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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Race and Religion

By F. A. RIDLEY

A NEGRO RACIALIST GROUP who describe themselves as Black Muslims has been attracting much attention. Whilst their religious affiliations with orthodox Islam and the Koranic cult appear to be somewhat dubious—the more so since modern Islam, at least, is not a racial cult—their present nature and purpose appear to be indisputable. For the Black Muslims represent a racist cult of a quasi-fascist nature, which aims at the eventual establishment of an all-black Negro state to be presently carved out of the current American Union. They are in fact, the black equivalents of such white racial organisations as the old Ku-Klux Klan though they do not apparently envisage an entirely black America, but rather an American species of "Bantustan" (a territory reserved exclusively for Negroes) rather similar to the South African Negro enclaves which Dr. Verwoerd's apartheid regime eventually intends to establish. However, it would appear that the Black Muslims are prepared, should the necessity arise, to use physical violence in order to achieve their ultimate aim. They have even been described (in the *London Times* colour supplement a few months ago) as envisaging an ultimate armageddon of black versus white, which sounds remarkably similar (except for its pronounced emphasis on colour) to that propounded by another bizarre American religious sect (a white one in this case), Jehovah's (self-styled) Witnesses.

The Black Muslims and America

There are nowadays so many sparks flying around the American scene that one of them could quite conceivably ignite a prairie fire of immense proportions. The thought must often cause sleepless nights to President Kennedy and his more far-sighted advisers. In the event of it being the Black Muslims who will play the role of an American Guy Fawkes, these Negro racialists could certainly quote many authentic precedents in the annals of the creed, the name of which they have assumed, for launching a Jihad—a holy war against the infidel! However, modern religious fanatics like the Mahdi, the Mad Mullah, and now the Black Muslims who seek to subvert their contemporary secular civilisation, find themselves confronted by more formidable technical military apparatus than was the case thirteen centuries ago when the Arab crusaders of Islam emerged into the light of secular history.

Frightening Warning

Be that as it may, at present the overwhelming majority of the American Negroes still apparently eschew thoughts of violence and cling to the constitutional methods that proved so convincingly successful in the recent great march on Washington. Hence, at least at present, the Black Muslims represent only a nuisance value, at most a merely potential threat of future violence and a frightening warning to the present generation of white American legislators to set their racial house in order whilst there is still time.

This contemporary example strikingly illustrates the role of religion in racial conflicts. To be sure it has its parallel, both white and black, in the present-day Union of South Africa where upon the one side black, chiefly Zulu, racist cults proclaim an exclusively black Christ as both an essential religious dogma and as the Messianic hope for ultimate Negro emancipation, whilst simultaneously the apartheid regime of Dr. Verwoerd still leans heavily on religious arguments of a Calvinistic nature and bases an unalterable white supremacy upon the divinely predestined racial supremacy that attaches to the Aryan bloodstream and to the white pigment. Nor is the influence of religious cults

confined purely to the controversies of rival colours. For sometimes, as for example in the embittered religious civil war at present raging between Catholics and Buddhists in South Vietnam, one can note the close connection between religious cults and divergent politics even within the confines of the same state (Ireland is a classic example nearer home). Not only in contemporary, but in universal history, one witnesses the recurring phenomenon of the inter-mixture of "races" with particular religious cults. Indeed, the periodically recurring phenomenon of the "Chosen Race" represents usually the hybrid offspring of such a union of religious ideology with political power.

Are the Jews a Race?

Perhaps the supreme example of such a combination is represented by the hotly controverted question: are the Jews a race, a religion or a kind of social religious cult inspired by a particular religion, Judaism? Half a century ago, the Jewish historian, Karl Kautsky, devoted an entire book to the solution of this leading question: *Are the Jews a Race?* (see also his magnum opus, *The Foundations of Christianity* for a further consideration of this question). Here, or so we may surely suggest, we have a problem that has passed through several successive stages, which does not admit of a single or uniform answer. Ancient Israel, the Jewish state, the chequered fortunes of which from the Exodus to the Maccabees are set out in the Old Testament, and Judah, were sovereign states within the normal meaning of the term. They had kings, they went to war with their neighbours, they possessed capital cities and natural boundaries defended (not too successfully) by national armies; last but in the estimation of the Old Testament writers, far from least, the ancient Israelites had their own local god, Jehovah (Jahveh), usually denominated as "the God of the Jews".

