodness and religion are two entirely different things.

J. KING.

NEWMAN THE WITNESS

Mr. Adrian Pigott, in his recent gratifying series of articles on present-day Sicily, convicts the Roman Catholic Church of responsibility for, and callous indifference to, the brutish and degrading existence endured by so many Sicilians. In the light of these articles, it is worthwhile recalling the reply made by Cardinal Newman in 1850 to Anglican friends who accepted his theological arguments that Rome was indeed the True Church, but who recoiled in horror from joining a Church whose appalling social consequences they could see in the Latin countries of southern Europe.

"This, then, is the point I insist upon, in answer to the objection . . . The Church aims, not at making a show, but

at doing a work. She regards this world, and all that is in it, as a mere shadow, as dust and ashes, compared with the value of one single soul. She holds that, unless she can, in her own way, do good to souls, it is no use her doing anything; she holds that it were better for sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail, and for all the many millions who are upon it to die of starvation in extremest agony, so far as temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say, should be lost, but should commit one single venial sin, should tell one wilful untruth, though it harmed no one, or steal one poor farthing without excuse. She considers the action of this world and the action of the soul simply incommensurate, viewed in their respective spheres; she would rather save the soul of one single wild bandit of Calabria, or whining beggar of Palermo, than draw a hundred lines of railroad through the length and breadth of Italy, or carry out a sanitary reform, in its fullest details, in every city of Sicily, except so far as these great national works tended to some spiritual good beyond them.

"Such is the Church, O ye men of the world, and now you know her. Such she is, such she will be; and though she aims at your good, it is in her own way—and if you oppose her, she defies you. She has her mission, and do it she will, whether she be in rags, or in fine linen; whether with awkward or with refined carriage; whether by means of uncultivated intellects, or with the grace of accomplishments". (*Difficulties of Anglicans*, Vol. I pp. 239-240, Longmans, 1908.)

D. JOSEPH.

OBITUARY

Another link with the past has been broken with the death at the age of ninety of Louise Bedborough, widow of the much-respected Freethought writer and speaker, George Bedborough. The National Secular Society had, in Mrs. Bedborough's words, "been part of the life of my beloved partner, George, and me since the days of Charles Bradlaugh". It was fitting, therefore, that a secular service at her cremation in Cambridge should be conducted by Bradlaugh's great grandson, Mr. Basil Bradlaugh Bonner on December 20th, 1960.

C.McC.

THE PAPACY IN POLITICS TODAY. By Joseph McCabe. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

A SHORT HISTORY OF SEX WORSHIP. By H. Cutner. Price 2/6; postage 6d.

THE DOLLAR AND THE VATICAN: Its Character, Methods and Aims. By Avro Manhattan. 3rd. Edition—Revised and Enlarged.

Price 21/-; postage 1/3.

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING. By Chapman Cohen. Series 1, 2, 3, 4. Cloth bound.

Price 7/6 each series; postage 7d. each.

PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN

THOUGHT. By Chapman Cohen.

Price 3/- (specially reduced price); postage 5d.

BRADLAUGH AND INGERSOLL. By Chapman Cohen. Well illustrated. Now again available.

Price 6/-; postage 8d.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK (10th Edition). By G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball. Price 4/6; postage 6d.

AGE OF REASON. Thomas Paine's masterpiece with 40-pages introduction by Chapman Cohen.

Cloth 4/-; postage 7d.

RIGHTS OF MAN. By Thomas Paine.

Price 2/6; postage 6d.

A CHRONOLOGY OF BRITISH SECULARISM. By G. H. Taylor. Price 1/-; postage 2d.

THE THINKER'S HANDBOOK By Hector Hawton. Price 5/-; postage 7d.

WHAT IS THE SABBATH DAY? By H. Cutner. Price 1/3; postage 4d.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF GOD. By Grant Allen. Price 3/6; postage 6d.

HUMANITY'S GAIN FROM UNBELIEF. By Charles Bradlaugh. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

IS SPIRITUALISM TRUE? By C. E. Ratcliffe. Price 1/-; postage 2d.

ROBERT TAYLOR—THE DEVIL'S CHAPLAIN. By H. Cutner. Price 1/6; postage 4d.

PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE. 18 of Chapman Cohen's celebrated pamphlets bound in one Volume. Indispensable for the Freethinker.

Price 5/6; postage 8d.