

The Freethinker

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SIR JULIAN HUXLEY is justifiably respected in the Free-thought movement, and this paper was full of praise for his splendid presentation of the case for science against theology (and the Rev. Dr. E. L. Mascall) in *The Observer* (17/7/60) to commemorate the centenary of his grandfather's Darwinian duel with Bishop Wilberforce. I am not sure, though, that his good work in *The Observer* was not more than discounted by the harm he did in writing the introduction to *The Phenomenon of Man* by the late Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (Collins, 1959). Teilhard's book has already been described in these columns by Dr. Edward Roux as "in the main so much more pseudo-scientific Mumbo-jumbo" (THE FREETHINKER, November 4th, 1960). To this book Sir Julian Huxley added his very considerable prestige. In effect, it appeared with his blessing.

Where a distinguished biologist led, it is hardly surprising that lay reviewers should follow, and *The Phenomenon of Man* was hailed as a masterpiece, the book of the year—even of the century! Fortunately at least two eminent magazines (one American, one British) in addition to THE FREETHINKER, enlisted expert reviewers: the *Scientific American* (April, 1960), George Gaylord Simpson; *Mind* (January, 1961), P. B. Medawar. (Dr. Roux is Lecturer in Botany at Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg.)

Mystic
Professor Simpson, a palaeontologist himself, was prepared to admit that Father Teilhard, S.J., was a "phenomenal" as well as likeable man. "He uniquely combined in one well-integrated personality a religious mystic and a scientist". But he was "primarily a Christian mystic and only secondly, although importantly, a scientist" (italics in original). *The Phenomenon of Man* is an attempt to give the mysticism a scientific standing. That is what Teilhard claims for it and that is what, alas, Sir Julian Huxley seems to have endorsed. (The French edition in 1955 had to be content with a theological preface by N. M. Wildiers.)

In his first sentence, Teilhard states:
"If this book is to be properly understood, it must be read not as a work on metaphysics, still less as a sort of theological essay, but purely and simply as a scientific treatise."

Now this simply cannot be allowed. The book is essentially religious and though, as Professor Simpson says, one "cannot object to the piety or mysticism", one "can object to its initial claim to be a scientific treatise and to the arrangement that puts its real premises briefly, in part obscurely, as a sort of appendage after the conclusions drawn from them".

I must point out in fairness that Sir Julian Huxley demurs at going "all the way" with Teilhard "in his gallant attempt to reconcile the supernatural elements in Christianity with the facts and implications of evolution".

But, as Professor Medawar so rightly exclaims, "bless my soul, this reconciliation is just what Teilhard's book is about!" (italics in original). "And so," Medawar adds, "it seems to me, Huxley contrives to enrage all parties—those who have some concern for rigorous analytical thought, and those who see in Teilhard's work the elements of a profound revelation".

An Unscientific Parallel

As an aspirant to the former category, though conscious of my temerity, I believe I see an unscientific parallel in the views of the Jesuit palaeontologist and the Humanist biologist. Teilhard's case rests on the totally illogical assumption that we are "logically

forced to assume the existence in rudimentary form . . . of some sort of psyche in every corpuscle". By "the very fact of the individualization of our planet, a certain mass of elementary consciousness was originally imprisoned in the matter of earth". For Teilhard nothing is new, all must have been there from the start, at least in rudimentary form. I recall in this connection an assertion in Sir Julian Huxley's *Observer* article that "minute mind-like activities accompany all the processes of living matter", which in my unsigned appraisal (THE FREETHINKER, July 29th, 1960) I said "might seem to be stretching things a little". I now see it in rather more serious light.

But let me return to *The Phenomenon of Man* via what is unquestionably the most devastating (and brilliant) criticism I have read for many a long month, Professor Medawar's. He places it in the tradition of *Nature-philosophie*, "a philosophical indoor pastime of German origin which does not seem even by accident (though there is a great deal of it) to have contributed anything of permanent value to the storehouse of human thought". It is a book, he says, "widely held to be of the utmost profundity and significance . . . Yet the greater part of it, I shall show, is nonsense, tricked out by a variety of tedious metaphysical conceits, and its author can be excused of dishonesty only on the grounds that before deceiving others he has taken great pains to deceive himself". *The Phenomenon of Man*, he adds (and who can disagree?) "cannot be read without a feeling of suffocation, a gasping and flailing around for sense. There is an argument in it, to be sure—a feeble argument, abominably expressed . . .".

"Teilhard is forever shouting at us," says Medawar, "things or affairs are, in alphabetical order, astounding, colossal, endless, enormous, fantastic, giddy, hyper-, immense, implacable, indefinite, inexhaustible, inextricable, infinite, infinitesimal, innumerable, irresistible, measureless, mega-, monstrous, mysterious, prodigious, relentless, super-, ultra-, unbelievable, unbridled, or unparalleled. When something is described as merely huge we feel let down. After this softening-up process we are ready to take delivery of the neologisms: biota, noosphere, hominization, complexification".

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

With Sir Julian's Blessing

By COLIN McCALL

Cheating With Words

Professor Medawar would have been disappointed, he tells us, if "vibration" had not appeared somewhere in Teilhard's book (it does on page 266), "for all scientific mystics either vibrate in person or find themselves resonant with cosmic vibrations . . .". What is much more serious, however, "is the fact that Teilhard habitually and systematically cheats with words". And "consciousness" is an example. "Complexity" is another. According to the Father, "The Simplest form of protoplasm is already a substance of unheard of complexity". Yet this "unheard of complexity" "increases in geometrical progression as we pass from the protozoon higher and higher up the scale of the metazoa". The "nascent cellular world shows itself [to Father Teilhard] to be already infinitely complex". The reader should note "nascent" and "infinitely". Medawar remarks that the latter would seem to leave little

room for improvement! But in any case, he points out, complexity is "not measureable in those scalar quantities to which the concept of a geometrical progression applies". "Energy" again, is a term that Teilhard grossly misuses. And it is a crucial term because it is at the basis of his all-pervasive "consciousness".

That *The Phenomenon of Man* should impress the unthinking is scarcely surprising. It follows the time-honoured formula: be obscure and you will be considered profound. It blends the trite and the absurd to form an indigestible mass. It is, in Professor Medawar's delicious term, philosophy-fiction, and a critical reader will see it to be so. Left to its own devices it would have been just one more Catholic effort to reconcile theology and science—unavailing as its predecessors. Sir Julian Huxley's introduction changed the situation completely. He gave a religious book his scientific blessing.

For Selling "The Age of Reason"

This Sunday, January 29th, is the 224th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Paine. We print below a copy of an address by D. I. Eaton, who had been sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment in Newgate and forced to stand in the pillory in front of the prison for publishing the third and last part of *The Age of Reason*. The text was supplied to us by the late Walter Parry of Liverpool.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

After upwards of twenty years invariable perseverance, and seven prosecutions in the Cause of Liberty, the Freedom of the Press, and Free Discussion, the sufferings I have encountered, and the losses I have sustained by and in consequence of the same, which I shall herein lay before you, I find myself at length compelled, for the first time in my life, at the age of three score, to solicit assistance from the bounty of my fellow-citizens, to enable and afford me some support during such a long confinement, as I am doomed to endure; the merits or demerits of which I humbly submit to your good sense to appreciate; and if my conduct, which has been uniform (and, I hope, ever will be so), should meet your approbation, I can have no doubt but your liberal generosity will enable me to encounter every difficulty that may attend me; and be assured that the sincerest sense of gratitude for all favours are thankfully acknowledged; and as the former part of my life has ever been dedicated to the service of my fellow-man, so shall the latter; and that what ever your bounty may bestow, I shall, as far as I am able, be offered up in your most sacred service, by publishing the truth while a type can be found in the country.

Sycophant to no man or party, I have not the support of the abilities or the countenance of any; for, as it was of my own free will, I have entered myself in the service of mankind, so I have, and always will, exert my feeble abilities to the utmost of their power; relying with full confidence and pleasure on their goodness for my future support.

Ten officers and three of the City Marshalmen entered my house to seize me, to be the first sacrificed in the prosecution of Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall, on the Monday morning, and not finding me, on the Tuesday they took up Mr. Hardy.

In 1793, on the 4th June, I was tried by indictment, for selling Paine's *Rights of Man*, and acquitted. Two days and two nights imprisonment when taken up for the same, and one night in Newgate after. But this verdict put a stop to Mr. Pitt's system of terror, and all similar prosecutions. In the next month (July), I was tried by virtue of an *ex officio*, before a special jury, for Paine's *Letter to the*

Addressers, and acquitted. In 1794, I was tried by an indictment for publishing in my *Politics for the People*, a story told of a game cock, for which I was acquitted. I was imprisoned three months and five days before my trial, for resisting and refusing to give the exorbitant bail of two thousand pounds myself, and two others in one thousand each. In 1795, I was tried by special jury for Pigot's *Female Jockey Club*; it was comprised by my council and passed over. In 1796, I was tried twice; the one for Pigot's *Political Dictionary*, the second for *The Duties of Citizenship*; this latter I had neither ever seen or knew of, nor of course had ever sold, when the prosecution commenced, however I was cast on both, out-lawed, and went to America for three years and a half.

Returned to my country, myself and property were seized, I was doomed to fifteen months close confinement, and books (not offensive) to the amount of two thousand eight hundred pounds, which were packed up for the American market, were burnt upon the premises, and I was obliged to pay two hundred and eighty-six pounds to preserve my household furniture. These acts of humanity were performed amidst the tears of my wife and children (myself in a prison) when the late Spencer Perceval was Attorney-General, by an order given to Mr. Solicitor White.

Thus with the greatest truth and sincerity, without the least exaggeration or colouring, have I laid before you the state of my case, without adding my loss by sea of nearly as much, that being an event which frequently happens, although it was in this case the consequence of my being out-lawed.

State Side of Newgate,
Ninth Month of Imprisonment.

D. I. EATON.

BEWARE OF THE DOG

Beware of the Anti-Obscenity Hound
Who decides what is proper for you;
His lace is straight and his collar is round
And his sensitive nose is blue . . .

He will speak for his master in Heaven above,
Without a request to begin,
On the standards of modesty, morals and love,
On decency, pleasure and sin . . .

Pay heed to his seemingly innocent theme,
Watch out for his ultimate goal . . .
For the role of the Censor is part of his scheme
Of privilege, power and control.

R.B. (U.S.A.)

Penguins and Seals

By EVA EBURY

"AS WE AWAIT the dawning of that day we at least hope that in the case of conflict, always provided the bombs used are relatively 'clean' and not too numerous, penguins and seals will survive and repopulate the earth." So Edouard Le Ghait ends the merciless logic of his treatise on the folly of Nuclear War Strategy (*No Carte Blanche to Capricorn* (Bookfield House, New York, \$1.25). M. Le Ghait was an ambassador and Chef de Cabinet, Belgian Foreign Ministry, before and during the war; his father also was a Belgian diplomat and from the maternal side, his great-grandfather was Governor of Wisconsin and his great-uncle, a close friend of Abraham Lincoln, was Secretary of State. In 1944 Edouard was appointed Ambassador to the USSR, and later to China; he represented Belgium at several international conferences and resigned from government service, a disillusioned man in 1953. Bertrand Russell says of this book, "Monsieur Le Ghait, familiar as he is with the diplomatic world, does not underestimate the practical difficulties of nuclear disarmament, but, none the less, arrives at fruitful suggestions, which even politicians might prefer to the extinction of the human race". Previously though, Russell has regretted that "Alas, the leading statesmen of West and East are incapable of the fresh thought that is demanded by new weapons. Slaves to ancient cliches, they accuse of emotionalism all those whom the danger does not deprive of reasoning power". Little more optimism is shown by M. Le Ghait, but he sees a hope in the recent treaty of demilitarisation of Antarctica and he trusts that the day will come when governments will want to extend, to larger sections of mankind, the privileged system now reserved for penguins and seals.

This is not a book picturing the horrors of mass extermination, but a closely reasoned factual account of the concepts of nuclear strategy in which every move leads to disaster. M. Le Ghait shows in every chapter his understanding of the issues which produce this folly, and hopes for a greater awareness of the problems of survival on the part of the citizenry, which, alone, he says, can prevent the continuation of ominous and dangerous policies. He asks for the pressure of the people to reduce the balance of terror, yet he confesses that the public prefer to hear about bread, prosperity and pleasant times, and that political parties reflect this indifference to atomic danger. "Despairing and powerless in the face of vast forces towering over them, they feel immobilised as they wait for the cupidity of one group, the vainglory of the other and the folly and lack of awareness of the majority". The tendency to deny the existence of danger is a basic human trait: it may be termed "courage", or when extreme, "neurosis", but it becomes anti-social if it prevents remedial action. It is imperative that public opinion should be aware of the situation in which the discovery of nuclear energy has placed mankind.

Instead, he claims, they are bemused with tortuous lie after tortuous lie. The interests and motives of the heads of states are never identical with those of the governed, and scientists are, of necessity, paid and sworn to secrecy by the government for whom they work. The people are first persuaded that nuclear arms are needed for defence, then as deterrents; then limited war is the aim; later "clean" bombs are envisaged and American scientists commenced a frenzied campaign for more tests, labelling as a crime against humanity, any attempt to hinder re-

search work for perfecting the "clean" bomb.

The motto became "mankind must learn to live with nuclear weapons", although the instability of the balance of terror is likely to increase during the coming years, for numbers spawn numbers and each contestant must possess the capability of destroying the capability of the enemy to destroy him. In 1957, Mr. Duncan Sandys, Minister of Defence, forthrightly stated that, as it would be impossible, in the event of war, to prevent H-bombs from dropping in Britain, "we decided not to defend the whole country, but to defend only our bomber bases". In other words, a whole country might be irremediably destroyed, while its military force could be preserved to inflict the fatal blows on its opponents.

A logical consequence of the nature of modern armaments is reign of the Generals. NATO has no political checks within it on strategic decisions. Ex-President Eisenhower professed to be unable to answer the question as to who would be authorised to decide on the use of atomic devices, but it is very evident that the military consider it should be within their jurisdiction. General Twining while head of the American Air Force, is quoted as saying with regret, "One fine afternoon like this, and I could finish the job, if only those fellows over there [the White House] would give the word". He was only speaking of the annihilation of Communist China! And General Norstad wishes to drive the USSR into such a position that to extricate themselves they must declare war. M. Le Ghait says of the Rapacki Peace Plan, that all the powers in hell were set in motion against it, for it upset the plans of the general staffs and loomed as a serious threat to the interests of the host of profiteers of the cold war. "Under these circumstances it is understandable that military leaders, promoted from being mere arms bearers, should have become policy makers too. With the concept of peace predicted on the balance of terror, they are exceptionally qualified to boast of their arms and intimidate the opponent".

We cannot return to conventional weapons, they are too costly. "For the same money and effort, nuclear weapons as compared with conventional weapons, give thousands of times larger yield in terms of target damage." That statement was made by a group of Indian scientists. Britain demands nuclear power that she may force the hand of the US if necessary. De Gaulle demands it because he trusts neither Russia nor the US. Bertrand Russell wonders whether, in the case of the total annihilation of Britain, Russia and America might not think it better to call a truce.

No Carte Blanche to Capricorn. "Carte Blanche" was the code name given to the NATO war game in 1955, in which it was estimated that 1,700,000 West Germans were "killed", and 3,500,000 "wounded". And "Capricorn" is the monster translated to the sky: "The Pig spends its life with its snout in the dung heap. It sees the sky for the first time at the moment that it gets butchered". These are the reasons M. Le Ghait advances for his cryptic title. "May the peoples of the world lift their eyes to the stars, and learn a useful lesson before giving Carte Blanche." For "we are speeding inexorably toward a day when even the ingenuity of our scientists may be unable to save us from the consequences of a single rash act, or a lone reckless hand upon the switch of

(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

Just as one of the most famous "relics" bequeathed to us from the Crucifixion is the wonderful spear which (it is claimed) pierced the side of Jesus on the Cross so the famous "Cup" out of which Jesus made his disciples drink "my blood of the new testament"—whatever that means—is now once again in the news. In actual fact, it has always been in the news, for it forms some of the most interesting episodes in the story of King Arthur and his famous Knights, as well as in many other romances written about 1,000 years ago.

★

The Holy Grail, as it is called, is supposed to have been brought to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea, and its history is just as authentic as all the various histories connected with Jesus and his "relics". However, it has turned up in North Wales at last, and is now curing all sorts of sick people who get cured by merely drinking from it. Of course, there are "witnesses" (there always are for absolutely authentic cures by Holy Relics) but it is rather strange that the Cup has not so far been used in hospitals. If hospital authorities could be induced to let very sick people in their wards drink from it, and who then are immediately cured—would that not prove it is *really* a relic from Jesus? But we never hear of hospital cures by Holy Grails, Faith Healers, or Spirit Doctors—why?

★

In their chase for converts, Mormons have started a "baseball league", for they claim—according to the *Sunday Express* (8/1/61), that this ball game has already gained them 1,000 British converts. Whether it will emerge from this that Jesus is the greatest baseball player that ever lived, or even that Joseph Smith is the second greatest, we are not quite sure, but it appears that a good game is always conducive to a perfect "gospel lesson" afterwards. The *S.E.* takes pains to remind readers that "Mormonism is a Christian religion", that polygamy is no longer allowed, that Mormons do not drink or smoke, and that all Mormons must hand in to the Elders a tenth of their income. The last must be the biggest of all inducements to join this Christian religion—even if the baseball league utterly fails. O happy Mormons!

★

Anybody who has never seen a Ghost should go to Cobham in Surrey forthwith, where he will find in all their glory many ghostly poltergeists, a ghostly blue donkey, a gang of ghostly hermits, and even a ghostly field-marshal. There is no doubt whatever about the donkey for it has been seen by the local church's bell-ringers, stout Christians all. And, as a Christian resident insists—"Strange things happen" in her house, including heavy ghostly footsteps, and padlocked doors forced open by ghostly hands. We are always intrigued at the way a good insubstantial ghost can make the rafters resound with heavy footsteps. Cobham should be a highlight for our holiday tourists this year.

★

In these days of new and better versions of the Holy Bible—versions which aim at intelligibility, and God knows that this has been a desideratum for centuries—we are always being told of wonderful new finds in the Gospel world which are bound to throw a flood of light on everything pertaining to "our Lord". The latest is a new Gospel of Mark which, we are reverently told by Dr. Morton Smith of Columbia University, gives details of a "new miracle" not mentioned by Mark in the current Gospel, and which should enhance the reputation of Jesus still further for genuine miracles.

The fact that the story of this new Gospel is given in a letter written in the 17th or 18th century should not bar its claim to absolute authenticity. If the letter states that Mark wrote the Gospel, that is sheer downright Christian evidence, and all who doubt it are ignorant infidels and blasphemers.

★

So at last we have our Archbishop of Canterbury admitting—no doubt very sadly—that the two words "Catholic" and "Protestant" are "out of date" and a humble Free-thinker would like to know what he would substitute in their place? "Christian"? Considering that there are at least dozens of Christian sects, and that there have always been dozens at any period since Christianity appeared in history, and they all more or less violently disagree with each other, what genuine meaning has the word "Christian"?

★

In actual fact, the two words "Catholic" and "Protestant" are not at all out of date. They sharply define the inseparable differences of opinion between the two kinds of Christians, and they will always do so—at least until one sect swallows the other. But of course the word that is really out of date is the word *Christian*. Who now believes that a Hebrew-speaking serpent "tempted" a pair of human beings to eat an apple and that all the world is going to "Hell" unless "saved" by a Saviour sent down from "Heaven" specially by the Creator of the Universe—who is himself—to "save" them? We hear a lot from the Archbishop, but *not* that piece of imbecility, though it forms the whole basis on which Christian theology rests.

ROBERT BURNS

(Born January 25th, 1759)

Strange blend of love and joy and tears,
 Son of the soil whose shortened years,
 Sufficed to win for you a place
 In many hearts of every race;
 We tune the lyre to sing your lay
 On this returning natal day.
 Your genius wooed sweet nature's charm,
 Your satire roused the Kirk's alarm.
 Your Freedom's Charter stoutly framed
 The Brotherhood of Man proclaimed.
 Of Scotland's sons renowned the most
 To our immortal bard—A Toast!

JAMES HUMPHREY.

PENGUINS AND SEALS

(Concluded from page 27)

an uninterceptible missile"—quoted from General Omar Bradley. Limited success is no longer sufficient between contestants, one or both must be blasted to annihilation, and statesmen and military leaders long for glory at any cost; consider the nations they rule as tools subservient to their ambition and vanity.

Should the wind be blowing from the South-East when a bomb were dropped on the missile bases in Yorkshire, only a few million people would die. Should it blow from the North-East, almost the entire population would perish.

The National Secular Society supports nuclear disarmament. While all members may not accord with the conclusions reached by M. Le Ghait, they are with him in his main objective, to let the people *know*, that while they daydream and world leaders compete with one another in the art of procrastination, their fate teeters on a tightrope.

THE FREETHINKER

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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.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

A 9½" x 6" envelope addressed to the National Secular Society was posted at Oxford, January 19th at 5.30 p.m. It arrived empty, marked by Post Office, "Found at Oxford without contents". Sender please write.

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

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute Cinema, Paradise Street), Sunday, January 29th, 6.45 p.m.: T. H. R. JAMES, "The Beliefs of an Unbeliever".

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Tuesday, January 31st, 7.15 p.m.: A. J. W. CHAVASSE, "Individualism v. Socialism".

Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 29th, 6.30 p.m.: C. SHUTTLEWOOD, "Astronomy and Astronautics".

Marble Arch Branch N.S.S. (The Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, W.1), Sunday, January 29th (224th Anniversary of the Birth of Thomas Paine), 7.15 p.m.: CHRISTOPHER BRUNEL, "Thomas Paine and Modern Thought".

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Education Centre, Broad Street), Sunday, January 29th, 2.30 p.m.: OLIVER GREET, "Commercial Art".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Sunday, January 29th, 11 a.m.: LORD CHORLEY, "The Modern Approach to Punishment".

Notes and News

ARRANGEMENTS ARE GOING AHEAD for the proposed picketing of the British Transport Commission's offices in Marylebone Road, London, on Saturday, March 11th, in connection with the banning of the Family Planning Association poster from the London Underground. The poster was issued after a survey of the Association's clinics revealed that a large percentage of the people who attended would have come earlier had they known of the Association's existence. Readers may like to know what was on the banned poster. It showed a picture of a house in colour and three photographs: a smiling couple, a mother with a baby, and a standing laughing child. The wording

was as follows:—

If you are getting married and want family planning advice

If you are married and want to plan a family

If you want a family and you cannot have one

The Family Planning Association will help you. Write or call—64 Sloane Street, London, S.W.1, or Telephone Belgrave 7575.

That was what the Roman Catholics protested about and that was what the British Transport Commission decided was religiously controversial. Astrological posters and spiritualist posters, incidentally, may be seen on the London Underground almost any time.

★

WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT of Dr. Fisher's resignation as Archbishop of Canterbury, to take effect on May 31st, came the usual tributes. The BBC response was especially predictable: here was yet another chance to show its prize newsreels, the Coronation and the wedding of Princess Margaret. For most of the papers the theme was unity, the Archbishop's call on Pope John XXIII having been well timed. (The Pope, said *The Guardian*, "may have reflected at their meeting that Dr. Fisher had much in common with his own predecessor, Pius XII"). Had there not been the recent visit to Rome and the tour of the Holy Land (the best remembered picture may well be alongside a camel!) public interest in the retirement would have been even slighter than it is. And when all comes to all, does anyone outside the Church of England really care?

★

THE *Daily Mirror* (18/1/61) seemed to care. It hoped for a younger, more modern successor, "a Primate with a 20th century approach to 20th century problems". Dr. Fisher had done his best "according to his lights", but "his lights were dim". He had "dropped enough bricks to build a new cathedral", but he had "flopped . . . in conveying the message of Christianity powerfully in a hard and avaricious age". Altogether, he would "not go down in history as the greatest Archbishop of our times, or of any times . . . The darkness was around him, and the darkness remained". What the *Mirror* overlooked was that the darkness was the darkness of Christianity itself. Dr. Fisher's successor may have a 20th century approach to some problems, but he certainly won't have a 20th century approach to religion. The *Mirror* saw that the "difference between the pay of a humble parson with his dog collar and a gaitered bishop is an anachronism". It didn't see that both parsons and bishops are anachronisms in 1961.

★

THIS WEEK (Sunday, January 22nd, to Sunday, January 29th) is Mission Week at the University College of North Staffordshire, Keele, but the Christians are not having it all their own way. The Heretics Society, under the aegis of Mr. Peter Neville, is holding a counter demonstration. Literature has been supplied by the National Secular Society and Pioneer Press, and the main Heretics' speaker will be David H. Tribe, who has travelled specially from London. Mr. Tribe is well known at Marble Arch and was, of course, the author of "It's That 'Man' Again" (THE FREETHINKER, 13/1/61). Another of his articles, "Fictions Stranger than Fact", will appear soon. Meanwhile we wish him and the Heretics good meetings at Keele.

—NEXT WEEK—

JEWES AND THE VATICAN

By J. GORDON

Natural Theology

By JAMES MACCLUSKEY

IF EVER THERE WERE A *concordia discors*, the above title is about as good an example of it that I know. Of course Natural Theology has ever suited the minds of those people who draw down their blinds on Sundays, even though they may be unbelievers. Indeed Natural Theology even suggests that there could be an Unnatural Theology! One can understand the term Natural Philosophy, i.e. physics, although it once covered Moral Philosophy. In fact, the Roman Church has, or had, a Moral Theology which—in itself—postulates an Immoral Theology, and I can almost hear your readers whispering—"You're telling me!" The Romanist Moral Theology was a trade (Sorry! I should have said "duty") carried on by a *curia* of its Church which sat to decide what was right and what was wrong in human conduct, and actually drew up a sort of graduated scale of guilt under the subdivisions of mortal and venial sin. Theft could be a planned affair, or it could be done on the spur of the moment, or it might be a temporary lifting which the perpetrator intended to rectify later by returning the object "pinched"—to use a most expressive cockneyism. A rape could be without the consent of the victim, or it could be a non-resisted one, or with partial acquiescence. Yet the outlook of the *curia* was not so much a moral one, as it was to enable the priests to decide precisely what scale they had to adopt in their administration of the Sacrament of Penance, together—of course—with the appropriate monetary rewards. But to return to our *moutons*, i.e. Natural Theology.

It is over a century and a half since that squib of William Paley called *Natural Theology* (1802) was published; and although it was looked upon as the "Rock of Ages" among the apologetics of the Victorian era, it only raises a smile among philosophers nowadays. If you are interested in its value, I commend you to Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876). Still, it prompted a few who had substantial bank balances, to endow lectureships to defend that same Natural Theology because—after all—what was going to happen to their ill-gotten gains if people were led to believe that a "Being all powerful, wise and good" was a mere figment? Had they not prayed devoutly each night that they should be granted that Being's wisdom and goodness that they should prosper, hence the adequate bank balances? One such benefactor was the Earl of Bridgewater, who poured out some of his shekels to authors to defend Natural Theology. Thus the Bridgewater apologetics darkened the intellectual horizon, and among them were the effusions of a "Blessed Trinity" of DD's, backed up by a couple of MD's, who essayed to make sugar out of salt.

That such doctrine should ever be kept before our minds—*vivendi causa*—prompted a Scot named John Burnett who—with a keen sense of business for preferential treatment when he reach the "Golden Gates"—endowed lectureships which would testify "evidence that there is a Being all powerful, wise and good". In fact, an ancestor of a relation of mine—the Rev. J. B. Sumner, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury—was one of the earliest beneficiaries under the Burnett Trust. Later, those funds led to the establishment of the Burnett Lectureship at Aberdeen University, one of the lecturers appointed being W. Robertson Smith, afterwards Professor of Oriental Languages there. It was the latter's articles on Biblical subjects to the Encyclopedia Britannica which gave rise to the heresy hunt which ended with the expulsion of Robertson Smith from the "goodly fellowship" of the

Free Church, and his dismissal from the professorship at the University. As all the world knows, he was to become famous as the author of the *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889).

Just prior to that there was founded the Gifford Lectureships on Natural Theology in Scottish Universities. In Glasgow the first lecturer was the celebrated Max Müller, and he dealt with the subject with a free and open mind, as did another, William Wallace of Oxford. I recall a passage from Max Müller in his *Lecture on Missions*:—

We want less of creeds, but more of trust; less of ceremony but more of work; less of solemnity, but more of general honesty; less of doctrine, but more of love.

Yet although it is stipulated in the foundation of the lectureship that "the lecturer is subjected to no test, and the founder expressed the wish that the subject should be treated as a strictly natural science", the professional orthodox religionists soon got a foothold, and they were of the type of Edward Caird, DD, W. B. Paterson, DD, Wm. Temple, the Archbishop of York, W. E. Hocking, DD, the Professor of Natural Religion at Harvard University, H. Henry Farmer, DD, Leonard Hodgson, DD, and lastly Arthur James Balfour, that artful casuist, whose opinions were so mercilessly criticised by the late Ernest Newman who, under the camouflage of Hugh Mortimer Cecil indited that audacious book entitled *Pseudo-Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (1897).

Perhaps the most interesting of those who had been invited to deliver the Gifford Lectures at Glasgow University was Sir James G. Frazer. His grounds for refusal were as follows:

I need hardly say that I should feel gratified at receiving such a proposal as you speak of from my old University, but it would be impossible for me to accept it, so I beg that no further steps be taken in the matter. My reason for declining to entertain the proposal, if it were made, would be, first, that my studies in primitive religion do not in my opinion, qualify me in any way for lecturing on Natural Theology, which is, as I understand it, a totally different subject: and second, that my work is mapped out for a good many years to come, and that I intend to allow nothing that I can help to interfere with it.

From that letter we see his admirable steadfastness in purpose, from which not even an enticing "fee" would cause him to deviate the slightest from the work to which he had devoted his whole life. It was a wise decision, especially in view of the priceless treasures that he was to bestow on us in *The Golden Bough* (1890), *Adonis* (1906), *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910), *The Dying God* (1911), *The Belief In Immortality* (1913-24), *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* (1918), and *Man, God, and Immortality* (1927). How clearly do I remember his words in *The Scope of Social Anthropology* (1908):

The true rulers of men are the thinkers who advance knowledge . . . so among men themselves it is knowledge which in the long run directs and controls the forces of society. Thus the discoverers of new truths are the real though uncrowned and unseceptred kings of mankind.

UNDIGNIFIED

DEAR, SIR,

I have seen displayed in your window *Freedom's Foe—The Vatican*, a volume which you no doubt feel is serious and well worth reading.

However, having great regard to the acknowledged saintliness of the late Holy Father, and the deep and sincere concern for all Christianity of the present "homely" Pope John—both classified as "The Vatican", I would like to see your book displayed in a more dignified manner and not virtually wedged between *The Cultivation of the Abdomen* and *The History of Sex Worship!*

(Signed) MRS. V. MARTINO.

The Mind of Primitive Man

By FRANK MAITLAND

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND why modern scientists believe that primitive man ran about in terror of lightning and ghosts and so forth. Only the other week (6/1/61), in an excellent review by Colin McCall of Professor G. G. Simpson's article on Darwin in *The Plain View*, he quotes the "unpredictable, haunted" world of the Kamarakoto, a tribe of uncivilised Indians in South America. "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."

If we look at the whole matter from the point of view of plain common sense, is it not the case that the mountains of evidence about primitive man were collected on the carpets of University studies or were collected in the jungles by students to bring back and place on those carpets, with becoming reverence to accepted ideas on primitive man? How useful are those stacks of scientific books, written by scientists who have no notion of how primitive men must have lived.

Surely it is a simple thing to see that if primitive men really and truly lived in a world of dreams, ghosts, terrors, sacrifices, superstitions, orgies and Freudian afflictions of every possible kind, primitive man would have perished amongst perils and terrors which would have been quite regardless of their lower superstitions and lower, middle or higher religious supplications? If primitive man had really been the brainless idiot that the modern scientist supposes, then there would have been no modern scientists to invent atomic bombs. And if we were to reason in the same way as scientists suppose, we would say it was a great pity that primitive man had not been a brainless idiot!

If primitive man was truly haunted by old Mother Nature, surely there must have been a few sceptics, a few hardier intelligences, who would have told them that their lower superstitions were a lot of nonsense. But, then, a Stone Age Galileo, a Neanderthal Bradlaugh, would have had as much effect upon primitive society as Galileo and Bradlaugh had in their own day.

How on earth did primitive man emerge from his palsy of terror and get things done? We are still waiting for the scientists to explain that to us.

If primitive man was only concerned with worshipping fire on the altar or as the sun in the sky or in some other shape, how did he come to use fibre to make clay pots, burn forests, smelt gold and copper? It is no use saying that the scientist use of natural things existed side by side with the mental smokescreen of nature: that explains nothing. The scientific use of fire does not explain fire worship and fire worship does not explain the scientific use of fire.

Star-diviners could not have worked out the calendar; only astronomers. It was not the gods and their priests who created the irrigation systems of the Euphrates and the Nile, among the great achievements of primitive science. Scientific observation of the behaviour of water preceded the gods who could send the flood and stem the Red Sea.

I see no reason to suppose that primitive man thought or acted any differently from the ways in which we think and act. If what Professor Simpson calls "the higher superstitions" are still celebrated weekly in every United States hamlet, that only goes to show that the United States is just as much "haunted" as the land of the

Kamarakoto. The "lower" and "higher" are simply labels of prejudice, because, after all, the most rationalistic Professor in Harvard cannot possibly tell the Catholics and Presbyterians of the United States that they are as stupid as the Kamarakoto, and with none of the excuses that "uncivilisation" may give. What on earth is the difference between *kanaima* and the doctrine of original sin? What is the difference between a Kamarakoto assuaging the "brooding evil . . . manifested . . . in an unusual event" and a devout Catholic offering 9d. to St. Anthony to find him work?

Of course, as the Professor points out, we don't need to believe in *kanaima*, although apparently millions still do. Darwin helped to change all that. But the work of Lucretius and Ecclesiastes show that there were Darwins and Bradlaughs in all ages. And I have not the slightest doubt that among primitive men, atwitter and atremble because the man in the moon seemed to be frowning at them, a bold voice could be heard saying that, after all, probably the moon was only made of cheese—the real questions was: what kind of cheese? It is at once obvious that such a question could only arise after cheese had been invented, and not before.

COLIN McCALL *comments*: There may be something in what Mr. Maitland says, but it is not appropriate in the present case. Professor Simpson never suggests that primitive man is or was a brainless idiot, merely—but this is crucial—that he is and was unscientific. "Lower" and "higher" superstitions are not labels of prejudice when Simpson uses them (they are terms of convenience) for, as I stated, he regards the former as in some ways superior to the latter. Mr. Maitland is unfair in saying that "the most Rationalistic Professor in Harvard cannot possibly tell Catholics and Presbyterians of the United States that they are as stupid as the Kamarakoto", and I refer him to one of my quotes, viz.: "If the unusual happens, we need no longer blame *kanaima* (or a whimsical god or devil) . . .". In that and in other passages Simpson does precisely what Mr. Maitland says he cannot do. And Simpson is not, incidentally, a "carpet" critic: he has lived among the Kamarakoto. But if my review was misleading, I apologise and urge him to consult the original.

Points from New Books

REGINALD PAYNE tells a tragic story in his autobiography, *The Watershed* (Faber, 18s.). He saw the 1914 war begin as a fight to save small nations and end with a jingoistic election. As a man of high ethical principle, Mr. Payne registered as a conscientious objector; but later he gave way to the pressures of the time and decided that he ought to join the army. He was unprepared, however, for the lectures by sergeants on the best methods of committing atrocities with bayonets. Mercifully, he had a nervous break-down. His book convinces us that war itself is the great atrocity, and that all the great ethical lessons will have to be re-read back to everyday life if man is to survive as man.

One passage may be of particular interest to students of the ways of the clergy. At the outbreak of hostilities, Mr. Payne was on holiday in Switzerland. His memory of the crowded train journey back to England is a nightmare, but he mentions one incident for its outstanding impact. He writes:

"For a few hours on the second night my friend and I were standing in a corridor coach filled with troops, equipment and baggage. A fat, snoring priest lay stretched out across the lavatory floor, with his head lolling on the closet seat, his body in the open doorway with his legs across the corridor. The floor was foul. Between the outstretched and separated legs were the remains of a basket of food and a tipped up bottle of wine which had dribbled over his clothing to join the flood of urine and filth on the floor. The face was coarse and heavy. I was disgusted by the spectacle. I felt that if evidence were needed of the depravity of The Church of Rome here it was in the person of the drunken priest asleep amidst the foulness of the closet".

John Gunther, famous for many books of contemporary research, has compiled a detailed biography of Albert B. Lasker, the pioneer of American competitive advertising. *Taken at the Flood* (Hamish Hamilton, 30s.) is packed with anecdotes and apothegms; and it is, indirectly, a searing exposure of the bogus values of the advertising world. For instance, to give distinction to a toothpaste, Lasker invented a name for a chemical in the formula. Afterwards, he said: "I invented irium. Tell me what it is!"

The man himself, however, had many flashes of brilliant sanity; and he had one excellent scheme for diminishing the risk of nations resorting to arms. He suggested that an international agreement should be reached whereby every king, on ascending a European throne, and every prime minister, on assuming office, must forthwith appoint a substitute, an alter ego for his office. Then, in the event of war, the real king or head of state would be obliged to go to the front at once as a private, with the substitute staying behind to do his work in safety!

Lasker certainly at times transcended the world of radio commercials and "subliminal salesmanship". At the end of his life, he was able to define a liberal in the most moving terms. He declared that a liberal is a man who knows that "if he himself is to survive, all others must survive". Tycoon he may have been; but one cannot, after reading Mr. Gunther's fascinating pages, add Lasker to the conventional American collection in the zoo of millionaires.

Frederick Van Der Meer's *Atlas of Western Civilisation* (D. Van Nostrand, £4 5s.) contains scholarly maps showing the relationship in place and epoch of "the great movements of the mind". When summing up our cultural heritage, the author writes: "Western Man sets no store by deafening speeds or by the technical tricks which bring sounds and pictures over the ether into his very home. Were he to do so, he would become more wretched than any slave in the Ancient World. For the latter served at least a human master, but modern man would become the slave of the relentless machine". I hope that Western Man will attend, and be inspired to do so by the wealth of illustration (painting, sculpture, architecture of the ages) in this important book.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

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LETTER FROM A YOUNG FREETHINKER

I am a Grammar School student studying for Advanced Level G.C.E. on a modern language syllabus. Despite the great need to economise our time and absorb as much knowledge as possible in the shortest possible time, we are still subjected to the intellectually-insulting time-waster of Religious Instruction, carried out by a bespectacled, ample-girthed, close-minded "man of God" who threatens one with "Hell-Fire" (incredible, isn't it?), and tells us that "if Christ came back to earth, you'd be the people to crucify him!" Thus we learn about the vicious attitude that typifies rationalist thought and comes so naturally to "those who have refused to acknowledge their Creator".

Fellow-Freethinkers will sympathise when they realise that, besides having to sit through this sort of verbal rubbish for forty minutes each week, I am also compelled to attend School Prayers every morning despite an appeal to the head-master asking leave to absent. One searches in vain for the awakening of the sort of freedom of expression so much a part of University life.

It would be impossible to attempt to tab and explain the forces, traditional and conscious, at work in the school, within the confines of a letter. But it is to Freethought that I owe my loyalties for showing me the road to mental alleviation at a time when I was struggling vainly to equate Christian dogma with the world I knew, and I am always attentive to an opportunity to further its principles.

F. J. SEED.

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