Racially, however, the ancient Jews were apparently a normal Semitic tribe, whose physical appearance, cultural level and even (as the instructive Moabite inscription on the Black Stone deciphered by modern archaeology convincingly notes) original basic religious convictions, did not differ from those of their surrounding Semitic tribes.

After a couple of thousand years one can assert much the same about the modern state of Israel since its inception (1948). Here, too—as the Eichmann trial

demonstrated recently in and to international law—modern, like ancient Israel, is a state, a nation. However, it is necessary to repeat that the Jewish question has passed through several disparate stages: for example, during the long diaspora the stateless Jews were then held together by solely, it would appear, a *religious* cult, Judaism, and medieval Judaism included various “races” and even divergent colours. How, for example, could one accurately describe the Abyssinian black Jews, the still existing Falasha, and the yellow (Tartar) Khazars of the Crimea—both converts to Judaism—as part of a single Jewish *race* as a homogenous ethnic group? We repeat, the problem is complex and does not admit of a single answer valid equally for every period of Hebrew history.

Much the same can probably be said about Hinduism, the original religious cult of the Indian “race”. It has in fact, been asserted that prior to modern times and the British unification, there was no such thing as an Indian nation but only the religious-social cult of Brahmanical Hinduism. However, the original caste divisions of

Hinduism themselves appear to point unmistakably to an aboriginal epoch when the religious cult of the Vedic scriptures was still the clearly discernable cult of a definite race of the Aryan conquerors of India from whom the higher but not the lower castes were descended. *Varna*, the original name for what is now called “caste”, implies colour; caste had a racial, not a religious origin, as between its white Aryan conquerors and their black, Dravidian helots from whom the outcasts were descended.

Cosmopolitan Religion and Race

Here we can only briefly note that over the bulk of the religious world, the higher (i.e. cosmopolitan) religions eventually superseded the more primitive racial cults in which holiness had a physical basis in the bloodstream. Thus Christianity and Islam emerged from Judaism and Buddhism from Hinduism. But today it may well be that particularly in the newly-emerging races of Asia and Africa, we have not (as the current example of the Black Muslims indicates) heard the last of the historic connection between religious cults and racial struggles.

Professor Lawden and His Critics

By COLIN McCALL

ON AUGUST 23RD, by permission of the *New Zealand Listener*, we printed a talk by Derek F. Lawden, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, on “A Material Basis for Mind”. The talk, scheduled to be broadcast on June 2nd, was postponed for three weeks by the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation, for the absurd reason that it “contained opinions inconsistent with those held by Roman Catholics and that in view of the Pope’s illness it would be offensive to Roman Catholics”. And when the talk was printed in the *New Zealand Listener*, the Corporation felt it necessary to counter it with an 800-word editorial above the initials M.H.H.

Ironically in the circumstances, M.H.H. began by playing down Professor Lawden’s ideas. They had been “extant for some time” and were “not really as startling as their exponents seem to suppose”. (Note: exponents, not opponents. One is prompted to ask, why then the postponement?) M.H.H. ended as follows:

Throughout history man has responded to laws not made by himself, and has therefore felt a need to worship the lawmaker (or God). If, however, there is nothing but nature, and we are nothing apart from it, we ourselves become God in our collective life, and are merely becoming conscious of our divinity. Others may worship man if they wish; but on a closer examination he seems scarcely fitted for divinity. He is most himself when he finds new ways of destroying his own kind, or of exterminating species which might wish to withhold some part of the earth from him, or of changing the earth itself. It is a relief to know that he cannot change the stars or create a cosmos. If all his life and destiny are contained in “matter”, so much the worse for nature; he will destroy her too, as a disease destroys a body. In the bleak landscapes of these times, man needs more than ever to look beyond himself, and beyond nature, for the home his spirit craves.

To which there are a number of obvious replies. Not all men in the past, and certainly not all men today, feel a need “to worship the lawmaker”, or indeed to worship anything. There is no logical connection between, “If, however, there is nothing but nature” and, “we ourselves become God in our collective life”. The term “God”, as generally understood and as implied by “lawmaker”, stands for something *supernatural*, whereas even in

M.H.H.’s clumsy phraseology, man is expressly natural—“nothing apart from it [nature]”. For Freethinkers and Humanists, concern for man is paramount, but this involves no attribution of divinity. We do not discard deities and then deify man.

Nor do we go to the other extreme and demonise. There is no justification for saying that man “is most himself” when he finds new means of destruction. The use of the common noun, “man”, is dangerous here. We can only legitimately speak of “men”—and men vary enormously, historically, geographically, and individually. Of course we have our pugnacious, even destructive urges, but we have many other urges too, and that of “mutual aid” should not be overlooked. It is impossible to say which urge is *most* characteristic; they are all characteristics. And it is a feature of civilised living that we restrain at least some of our urges at least some of the time.

M.H.H.’s last few sentences are too fatuous for comment.

Yet his efforts received their due reward. “We would like to appreciate and thank you for the editorial”, wrote H.F. and D.S. Dodson of Auckland; it “will, we believe, help the genuine seeker to find the Truth that Pilate missed”. J. Linton (Auckland) found it an “antidote” to Professor G. M. Carstairs as well as to Professor Lawden. “The world is in its present mess”, Mr. Linton declared, “because men have not obeyed God’s laws . . . For goodness sake let us have talks by sound men who have something better to offer than Messrs. Carstairs and Lawden—something that will help to save the world from chaos, not add to it”. In similar vein, A. H. Reed of Dunedin thanked God for “eminent scientists who see no contradiction between science and the Christian religion”, and thanked “you, sir, for the closing words of your leading article . . .”.

For Lawrence F. J. Ross of Christchurch, on the other hand, Professor Lawden’s talk was an “erudite, imaginative journey into the nature of matter and man”, which proved that “the publicly-owned broadcasting services are

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Why Churches Won't Let You Adopt the Child of Your Choice

By DR. BENJAMIN SCHLESINGER

(Assistant Professor of Social Work in the University of Toronto)

On AUGUST 19TH, 1960, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Hallas sat in a Winnipeg court room and listened in grim silence while a Justice of the Supreme Court of Manitoba pronounced the dreaded words they had prayed would never be spoken. The little, five-year-old foster son they had considered their own flesh and blood for more than four years was to be taken from them and adopted by other parents. The reason? Mr. and Mrs. Hallas were Protestants; little Bobby was the son of a Roman Catholic mother.

The first blow had fallen about a month earlier when the foster parents were informed by the Catholic Children's Aid Society that a Catholic family had been located that would adopt the boy. Although Mr. and Mrs. Hallas had been told when Bobby was placed in their care at the age of 11 months that the arrangement was temporary, they had grown so attached to the child they were determined to fight the separation to the highest court. In fact, they carried it as far as the Provincial Legislature, without success.

The odds were against them from the beginning. Manitoba law is quite explicit; children of one religious faith cannot be adopted by parents of another faith.

Fortunately there are not many cases that turn out so tragically. In nearly all adoptions and foster-home placements handled by Children's Aid Societies in Canada the results are favourable.

The damaging effects of the religious factor in adoption laws fall on those children for whom homes cannot be found. In Ontario, Catholic agencies have four children for every Catholic home willing to adopt, while four Protestant families are available for every Protestant child. There are 20 Jewish couples for every available Jewish child. Every year while Catholic children go begging, 800 Protestant and Jewish couples are turned down and another 2,000 give up and withdraw applications. Other thousands wait in line.

The cost of this phenomenon has been computed by two lawyers, Gerald Turk and Robert Burgess, writing in the *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*. They calculated that a child who comes into the care of a Children's Aid Society and remains until the age of 18 costs the public \$13,500 in taxes and charitable contributions.

The lawyers concluded that millions of dollars could be saved over a period of years by implementation of legal adoption across religious lines.

The Child Welfare Act of Ontario does not expressly require the same religious faiths between adopted children and adopting parents. It does contain a clause, however, that deals with the placement of a child with the appropriate agency in cities which have two distinct Children's Aid Societies, one for Catholics and the other for Protestants. But this does not apply in municipalities with only one Society to handle all cases.

Thus we find two standards in Ontario, one for cities such as Toronto with both agencies, which, by the nature of their charters, are prohibited from arranging cross-religious adoptions and another for smaller communities where one Society handles all children, regardless of religious background.

Catholic agencies require that at least one of the adopting parents be a practising Roman Catholic and that the children be reared as Catholics. Protestant agencies want

the children to be given a "reasonable" amount of religious training but they interpret that policy very broadly. Jewish agencies usually insist only that the adopting parents have some affiliation with a Jewish organisation or the Jewish community.

It is through such regulations that many children are denied the opportunity for adoption and will remain wards in foster homes or orphanages until they come of age.

Author Pearl S. Buck, who has adopted many children herself, has stated, "Where all else is equal, of course, similarity in race and religion is good, but human destiny should not be based on these two elements. A child is born a child, without consciousness of race or religion. But he is very conscious of the need for love and understanding from the moment that he appears upon this earth."

Yet it becomes ever more difficult to gain approval of adoptions where the religions of the natural parents differ from that of the adoptive family.

There is little, if any, justification for criticism of the Children's Aid Societies of Canada. In fact, they and similar agencies should handle all adoptions. If they did, the tragic and heartrending effects of certain private adoptions that we've heard about in recent years, resulting in such harmful consequences to both children and parents, would be avoided.

A case in point is that which occurred in Cooksville, Ont., about six years ago when Mr. and Mrs. Austin Hepton were forced to relinquish custody of the three-year-old-twin sons of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Maat.

The Maats had voluntarily surrendered their twins for adoption before they were born. Newly-arrived in Canada they found themselves in a strange land without friends, permanent home or prospect of employment. In a moment of extreme emotional strain they signed papers consenting to the adoption by Mr. and Mrs. Hepton. Three months later, in better circumstances, their consciences smote them and they demanded the return of their boys. A long legal battle resulted, reaching the highest court in Canada. Judgment was rendered in favour of the Maats.

Public emotions were stirred and newspapers carried arguments favouring both pairs of parents. While it was not the only factor in the case, it was learned that final adoption papers never had been signed, only "consent to adoption" papers. The Maats revoked the consent within the legal time limit.

When handled by Children's Aid Societies, adoptions require from eight months to a year for checking on parents' suitabilities for a particular child and other matters.

In the Maat case, each of the parents knew the identities of the others and they fought it out in court rather than have the problem handled by a professional society.

In some countries, adoption is an institution that dates back to antiquity. The Old Testament gives us a glimpse of it in Exodus 2, 10—"and the child grew up and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son and she called him Moses".

The Roman code of Justinian said a child took the name of a person who adopted him but did not gain property rights although he agreed to bear arms on behalf of his adopted father. Ancient Chinese custom met the religious

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This Believing World

Not all our teenagers want jazz to be introduced into the sacred precincts of a holy church, and the *Daily Express* (September 12th) gives particulars of their sturdy opposition to it. "We do not want gimmicks like hotted-up hymns" they told the Rev. Harry Edwards, vicar of St. Michael's Church, Highgate, London, who was willing "to organise jazz services". All the same, the teenagers described church service as: "drab, outmoded, elderly, and reminiscent of compulsory chapel at school". And all this after nearly 1900 years of the true Christian religion!

★

But this is—as Dr. Bronowski has told us so often on TV and the radio—a "scientific age", and what is the good of a jazz trumpet, a trombone or a clarinet, to say nothing of saxophones and drums if they are not pressed into the service of "our Lord" in this day and age? Would not the loud and strident tones of a jazz band hotting up "Washed in the blood of Jesus" sound sweeter and sweeter to Christ in Heaven and his Angels? Surely no truly religious Christian teenager could deny that?

★

A heading in "The Observer" (September 8th) dealing with Moral Re-Armament recalls a statement by the founder of the Group, Dr. Frank Buchman, who said (so it was reported) "Thank God for Hitler". *The Observer's* heading is "Thank God for Peter Howard" who is Dr. Buchman's successor. Mr. Howard "now girdles the globe for God", we are told, and what he wants is more time for "Christianising humanity and not humanising Christianity" which sounds as if it were something profound, but isn't. Surely Almighty God himself coming down from the comfortable clouds in Heaven in the shape of a man to share our joys and sorrows was "humanising" Christianity?

★

Still, the full-page advertisements in our national newspapers prove how much hard cash is still pouring into the coffers of the Moral Re-Armers, and in this its supporters are simply following the pattern of all our wealthy and pious Churches. How can they carry on with their propaganda for Christ unless plenty of money pours in? How can Mr. Howard "girdle" the globe for God unless he can pay his way girdling?

★

We have not read a full report of the Anglican Congress which took place recently in Toronto. But what the Bishop of Southwark thought of one of its messages was given in the *Daily Mail* (August 24th). He called it "Pious Guff". It read, he added, like "something one of my less competent deacons could preach on his first Sunday". However, the Congress did make a strikingly original request. It wanted a message "calling for unity in the Anglican Church and more co-operation with other Protestant Churches". It might just as well have asked for the moon.

★

Something like this must have struck the delegates at a more recent conference held at Wye College, near Ashford in Kent, for it expressed a general feeling (according to the *Daily Telegraph*) that the Churches "were not yet ready for inter-communion as a matter of course". In fact, about the only thing the Churches could agree upon, the Conference claimed, was the Lord's Prayer. But was this not carrying optimism a little too far? The Authorised Version, the Revised Version and the New English Bible

all disagreed as to what was the Lord's prayer in English, and as "our Lord" delivered it in Aramaic and not in Greek—if he really is responsible for it—then nobody knows what he actually said.

★

A 21-year-old Pakistan, Mahammed Zaman, who was taken ill a week after starting work in a Yorkshire mill and died in Dewsbury General Hospital, was said by friends to have been bitten on the ankle by a mad dog at Azad, Kashmir. Frightened that he had caught rabies, Zaman went on a 100-mile pilgrimage to a saints' grave in the Punjab, in the hope of being saved". According to his beliefs", the *Daily Telegraph* reported (September 17th). "Zaman could not receive any medical attention once he had visited the grave".

★

"Pope Silences Archbishop", read a "Daily Telegraph" headline on September 12th. It referred to the South Vietnamese Archbishop of Huế, Mgr. Ngo Dinh Thuc's cold treatment in Rome. It is proving rather more difficult, alas, to silence the Archbishop's sister-in-law, Mme. Nhu.

PROFESSOR LAWDEN AND HIS CRITICS

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still free to present ideas and knowledge, running counter to prevailing mythology". And C. A. Power (Plimmerton) only took the Professor to task for "committing the ultimate folly—of casting his pearls of wisdom before an audience largely of limited imagination and narrow outlook". The editorial, Mr. Power said, "made this clear enough". And, as a retort to another correspondent's assertion that "a mere mathematician could not possibly be an authority in the field of biology", Mr. Power instanced Watson's mathematical deduction of the structure of the DNA molecule.

Professor Lawden's own reply emphasised his empiricism. With advances in the field of psychology, he wrote:

I expect unaided introspection of the human personality to be replaced ultimately by more exact instrumental examination, just as the telescope came to the aid of cosmology, and then, any Christian belief relating to the nature of the human personality which is not completely vacuous, will be as open to scrutiny as the heavens are today.

"On a factual point," he continued:

I do not deny the existence of God. I simply deny the validity of the Christian concept of God and the unhealthy negative worshipping attitude of the Christian to the unknown surrounding us on all sides. I insist that the proper adult attitude to the unknown is the positive scientific one of attempting to know it. To permit ourselves the luxury of conversion to the comfortable view that this knowledge is already in existence and is especially favourable for our species, does not do us credit. We should have the courage to face the fact that the significance of the universe is still quite beyond our understanding, but take hope from the fact that, nevertheless, we are steadily climbing towards a better vantage point.

It remains only for me to join with Mr. Ross in thanking Professor Lawden for letting us share his "erudite, imaginative journey into the nature of matter and man".

"NEVER ON A SUNDAY . . ."

I have just discovered a strange fact about the execution by garrotting of the two Spanish anarchists who were condemned by the Spanish Franco Government for alleged bomb outrages.

The execution was postponed and they were given an extra twenty-four hours of life because the original date fixed for the execution was a religious festival.

Such is life in the holy Franco State. Garrotting (a brutal medieval method of strangulation) is fine. But never on Sundays or Saints Days. Amen.

—Logan Gourlay (*Sunday Mirror*, 25/8/63).

WANTED: A MIRACLE

"Unity without a miracle, will not take place in this generation."
—Archbishop Heenan (*Daily Sketch*, 9/9/63).

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.
London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD, D. H. TRIBE, J. A. MILLAR.
(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.
Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday afternoon (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday evenings.
Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.
North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY
Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Market Hotel, Station Street), Saturday, September 28th, 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m.: ANNUAL DINNER
Chairman: W. MILLER.
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, September 29th, 3 p.m.: ANNUAL REUNION. Guest of Honour, DR. J. A. C. BROWN; Chairman: J. HUTTON HYND. Music and refreshments.

Notes and News

THE QUEEN is expecting another baby. When she and Prince Philip were married they "told close friends . . . that they would like to have four children"; now that wish is to be fulfilled. The *Daily Sketch's* Ann Buchanan, who must either be a "close friend" or know one—since she let us in on the secret—saw the growth of Britain's families as a "happy trend the Queen is setting" (17/9/63), be that as it may. Miss Buchanan's assertion that "There is no better training ground for adult life than a crowd of brothers and sisters" seems by no means evident to us. Is it so very valuable to "have to take your chance with the others", for instance? Surely there are advantages and disadvantages in a large family. For Miss Buchanan and the *Daily Sketch*, though, if its royal it must be right.

PROFESSOR DEREK F. LAWDEN'S radio talk, "A Material Basis for Mind" (THE FREETHINKER, 23/8/63) was postponed by the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation from June 2nd to June 23rd. The Corporation considered it "inappropriate" to broadcast the talk on the earlier date, "because of the impending death of the head of the Roman Catholic Church", and when the printed version appeared in the *New Zealand Listener*, it was preceded by an editorial, "No Room for God", which is referred to in Colin McCall's article this week, "Professor Lawden and His Critics".

THIS CONCERN for Roman Catholic sensibilities is a common feature of (historically) Protestant countries, but is rarely reciprocated in Catholic lands. And we understand that of the Rolf Hochhuth play, *The Representative* (opening at the Aldwych Theatre, London, on September 23th) has in fact been "adapted" by the Royal Shakes-

peare Theatre Company, in the light of German Catholic criticisms. We must, of course, be quite clear on this point. The play, as written, would run for seven or eight hours, so must obviously be shortened for stage production. The German production ran for three hours: so will the English; but the texts will differ. Some parts especially "objectionable" to Catholics will be cut, other parts will appear in the English that were omitted from the German.

EVEN SO, *The Representative* can hardly please the Catholics. It is, as readers know, an indictment of Pope Pius XII for not interceding when Hitler was pursuing his "final solution" of the "Jewish question". And unless the play is distorted out of all recognition, this is bound to "come across". Not surprisingly, then, Roman Catholic organisations have declared their intention of parading with banners outside the Aldwych Theatre. As a counter-measure, the National Secular Society will distribute leaflets asking, "Do you know that Roman Catholics tried to censor this play?" and quoting excerpts from *The Universe* (30/8/63), some of which were noted in this column a fortnight ago.

THE SEPTEMBER issue of *Church and State* showed Bishop Philip M. Hannan watching the annual parachute jump of Roman Catholic American Air Force paratroopers in honour of St. Michael, their patron saint. A thousand paratroopers dropped in the area at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where the Bishop was waiting to celebrate Mass. Protagonists of the sectarian rite asserted that it was of a voluntary character but *Church and State* pointed out that "such an extensive use of military equipment and personnel would be impossible without official orders". Protestants who objected were, however, excused. In January, 1959, the Adjutant-General of the US Army, Major-General R. V. Lee, issued an order barring all official promotion of patron saint exercises in that branch of the service. The US Air Force needs the same kind of order, as one protesting Protestant remarked.

TREVOR R. WEBB, Church of England organist and choir-master, has attacked the "status symbol" attitude to church weddings and the "monotonous repetition" of the music chosen. "Church musicians", he said (*Evening Standard*, 10/9/63) "are condemned to the same weary round because certain hymns and pieces of music are the done thing". Mr. Webb placed *Love Divine* and *Lead Us Heavenly Father* in this category and described *Here Comes the Bride* as "the worst thing Wagner ever did for music". As for the 23rd Psalm sung to Crimond, it "is never put over properly because the punctuation is always ignored". What with the insult of being asked, "Can you play . . .?" and "noisy conversation", Mr. Webb seemed pretty fed up with weddings generally. Perhaps more people will take his "Best of all" advice: "if you don't believe in the service go to the register office".

THE Seventh-Day Adventists have organised a "Dial-a-Prayer" service in Birmingham. Dial VIC 5754 and you hear a short recorded text. Unfortunately for the Institution of Locomotive Engineers and the Locomotive and Allied Manufacturers' Association, who have a London telephone number VIC 5754, London Adventists seem unaware of the Birmingham-London distinction. After something like a thousand calls for a quick prayer, the railway engineers have, according to the *Daily Mirror*, 16/9/63) taken to answering bluntly, "Locomotive House". If Londoners feel its worth it, mind you, they can always get their prayer by a trunk-call to Birmingham. Dial 021 and then the number.

Renan and St. Paul

By H. CUTNER

SOME READERS who saw Mr. F. A. Ridley's excellent account (THE FREETHINKER, 19/7/63) of the first publication of Renan's *Vie de Jesus*, one hundred years ago, and its great success all over the world—even among "heretics"—may know that it was the first of a number of volumes in which he treated with splendid scholarship and tolerance the origins of Christianity. These volumes never had quite the success of his *Vie de Jesus*, though he took immense pains over them. One can perhaps easily distil a life of Jesus "meek and mild" from the Gospels by leaving out or explaining away the passages which do "our Lord" little honour, though no doubt these passages were once considered just as "inspired" as the others. But what is one to do with Paul, considered by so many eminent critics the *real* founder of Christianity? Renan's third volume was devoted to St. Paul, and in a long and very closely argued introduction he found it necessary to deal with the Epistles and their relationship to Acts, and found it difficult to disentangle the real Paul—if there was one—from the theological one.

As in his *Vie de Jesus*, Renan followed the New Testament account closely, for these documents are the only ones which tell us anything about Paul. But even Christian critics have had to admit that the problems which have been forced to their notice by comparing Acts and Epistles, still remain unsolved. And that is what happened to Renan—it was one thing to write about the "missionary" journeys of Paul, but quite another thing to prove that they actually took place.

During the years I spent trying to find out any genuine proof or evidence that the Jesus of the Gospels had ever existed, I was obliged to study the problem of Paul. I discovered there was no problem for a true Christian believer. If any contradiction between the Acts and Epistles could not be reconciled, all one had to do was to let the Church or Jesus Christ bear the burden, and meekly accept anything whatever on "faith". Nothing could be easier.

Unfortunately, I never could do that, and gradually it dawned upon me that there was actually no more evidence for Paul than there was for Jesus. As my favourite theologian, Robert Taylor, was a believer in the "historicity" of Paul, this rather disturbed me. Of course the Epistles, or at least four of them, had for most Greek scholars, a highly individual style which in some measure was missing from the others; so somebody must have written them and why should this somebody not be Paul? Why should he not be the Saul of Acts who later changed his name to Paul?

Well, the answer is simply that we have no *evidence* that Saul ever wrote anything. We have no evidence that the origins of the Christian Church were as described in Acts—a book full of miracles and angels and absurd incidents. There is no evidence that somebody called Stephen ever lived, let alone was martyred. In fact nobody can place a date, with evidence, for the composition of Acts. Its style resembles that of Luke, and Christian scholars are almost unanimous in declaring Acts to be a continuation of the Gospel of Luke, and by the same writer. But nobody really knows.

When Renan began to write the second volume of his origins of Christianity, *Les Apôtres*, he had no other authority than the book of Acts; and Renan, who did not believe either in miracles or angels, had the greatest difficulty to make do without them. He would have liked to

make Paul as wonderful a character as he made Jesus, but Renan had sadly to admit that Paul had no "loving-kindness", and believed himself always to be in the right. All the same, "Paul was a very great man", though "not to be compared with Jesus".

But though Renan used Acts as one of his authorities, he admitted that its "historical value gave room for serious objection". Also, he objected to the dates given for it, and the incidents it describes. And further, Luke (if he really wrote Acts) was "ill-acquainted with Judaism and the affairs of Palestine"; he hardly knew Hebrew and the word Jew is always taken by him as synonymous with enemy of Christians". Renan thought that if one had to write the life of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke alone, "it would be extremely defective and inconclusive", which perhaps gives us some idea of what he thought of the Great Physician, the incomparable Luke, the Companion of Paul. In any case, Renan was quite certain that "the last pages of Acts are the only completely historical pages which we possess on Christian origins". And what do we know of the "origin" of Acts? Literally nothing at all.

Renan called the "miracles" of Acts "rather of a *priori* invention", while, as has been noticed by nearly all critics, the two heroes of Acts—Peter and Paul—"resemble each other". As Acts is now recognised to have been written to bring Jewish and Gentile Christians together, this should cause no surprise. In any case Renan found himself constantly in a quandary—how much he ought to believe, or how much he *must* believe, or, if he could believe anything at all. He called his criticisms "not simple suspicions, conjectures of a criticism mistrustful to excess", but "well-founded inductions". But when it came to accepting any narrative about Paul in Acts or in the Epistles, he gave preference to the Epistles. But what did he think about the Epistles?

In his *Saint-Paul* (which was published in 1869) he had a very lengthy Introduction which he called "Criticism of Original Documents", and he subjected these to what can only be called a devastating criticism. For example, he threw overboard completely those to Timothy and Titus as being "false" or "apocryphal", but he accepted unreservedly Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. He wanted to accept most of the others, but hesitated because they are only of "probable" authenticity. And after saying this, he subjected all of them to an examination in which he continually said "This is genuine, this is not genuine, this may be genuine", and left it to his readers to decide.

I don't know whether Renan ever saw the Dutch criticisms of the Pauline documents. But Professor Van Manen in his famous article on Paul in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* called the Epistles all products of the second century, "pseudographia", that is, forgeries. They are all more or less based on the current Gnosticism but, as they are quite unintelligible in places, we can only conclude that they have been edited and re-edited, and nobody knows what they were like when originally written. (This goes for the Gospels as well). It is claimed that Marcion (2nd century) knew the Epistles, but the difficulty here is that we have none of Marcion's own writings. What we do know, however, is that writing in the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr appears to know literally nothing whatever of the famous Epistles. This has always

seemed to me to be a damning fact against their authenticity.

Renan admitted that the Pauline theology was Gnostic. He said that "nascent Christianity borrowed more than once from Gnosticism", and in "the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians, Gnosticism is plainly manifest". As for the Epistle to the Hebrews, generally classed as Pauline, though not so by many eminent critics—Renan asked "Who wrote this epistle?" and bluntly answered himself, "God alone knows the truth".

But no matter what we say about the Epistles, as we have no other history of the Christian "Church" after the death of Jesus, Renan accepted what he could of the story as related in Acts, and did his best in both *Les Apôtres* and *Saint-Paul* to tell us why. I cannot follow him here. I do not accept his picture of Jesus in *Vie de Jesus* nor of Paul in the two following works. I am quite sure that the Jesus of the Gospels is a myth, and after reading the shattering criticisms of Van Manen on the Epistles, I see no reason to accept Paul—and of course I do not accept Peter or the other Apostles either.

WHY CHURCHES WON'T LET YOU ADOPT THE CHILD OF YOUR CHOICE

(Concluded from page 307)

or cultural need of becoming an ancestor by providing that, when a man was childless, the eldest son of his nearest blood relative became his son.

The purposes of adoption have varied through time and are usually related to a particular social period in the country's history. In ancient cultures, continuity of the male line was important and the adoption of a son required religious, political and economic consideration if no other heir was available by natural birth. It was primarily the welfare of the adopter that was furthered with little consideration given to that of the adopted son. In modern times, emphasis switched to the welfare of the adopted child and most legislation has become "child centred".

Adoption laws differ from country to country. In Panama, Equador and Columbia an unmarried person may adopt only a child of the same sex. A family in Argentina may adopt only if there are no legitimate children, while Bolivia rules that a child under 14 years of age cannot be adopted at all.

England's adoption laws came on the scene as recently as 1926. Prior to that time an illegitimate "pauper" child occupied extremely low social status, unacceptable to any respectable family, especially if that family happened to be wealthy or titled.

In Russia, the Code of Laws on Civil Registration, Marriage and Guardianship of 1918, prohibited adoption, although it left unchanged the rights of children adopted prior to the date of its introduction. The Family Code reintroduced it in 1926.

In countries whose legal system derives more or less from Roman Law or the Code Napoleon, the adopted child's links with his own parents are not broken. He is not only entitled to inherit from them and their relatives but he may be called upon to support them and, reciprocally, they may find it necessary to support him if the adopter fails to do so.

The rapidly developing interest in adoption during World War II and the early post-war period, far outstripped the services provided by the existing adoption agencies.

Adoption laws in Canada date back to 1896 when Nova

Scotia passed an Adoption act. New Brunswick, Alberta, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia soon followed suit.

In Ontario, credit must be given to J. J. Kelso, a reporter in 1885 at the old *Toronto Globe*, who later became the first Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. In 1907, Mr. Kelso wrote in his annual report, "It is rather a curious condition of affairs that we should have nearly 3,000 children in orphanages when every Children's Aid Society in the province is turning away applicants who would gladly give a child the advantage of their home".

It was not until 1921 that Mr. