

The Freethinker

Volume LXXXIII—No. 12

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

THE BBC TELEVISION PROGRAMME, *The Cosmologists*, in which five astronomers talked about their work to Stephen Black (Tuesday, March 12th, 1963) proved rather less interesting, to me at least, than *The Prizewinners*, the previous programme of this kind, in which Dr. Crick and the other Nobel prizewinners were interviewed. It is difficult to account for the disappointment this time. Perhaps it was the immensity of the subject which wasn't really brought home to the viewer. One or two telescopic glimpses into space for instance, might usefully have been permitted. On the other hand, I am sure that a contributory factor was the rather imprecise terminology used on occasions.

Certainly time was irritatingly wasted asking Drs. Margaret and Geoffrey Burbidge how they had met and why they went to America. This could simply have been stated while we were watching them walk down the slope from their Arizona telescope. And one felt that they could have extended a little more by pertinent questioning without their answers being too complex for the audience. Perhaps, though, the producer's aim was to lead us simple people gently into the realms of cosmological theory.

"Continuous Creation"
Dr. Margaret Burbidge described herself as agnostic, but said that she believed in a spiritual side of the universe. What she meant by this was not elucidated. Mr. Black suggested that "creation" (continuous or otherwise) presumes a creator. Dr. Geoffrey Burbidge conceded that it presumes an act. In fact, we know that neither Fred Hoyle nor Hermann Bondi, the leading proponents of "continuous creation", believes in a creator or an "act" of creation. "Creation" is a misnomer. This may not matter much in astronomical circles, where the meaning is known. Outside those circles, however, it can cause a great deal of misunderstanding. So, too, can the use of the term "evolutionary" applied to the "big bang" theory, as though the "continuous creation" theory weren't evolutionary as well. Its alternative appellation "steady state" has an overall application and does not imply changelessness.

K. R. Popper has said (in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*) that: "In science, we take care that the statements we make should never depend upon the meaning of our terms. Even where the terms are defined, we never try to derive any information from the definition, or to base any argument upon it. That is why our terms make so little trouble. We do not overburden them. We try to attach to them as little weight as possible. We do not take their 'meaning' too seriously. We are always conscious that our terms are a little vague (since we have learned to use them only in practical applications) and we reach precision not by reducing their penumbra of vagueness, but rather by keeping well within it, by carefully phrasing our sentences in such a way that the possible shades of meaning do not matter. This is how we avoid quarrel-

ling about words". Which may be all right for the scientists themselves, but can be a little troublesome for non-scientists.

Hoyle

Professor Hoyle did make it clear that he didn't believe that particles were created "out of nothing", but "out of a field", which he compared to a magnetic field, an electro-magnetic field and a gravitational field. And to produce an atom, he speculated, might take 10,000 years or so. There was, then, nothing like an "act of creation" in the usually accepted sense. And Hoyle added that he didn't think the concept of God "gets you anywhere", though—

with unfortunate imprecision—he said that if you say there is "a coherent plan in the universe, I would tend to agree".

"An Act of Faith"

I don't think Hoyle means a plan in the sense of a scheme with a purpose in mind, which would imply a planner and bring one back to the concept of God which doesn't get you anywhere. But if he means that he detects a certain regularity or uniformity throughout the cosmos, why didn't he say so?

He was likewise vague when he called the whole of life "an act of faith"; when he said that "paradoxically, an atheist is more in need of faith than a Christian"; and when he said: "Mathematics, in so far as we have any concept of God, is God". Sir James Jeans was wrong to bring in God (as a great Mathematician), Hoyle remarked. Why then did he himself employ the term at all? Why not, if that is what he meant, say that he thought mathematics provided a key to understanding the cosmos?

Lovell

Sir Bernard Lovell saw no reason to dispose of God "as Hoyle does", though he gave us no reason to retain Him either. That we can never get "exact" or "final" answers, Hoyle—and indeed all scientists—would agree. It is theologians, not scientists, who give final answers—of a sort.

Bondi

Hermann Bondi made this plain in the final interview in the programme. The methods of science, he pointed out, were in "utter opposition" to the religious point of view. It was absurd to say that "I am a Christian, therefore all Buddhists and Muslims are wrong". Or vice versa. It was very wrong to force religious views on people, yet this went on today; it was not confined to the Middle Ages. (In fact, the agnostic Dr. Margaret Burbidge had earlier admitted teaching her young daughter about God on the pretext that natural explanations were too difficult for children.) Professor Bondi stressed—and perhaps overstressed, in the light of technological achievements—the uncertainty of science. A theory, he said, is put forward to be disproved, and Popper has of course argued that this is the basis of science. But this is surely only half true. A theory is a suggested explanation of certain

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

"The Cosmologists"

By COLIN McCALL

phenomena, and while it can never be absolutely proved—always being open to disproof—it can be empirically substantiated.

“Impressive Success”

Indeed, Professor Bondi himself mentioned the theory that heavy elements (oxygen, carbon, iron, etc.) were built up from hydrogen, and the “extremely successful” work in the last decade to find if there was anywhere in the universe hot enough for heavy elements to be being made now. To quote his introductory article in the *Radio Times* (7/3/63): “Perhaps the most impressive success of cosmology is that it inspired work which answered this question convincingly with a ‘yes’”. It was, as he remarked in the programme itself, the “steady state” (i.e. “continuous creation”) theory that inspired this work.

But if I had to choose between *The Cosmologists* and Professor Bondi’s *Radio Times* introduction to it, I should choose the latter. It can be wholeheartedly recommended.

The Chemical Composition of Jesus

By J. A. MILLAR

“DO YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS?” I asked the attractive young lady who had been obviously listening with interest to our discussion on the falsity of the Bible. “Yes” she replied, “and no matter what you may say, or produce, to show that He does not exist, I always will.” “Why?” was my obvious rejoinder. “Because He is in my heart.” “But there is not room in a heart for anyone, it is a mass of muscle and tissue, nerve fibres and blood, how could Jesus be in there?” “I can feel that He is.” “But how do you *know* it is Jesus that you feel?” Have you looked inside your heart, and if you have, how would you recognise who or what you saw?” No reply.

Christianity is fighting its last battle. The facts which it has marshalled in its defence have been refuted; religious writings have been exposed, and the parasitical nature of priestcraft proved. All that is left now, is the contention that there is such a thing as a personal experience of “gods”. With this in itself, there can be no quarrel, as it is purely a matter for the individual. What we can, and should contest, is the further assertion that a “personal experience” is available to all those who have enough faith to want and seek it; and the very idea is simply an undisguised invitation to suppress intellectual freethought which we cannot and must not tolerate.

It is now an established scientific fact that certain chemicals when imbibed into the human organism, produce what have been termed “religious” experiences. These have been described by highly competent scientific observers as feelings of “a presence”, “being loved”, “awareness of infinity”, and so on. Drugs which exert such effects have long been known to man, and it is of the greatest importance to note that they have been highly prized as sacred potions for religious purposes. The Aztecs utilised peyotl to induce mystical “feelings”, the Incas coca; opium was used by oriental sects, and marihuana employed widely in the middle east. Theophrastus, Dioscorides, and Pliny, were known to be familiar with the effects of opium, whilst the Book of Revelation has all the hall-marks of the work of a drug addict. There is nothing unusual in drug addicts and insane persons being considered “holy”.

According to Robert S. de Ropp (*Drugs and Mind*, p.7), “All these drugs act by affecting the *chemistry* of the brain, for it is out of this chemistry that what we call mind

emerges. The mind of man does not exist in a vacuum. It is associated with the chemistry of the brain and this chemistry underlies all our manifestations. Neither thought nor emotion can occur without some chemical change. . . . Were this not so the action of drugs on the mind could never be understood. It is precisely because all mental and emotional processes have a chemical basis that these drugs exert an action”.

Amongst the more sensational breakthroughs in biochemistry was the discovery of the drugs mescaline and lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25), as agents which caused “religious feelings” and schizophrenia—which often gives rise to alleged religious experience if the duality of personality is sufficiently strong—together with the important further consequent discovery that people who are schizophrenic or suffering from religious mania invariably have a chemical substance of the LSD group present within their bloodstream.

Quastel and Wheatly have shown that the drug mescaline and similar chemicals interfere with oxidative processes in minced brain tissue, and the naturally occurring presence of these substances is well known in the human organism, and, from a scientific point of view, would constitute a biochemical derangement, giving rise to varying degrees of mental disorder. But how, it might be asked, do we know that it is not those who do not possess these substances in their organic make-up, who are the mentally afflicted? The answer to this is simply that there is no consistency of logical reaction amongst the afflicted.

The mental manifestations of such chemical disorders are attributed to preconceived notions derived from another source. Thus, Buddhists attribute them to Buddha, Jews to God, Christians to Christ, yet others to anything and everything, from flying saucers to Venusians. From this, we may be tolerably certain that the experienced distortions of reality are in fact physical impediments, and that such Christians stand in the same need of modern mental treatment as any other insane person. Consequently, when we are told by Christians “I feel Jesus in my heart”, they are in fact, making a statement that there is in their bloodstream a chemical chain of the LSD group (it is quite coincidental that the scientific abbreviation for the chemical composition of the saviour and the temporal aims [LSD] of some of his “disciples” should be the same!) and are merely stating that Jesus Christ is a compound of carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen and oxygen.

I very much doubt whether the average Christian would care to defend his “Lord” as being infinitely less complex in structure than man, and capable of easy synthesising in a test tube. If any theologians who are interested in “injecting new blood” into their Church based on the “spirit of the early Christians and Jesus”, would care to write to me, I will gladly give them the precise formula for the drugs which will produce guaranteed “personal experiences”. There is only one snag. If injected into the bloodstream of a militant atheist, the result might be not to make him a Christian, but rather to imagine that the “spirit” of Bradlaugh is in his heart”, to “hear” the voice of G. W. Foote “talking” to him, and possibly, an eventual campaign for the cononisation of Chapman Cohen.

It should be pointed out, however, that the actual number of cases of religious mania due to biochemical disorders are very few in number, certainly less than one tenth of one per cent, and the bulk of those claiming personal experience of God do so without any real idea of what they mean, but as a result of childhood indoctrination.

The Society of Jesus and The Salvation Army

By F. A. RIDLEY

HAVING IN THE course of a varied life, managed to impinge upon quite a number of fields of human activity, one of my rewards is a mail of an also somewhat varied character. As an illustration of this, there arrived by the same post copies of that well-known organ of the Salvation Army, *The War Cry* and the house journal of the English Jesuits of Heythrop College, Oxford, *To Our Friends*, to which notable ecclesiastical production I have before this had occasion to draw the attention of the readers of this paper. As I am, I think I may say, one who is always willing to learn from any available source, I read carefully these journals that officially represent two such famous, and in their day and generation, vastly influential organisations as the Catholic Society or Company of Jesus, founded on military lines by the Spanish ex-soldier, Ignatius of Loyola (c. 1490-1556), and the somewhat similar organisation of the "General" William Booth (1827-1912), also on professedly military lines and now known universally as the Salvation Army. Two crack corps of religious shock troops, two armies of salvation which belong respectively to the Roman Catholic and Protestant persuasions. A brief consideration of the major points in which these two famous organisations agree and disagree may not be altogether without interest to students of modern religious history.

It is obvious at first sight that within their respective—and in some ways very divergent—conditions of origin and in their more general terms of reference, there are some markedly similar points held in common both by the Company, a military term in the founder's original Spanish—founded by Ignatius of Loyola, and in the Army—another and more obviously military designation—that stemmed from the inspiration of William Booth. Fundamentally the same hierarchical predominantly military type of organisation prevails, and the "General" is virtually an absolute (elected) monarch; a dictator elected for life with virtually unlimited power. The respective electors, the Jesuit General Congregation and the Salvationist High Council, are also somewhat similar in character and composition.

Similarly, this essentially military character pervades the entire organisations, for both the average Jesuit and the average Salvationist is a soldier under military discipline; a man under authority throughout the entire course of his life-long service in the religious corps *d'élite* for which he has volunteered. Each nowadays world-wide body is divided into provinces and districts under direction of the local (Jesuit) Provincial and/or the Salvation Army Commissioner, both of whom, whilst exercising virtually unchallenged authority over their territorial assignment and local (as we may term them) army corps, are themselves directly subordinate to the world headquarters of the organisation. It seems that this striking organisational similarity is not altogether the work of chance, nor even the natural outcome of the very similar historical mission and purpose of these two famous bodies of religious shock troops. At least, I was once informed by a student of the history of the Salvation Army, that that organising genius of the Army, the second "General", Bramwell Booth, professed a great admiration for the older Catholic "Salvation Army" and that he consciously imitated the Jesuits in many organisational details. So that the many resemblances are not entirely accidental.

Be that as it may, some reciprocal admiration has not

been lacking upon the Catholic side. For that major pillar of Rome—incidentally the closest ally of the Jesuits in the Vatican Council of 1870—Cardinal Manning, paid frequent visits to Salvationist headquarters. For which indeed, this intransigent pillar of Roman orthodoxy professed such a high regard that it is on record that he once advised his successor, Cardinal Vaughan, that if he wanted to be not only a good Catholic but a good Christian as well, to study and to imitate the Protestant Salvation Army.

In the precise circumstances of their initial organisation, there is a marked similarity between the Society and the Army for their respective founders, were men of broadly similar types, born leaders and propagandists rather than business men or administrators in specialised matters of detail. In which latter respect, it was the second Jesuit General Lainez and the second Salvationist, General Bramwell Booth who generally filled in the details of the two so remarkably efficient world-wide organisations.

Both the Jesuits and the Salvation Army appeared at particular historical moments in order to achieve special religious tasks. One can add that both bodies arose in answer to a contemporary religious crisis, and that they both assumed special organisational types in order to meet this crisis. In the case of the Jesuits, not only the older but historically the more important of the two, their original purpose was changed by external circumstances at an early date. For Loyola originally founded his Company with a precise object to promote a fresh anti-Muslim crusade that would eventually recover Jerusalem and the holy places of Palestine (as I have shown in my book, *The Jesuits; A Study in Counter-Revolution*, now out of print).

Loyola was a pilgrim in Jerusalem when he first conceived the plan of founding a new and specially constituted religious order. It was the advent of unexpected religious and geographical developments that eventually transformed Loyola's Company into the major antagonist of the Protestant Reformation and the spearhead of Catholic missions in the newly discovered Pagan lands in America and Asia. In the course of their versatile cosmopolitan activities, the Jesuits have touched life at many points. In, for example, the cultural sphere, there is no real comparison between them and the Salvation Army. For whilst it has often been charged against the Jesuits that their famous principle (enunciated by their founder) of "corpse-like obedience" to their superiors has effectively excluded men of original genius from their ranks (e.g. Descartes, Lamarck and Voltaire, were all pupils of the order) their general cultural standard has been quite respectable. Many competent scientists from Fr. Riccioli, SJ, whose pioneer lunar map was the basis of all later lunar cosmography and who first named the lunar mountains (one of which is still named after Galileo's Jesuit correspondent Fr. Clavius, SJ) to the late Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the eminent palaeontologist and the discoverer of Peking Man, as well as other intellectuals have served in their ranks. Otherwise the order could not have hoped to meet the Reformers on equal intellectual terms.

Contrarily, the 19th century Salvation Army came into existence in order to discharge a much more limited purpose.
(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

Christians these days are not very happy about the Creation story in the first chapter of Genesis. After they had insisted for nearly 2,000 years that it was part of God's Precious Word, the theory of evolution annihilated the story as *history* and, in recent years, physicists and astronomers have helped to annihilate it as science. So what is a good and pious bishop to do? The other Sunday, ATV gave us Dr. J. Robinson, the Bishop of Woolwich, Sir Bernard Lovell, and Professor C. A. Coulson discussing the problem with Arthur Garrett. And a most entertaining discussion it was.

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Sir Bernard told us about the millions of galaxies, stars, planets, which filled the heavens, and enlarged upon this so much that the statement in the Holy Bible, that God "made the stars also" seemed something of an understatement. But not for two such stout believers as the Bishop and Professor Coulson. How much more wonderful is God Almighty *now*, when we contemplate all the modern discoveries and contrast them with the prosaic "he made the stars also". No, science is entirely with God these times as well as with his now more than ever Precious Word!

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Not all Methodists are enthusiastically embracing "unity" with the Church of England. What is frightening some of them is the fear that the English Church is more or less rapidly becoming tainted with Roman Catholicism, and ready to join up with the Vatican on the Vatican's terms. It is doubtful whether this will include a return of the Inquisition, though some Methodists think this will be the case. But can Rome be trusted? Well, look at its history.

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That great depository of song, "Hymns Ancient and Modern", most of which used to be sung with the utmost pious fervour in church and chapel, especially by women, is going through a particularly violent purging these heretical days. A committee of clergymen and teachers are busily weeding out what are now thought by them to be hymns of "gloom and woe"—though some of us think the word "misery" should also be added here. Anyway, the judges do not like "Foul, I to the fountain fly", and "Every aspect pleases and only man is vile". These beautiful lines are from the most sung of all hymns—"Rock of Ages" and "Greenland's Icy Mountains".

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And the judges just hate "Onward Christian Soldiers", "Abide with me", and even "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross". Think of it—"Abide with Me" the Hymn which used to make all Christians who sang it think that they really were with Jesus—yet out it goes! So does "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam". But are the judges keeping that glorious hymn, the one most beloved of the Salvation Army—"Washed in the blood of Jesus"? It always goes well with the details of the Crucifixion especially at Easter time. Perhaps it requires a little too much faith in unbelieving times.

★

Now that Mr. Khrushchev's son-in-law has visited the Pope, there is joy, if not exactly among the Angels in Heaven, at least in Christian circles. Does it mean a rapprochement between Atheistic Communism and Roman Catholicism? Even if it does not mean quite that, it may mean as the *Daily Express* (March 8th) says, "that the Soviet Government at last recognises the enduring spiritual power of the Christian faith", a statement which is rather odd, for the Christian faith here must mean Roman

Catholicism, considered by many Protestant writers as being mostly based on Paganism.

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The "Daily Express" also says that this proves that "Christianity cannot be crushed" which is perhaps true if savage force is used to crush it. But is not the long steady disintegration of Christianity which is now taking place, except among the most ignorant, proof that it can be criticised out of existence? Where stand Hell and Heaven, Angels and Devils—all cardinal doctrines of the Faith—these days? Do even bishops really believe in the Virgin Birth—or even in the Resurrection except on blind faith? Christianity will, like all religions, finally disappear even if Khrushchev's son-in-law did visit the Vatican.

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AND THE SALVATION ARMY

(Concluded from page 91).

pose; in the course of fulfilling which, it had no need of the cultural studies in which the Jesuits specialised. For William Booth led his "Army" into "darkest England" (and darkest foreign equivalents) with the object of reclaiming for Christianity the submerged tenth, the depressed outcasts who formed the reverse side of the medal to the wealth and splendour of the Victorian upper classes in that era of savage economic competition. It was with the precise object of reclaiming for Christianity, the down and outs—a very numerous class who had then disappeared from the view, not only of organised society but equally of organised religion that the early Army went out into the slums in a manner perhaps rather similar to that of the early Christians, for I have always thought that if the early revivalist preachers who started Christianity could return today, they would probably become either Salvationists or Jehovah's Witnesses! For this purpose the Army had necessarily to indulge in crude demagogic tactics and noises. Culture would have been out of place amongst the Army's East End clientele (cf *The People of the Abyss*, by Jack London for a grim, but probably accurate picture of social conditions in the East End of London at this time).

In comparing our two "armies", we shall find no counterpart in the Protestant "Company of Jesus" to the sophisticated Jesuit intellectuals. I, at least, cannot recall the name of a single Salvationist intellectual, scientist or otherwise. It was not the purpose of the Booth organisation to produce them, since they would have been useless in its self-chosen field of reclaiming for Christ the then illiterate masses, the Marxist *Lumpen Proletariat* of the period. Incidentally, since nowadays the Salvation Army is a wealthy and therefore respectable organisation, it is not always realised that the early Salvationists were widely regarded as members of a subversive organisation, dangerous revolutionaries! Did not even Engels salute them as "Christian Socialists engaged in fighting capitalism in a religious way"? This could hardly be said of "General" Booth's present-day successors.

Whatever their historic points of similarity and divergence, both these major Catholic and Protestant paramilitary organisations were alike in this, that they were both bodies of specially trained shock troops organised for special purposes. Their subsequent world-wide success represents an effective example of the principle of the survival of the fittest in the given historic sphere: an evolutionary law that evidently applies also in the sphere of religious as well as of secular organisation.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

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Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, March 24th, 6.45 p.m.: J. M. ALEXANDER, "Psychology and World Politics".

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Tuesday, March 26th, 7.30 p.m.: H. L. BEALES, MA, "On Young and Old, Modern Pressures to Conform".

Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, Room 7, Bath Street), Sunday, March 24th, 3 p.m.: S. D. KUEBART, "The Spanish Inquisition" and JOHN W. TELFER, "Lourdes, Europe's Greatest Fraud".

Lord Humanist Group (Friends' Meeting House, Cleveland Road, Monday, March 25th, 7.45 p.m.: MRS. DE MANBEY, "The Second Sex".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, March 24th, 6.30 p.m.: PAUL BRODETSKY, MA, "John Stuart Mill".

Manchester Branch NSS (Wheatsheaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, March 24th, 7.30 p.m.: COLIN MCCALL, "Catholicism and Crime".

Marble Arch Branch (The Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, March 24th, 7.30 p.m.: A. L. MORTON, "Heavens on Earth".

North Staffordshire Humanist Group (Guildhall, High Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme), Friday, March 22nd, 7.15 p.m.: A MEETING.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, March 24th, 11 a.m.: REGINALD SORENSEN, MP, "The Orient in Transition".

Notes and News

WE ARE sure Mr. Khrushchev will be delighted to hear (from the *Sunday Telegraph*) that he has a soul. The *Telegraph* (10/3/63) was speculating on the possibility of the Russian leader following his daughter and her husband (the editor of *Izvestia*) to Rome for a papal audience, and it assured "even the most hidebound Monsignor" that he had no cause to be shocked by a visit from the Soviet leader. "He has a soul", the *Telegraph* said; "he is even fond of quoting the Bible". And, it concluded: "He is unlikely to ask, as Stalin did, 'How many divisions has the Pope?' Such facile materialism is inappropriate when Chinese fanaticism bids fair to threaten Russia and the West alike".

"WHILE DOCTORS are doing their utmost to free neurotic patients of the guilt-complexes which bedevil their lives", wrote a doctor in the medical paper, *Stethoscope* (*The People*, 3/3/63), "the churches by their old fashioned philosophy seem to be doing their utmost to instil such guilt-complexes". Urging the parsons to be a bit more up to date in their moral philosophy, the doctor called for: "A little less of your Sin and Damnation—and a little more human compassion and sympathy with human frailty".

★

SARAH HOSE (31) and Nancy Gregory (19), teachers at the Truth for Youth School, run by the Church of God, were both fined £71 at Hagerstown, Maryland, USA, for beating an eight-year-old pupil. The boy had to spend 20 days in hospital, and the teachers were ordered to pay his medical expenses and to undergo psychiatric tests (*Daily Telegraph*, 8/3/63). "The school principal, the Rev. E. E. Marquiss, had quoted the Book of Proverbs admonition, 'Beat the child and stop not for his crying. He will not die'."

★

WHEN THE famous Birmingham type-designer and printer John Baskerville died in 1775, he was buried, at his own request, in an upright position and "in unconsecrated ground"—on his own land, in fact. His coffin was removed in 1821 during the digging of a canal, and was reinterred at Christ Church, New Street, Birmingham, only to be removed again in the 1890s to the catacombs beneath Warstone Lane Cemetery Church with a tablet provided by public subscription. Now Councillor John Silk is to petition the Birmingham City Council for the removal of Baskerville's lead coffin and its burial in unconsecrated ground. "I think it is unfortunate that one of our greatest citizen's has had his dearest wishes deliberately flouted", said Mr. Silk (*Birmingham Evening Despatch*, 8/3/63). "I think people's dying wishes should be respected, and there is also the point that people in hallowed ground might not like to be placed next to a self-confessed atheist". Baskerville's own epitaph was printed in THE FREETHINKER on January 18th, 1963.

★

THE FIRST (February 1963) issue of *The Rationalist*, the duplicated magazine of the Sheffield University Rationalist Society is lively and interesting. Graham W. Parker writes on "What is the Purpose of Life?", Reg. T. Hearne on "The Place of the Rationalist in World Affairs" and Terry S. Marshall on "An Outsider Looks at Modern Christianity", while in the introductory article, "Forward", Peter W. Crabtree invites all the rationalists of the university, "whether you call yourself humanist, atheist, agnostic or freethinker" to join in the activities of the Rationalist Society. We hope they will respond.

★

A MOTHERS' UNION investigating team who visited more than 150 mothers in the parish of St. Giles, Camberwell, has reported "disappointing" results to the vicar, the Rev. John Nicholls. The team discovered that South London mothers "just have not the time to go to church" (*Evening Standard*, 6/3/63) to which Mr. Nicholls retorted: "One wonders how they found time to go to church to get married, let alone find the time to recall their wedding promises. One promise was to see that children were brought up Christianly and virtuously. It makes you think!" It does indeed.

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CASSANDRA of the *Daily Mirror* has heard (5/3/63) that there is a suggestion to have lie detectors installed in Confession boxes.

A Great American Scholar

By H. CUTNER

Titan vs. Taboo: The Life of William Benjamin Smith by Warren Browne. The Diogenes Press, Tucson, Arizona, USA. 37 pages. 1961. \$7.50. (Obtainable in England through W. H. Smith & Son Ltd.)

PROFESSOR WILLIAM BENJAMIN SMITH was born in 1850, and I came across his book *Ecce Deus* ("Behold the God")—when it was published here in 1912. Up to then, I had closely followed C. F. Dupuis, Robert Taylor, and J. M. Robertson on the Myth Theory of Jesus, but Smith opened a new line of approach which at the time I did not quite understand and which ignored some of the other arguments which I thought were unanswerable. I was very curious to know something about W.B. Smith, but could find out only that he had written a book in German on the *Pre-Christian Jesus*, and *Ecce Deus* (also in German) which he translated into English himself.

Some years ago, I was the guest of Professor Warren Browne at dinner, and was astonished at what he told me about his friend's remarkable accomplishments—and I think that most readers of this brilliant biography will be equally astonished. The account Professor Browne gives of *Ecce Deus*, and the controversies it aroused, occupy over sixty pages and should compensate those readers who cannot obtain the book for its first-class interpretation of Smith's original approach to the question of the existence of Jesus. For it required a long preparation and an arduous study of the Bible and Biblical literature, as well as the genius of a great scholar like Smith, to put his facts and speculations before what was in the nature of things a hostile public.

There was little eventful in his childhood—he was born in Stanford, Kentucky—and he had little formal education, though in his household there was Dryden's translation of Vergil's *Aeneid* which captivated the boy who later received from his father a copy of Pope's *Homer*, and Anthon's *Classical Dictionary*.

As Smith's mother and sisters very very religious (they were Campbellites or Disciples of Christ) we can understand his early preoccupation with religion; and indeed his earliest printed pamphlets dealt with Paul and some of the New Testament Apocrypha (all duly noted in Professor Browne's very full bibliography of Smith's works).

But it was necessary by the time he was 17 for Smith to go to a university, and he went to Kentucky University, learning Greek, Latin, and mathematics, all subjects which he mastered. Indeed, his proficiency in mathematics was so great that he became in time one of the greatest mathematicians in the USA, contributing many articles to advanced magazines on the subject, and in particular to the great American encyclopedias. He received many appointments as he grew older.

All the time, however, he never lost interest in religion particularly the Christian religion, which he came more and more to disbelieve. For example, who wrote the Pauline Epistles? Were they veritably "letters" written by a Jew called Saul who had his name changed to Paul? There is no evidence whatever that their author was a Jew or that he knew much about Jesus and his "ministry". Smith came to the conclusion that "the authorship of the Pauline Epistles does not reside in one person". That they are "gnostic" documents, heavily edited in the interests of the early Christian Church has been my own conclusion arrived at independently many years ago. I am quite convinced that "Paul" is as much of a literary invention as "Jesus". But the reader must go to Professor Browne's biography to learn how Smith came to see the

different authors of the famous Epistles.

From Paul it was but a step to Jesus, and Professor Browne deals exhaustively with Smith's progress in "radical criticism". From his constant study, he says,

Of the Gospels, the Epistles of Paul, and other books of the New Testament, he came to perceive there was very little in them concerning any life of Jesus Christ, but a great deal about the death and Crucifixion, and to a lesser extent, the Resurrection. What the Christ seemingly said and did could be easily understood as descriptive of the actions of a god, but highly difficult to comprehend as those of a man. Furthermore, it seemed to him that the Scriptures were put forth as primary dogmas; they do not describe Jesus the Man so much as Christ the God; they are attempts to teach or to illustrate theological doctrines . . .

By the year 1900, Smith "had definitely arrived at the conclusion that the Scriptures were being and had been misread for many generations"; and this led him to a discussion with one of America's most distinguished parsons, the Rev. Lyman Abbott, the Editor of *The Outlook*. Smith had little difficulty in (metaphorically speaking) annihilating Abbott and his defence of the "history" of early Christianity. "The essence of the early Christian preaching" Smith argued, "was clearly dogmatic and not of life at all!" And he added, "That the ancients either put into those Gospels or took out of them the matchless model, the inspiring ideal, the unailing motive power that so enkindles noble natures of today, is a grave historic error".

Smith's articles on Paul brought him some complimentary terms from Dr. Cheyne, who would have asked him to write the article in the *Encyclopedia Biblica* if he had not first asked Professor Van Manen to do so. Van Manen claimed that all the Epistles of Paul were anonymous and not written in the form we have them before the middle of the second century. His position was that of Smith more or less—which accounts for the fact that all true Christians heartily dislike both heretical scholars.

Eventually, Smith became convinced that the date assigned to Jesus was all wrong, and that there actually was a "pre-Christian" Jesus, and he wrote a book on this thesis which, written in German, has so far not been translated into English. Those of us who take the view that the "ideal" figure of Jesus was a literary invention can find at least some justification in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. How Smith would have revelled in them as supporting him so marvellously!

One reason why he wrote in German was because he was an incomparable linguist, and it intrigued him to try his hand at such a difficult language which he learnt when studying and teaching in Germany. His scholarship was greatly admired in the German universities—of course before the First World War. At all events, he worked on *Ecce Deus* in German, and published it in Germany before translating it into English; and it appeared in England in 1912. The book was the result of a much hard thinking and writing, and it certainly is one of the most original contributions on its subject ever written.

It is brilliantly summarised and explained by Professor Browne whose account of its reception and the criticisms it aroused are truly fascinating to all interested in the subject of the origins of Christianity. I hope to deal with both in my next article as well as Smith's extraordinary posthumous work *The Birth of the Gospel*. I doubt whether I could have done this without the luminous account of both books given us by Professor Browne in his admirable biography.

(To be concluded)

My Final Word

By G. I. BENNETT

MR. D. H. TRIBE has a gift for amusing caricature. His seeing me "place daisy chains on the graves of 19th century thinkers . . . or prod the thickets with [my] proctorial staff" are examples. He is, however, a poor controversialist, and in his article of March 8th, which purports to be a reply to mine, he strays freely from the points at issue.

I asked him a direct question, What are *your* sexual ethics? which one would have thought that a man who so obviously disagreed with me would have jumped at answering. But no. I was referred to his article "Religion and Sex" (which, apart from its notion that most people today tend to treat sex as a great joke, is more concerned with religion than sex), and to that recent much-discussed publication "Towards a Quaker View of Sex". Which, with all Mr. Tribe's advocacy of "a wide range of permissiveness for purely individual whim", leave matters substantially where they were.

Neither Mr. Tribe nor Mr. Cobell are to be drawn into telling us what kind of social set-up they envisage for the future when their demolition of western sexual standards—British in particular—has taken place. I suppose the reason is that they don't know. We have many iconoclasts of this *genre* nowadays who revel in pulling down for its own sake.

Another question of mine was: "Of what quality is love if a woman gives her body freely and experimentally to others?" None of my opponents gave it serious consideration, although Mr. Tribe quotes it in part and Mr. Cobell discourses on the comparative irrelevancy that the word *gives* in this context has a Christian connotation.

A woman may be a delightful creature, but she is, in any mature assessment, more than a man's plaything, more than a titillator of his passions. She is a personality in her own right with a need for a genuine love relationship where there is affection, sympathy, gentleness, and trust. And in his legitimate role a man protects a woman. In this lies his self-respect, in this his masculinity. It is only within such a love relationship that sex can properly express itself. This is aside from the question of the legal contract of marriage, since some who have never gone through the civil ceremony have been in all but name most devotedly wedded to each other in spirit as in body.

Now what strikes me about the Cobell-Tribe line of thought is its essential man-centredness. Its concern is not with giving woman what it is felt she wants (which is usually affection, a home, a secure emotional relationship), but with giving man what it is presumed he wants, which is a sufficient outlet for his sexual whims and fancies. To Mr. Tribe and his friends physical pleasure is apparently sacrosanct, and with all the fervour of bacchanalians they worship at its shrine. Yet such pleasure is no necessarily reliable criterion of good. I am not, I must emphasise, against physical pleasure; but I should be undiscerning if I saw it over-riding in importance every other consideration.

That a man tends to seek variety in his sexual experience may be true; but this is no reason for upholding—nay, advocating—liaisons of one sort or another. Someone usually suffers in consequence—often a woman. To preach them openly, as do our champions of the New Establishment, is to cut at the roots of marriage, which presumably has still some social as well as personal significance.

In this controversy there has been some mention of charity. One thing we should be clear about is that charity

is *not* licence. It is a capacity to understand why a person acts as he does, and if he has gone wrong, to help him if we can. Charity is a great quality; but while it does not condemn, it does not try to reverse the moral order of things, and put Wrong in the saddle and call it Right.

Oddly, one question on which Mr. Tribe straightforwardly takes me up (ethics versus evolution) arose as a side issue of the present controversy; it forms no integral part of it. Since the Editor wishes these my last remarks to be brief I do not feel I can go into it here and now. But I could show that what my critic airily dismisses as nonsense is not nonsense at all. My views are based on the main conclusions of that dedicated anthropologist, the late Sir Arthur Keith, whose evolutionary writings I have always had to acknowledge the fundamental soundness of.

THEATRE

Pius XII On The Stage

AFTER THE DEATH of Pius XII in 1958, the National Secular Society held a crowded meeting at the Caxton Hall, London, to protest against the absurd adulation of the alleged "Pope of Peace". No other body made any public complaint, although gradually since then it has dawned on many people that the late pontiff's record was far from blameless.

Now at last his callous indifference to human suffering and his support of Hitler have been exposed in a new play by a 32-year-old Protestant, Rolf Hochhuth, directed by Erwin Piscator at the Kurfurstendamm Theatre in Berlin. It is called *Der Stellvertreter* ["The Proxy" or "The Representative"]—*A Christian Tragedy*, and it tells the story of the Pope's failure to take any steps to condemn Hitler's death-camps, in spite of urgent representations which have been made to him.

Herr Hochhuth alleges that Pius refrained from condemning the Nazi persecution of the Jews because of the *Concordat* and for fear of a Communist victory (*Sunday Telegraph*, 10/3/63). A conscientious young priest, Fr. Riccardo, pleads with the Pope in vain. "Certainly, terror against Jews is despicable", is the reply. "But it must not make us so bitter that we forget the duties the Germans will have to fulfil as protectors of Rome within the near future". Fr. Riccardo decides to make some personal atonement and, pinning a Star of David on his cassock, he joins some Jews on their way to Auschwitz, where he is murdered by the Nazis.

According to the American magazine *Newsweek* (11/3/63) the play was received with rapturous applause and a few boos on the first night. *The Universe* (1/3/63) was naturally less favourable. It will be interesting to see the reactions of the critics when the play is seen in England in September. It is to be presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company in a translation by Robert David Macdonald.

A.P.

"All in Good Time"

A "sort of North Country Chekhov" is how Bernard Miles describes Bill Naughton, author of *All in Good Time*, in the Mermaid Theatre programme (which, by the way, makes attractive and interesting reading as ever). Well "sort of", I suppose! But if Mr. Naughton can't really be placed alongside the greatest of playwrights and short story writers, he nevertheless shares with them that most important quality, human sensitivity. And *All in Good Time* is a very good play about a very difficult subject: a young husband's impotence.

I say "young husband's", but the beauty—and truth—of Mr. Naughton's play is that it gradually spreads responsibility for the sexually-unsatisfactory marriage through the family and friends, and reveals some of the unusual features of apparently normal married lives. One is, in fact, prompted to ask the

important and unanswerable question, what is normality? And indeed it is a bachelor uncle who (in a lovely scene) gives the best advice to the young wife when the various in-laws are blaming one another and revealing their own deficiencies.

This is a moving play; it also is a most amusing one, though obviously too outspoken for the young lady whom I overheard during the interval calling it obscene. That very Christian theatre critic of the *Sunday Times*, Mr. Harold Hobson, also "nearly walked out" at this point, though on "literary" and not "religious nor moral grounds". But he was glad he stayed for the second act. I am not sure about the lady.

The acting of all is good, and that of Bernard Miles as a misunderstood and misunderstanding father, superb. C.McC.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor welcomes letters from readers, but asks that they be kept as brief and pertinent as possible.

NAPOLEON

May I be permitted to comment on the observations made by your worthy correspondent, Mr. F. A. Ridley, in which he refers to a previous letter of mine.

First, I would suggest that the role of Napoleon, in political terms, was the freeing of Europe from the iron grip of Feudalism—a social system which had long outlived its day and whose death knoll was sounded by the French Revolution of 1789. Napoleon quickly rose from Commander of Artillery, 1793, to First Consul, 1799, to Emperor, 1804. The great general was both reformer and liberator but by 1812 the liberator had become a tyrant from whom Europe wished to be freed.

In Russia he was seen by all classes of society for what he was and the resistance to his further ambitions came from genuine patriotic feelings which had nothing to do with the iniquitous Tsarist autocracy under which "Mother Russia" laboured. Like the invasion by the Teutonic Knights (16th century) and Charles XII of Sweden (18th century), the French gamble at conquest was resisted and overcome.

Second, concerning Borodino (some 70 miles from Moscow); the battle gave Napoleon, admittedly, a tactical success following the capture of Bagration's position and the Raievsky battery on the left flank. The price paid by the French was high—60,000 dead and wounded against 40,000 Russian losses. However, tactical successes do not necessarily lead to a strategic victory. I submit that Borodino proved a complete strategic defeat for the Emperor precisely because of the moral victory of the Russians who still stood on the road to Moscow after the murderous bombardment from the French guns.

Later Napoleon wrote: "of the fifty battles I have fought, it was in the Battle of Moscow that the greatest valour was displayed and the least success achieved".

"The direct consequences of the battle of Borodino were Napoleon's causeless flight from Moscow, his return along the old Smolensk road by which he had come, the destruction of the invading army of 500,000 men and the downfall of Napoleonic France, on which at Borodino for the first time the hand of a stronger spirit had been laid". (*War and Peace*, Pt. II. Ch.39.)

R. SIDDALL.

[This correspondence is now closed.—ED.]

CAN YOU HELP?

Can any reader help me? I am doing some research into the historical development of the secular and humanist movements in Great Britain, and I am having difficulty in securing a book. It is *History of the British Secular Movement*, by J. F. McGee, published by Haldeman-Julius in 1948.

I have been unable to acquire this book through the lending library scheme in Great Britain, and my attempts to secure it from America have also failed. COLIN B. CAMPBELL, Birmingham College of Commerce, Aston St., Birmingham, 4.

DEBATE

I had the good fortune to be in attendance at Chelsea College at a debate on "Is There a God?", which might have been better termed, "The Demolishment of Father Corlishley".

I am an old Freethinker, but my activities are limited, as I am a night-worker. However, I am old enough to remember some of Chapman Cohen's discussions with Sir Arnold Lunn, etc., and I would assure readers who wonder if standards are being maintained, that, indeed they are!

Mr. Colin McCall made and maintained our case by the use of commonsense, plain language and good temper. Could we ask more? ARTHUR E. CARPENTER.

OBITUARY

ANDRE LORULOT

André Lorulot, editor of the French freethought papers, *La Raison* and *L'Idée Libre*, and Vice-President of the World Union of Freethinkers, died suddenly on March 11th at his home in Herblay, Seine-et-Oise. He was 77.

It is hard to convey to English readers what an intellectual and personal loss this will be to French and indeed Continental freethought. The older ones may get an inkling if I compare the devotion that their French colleagues felt for André Lorulot with that felt here for the late Chapman Cohen. Like Cohen, Lorulot combined wit and charm, and excelled in both writing and oratory. I suppose he was essentially a father-figure, frail and lovable, but commanding on the platform, and I shall cherish the memories of his commemorative speeches at the statues of Francisco Ferrer in Brussels in 1959 and Michael Servetus in Annemasse in 1960, where admiration for the martyrs was perfectly combined with denunciation of their murderers and the hateful creeds that inspired them. "Honour to Michael Servetus", said Lorulot, "and honour to all those who suffered for the great cause of human reason that will finally free us from all superstition and all tyrannies".

Honour to André Lorulot, who may not have suffered for the great cause, but who devoted his life to it. And condolences to his charming wife and daughter whose loss must be almost unbearable. C.McC.

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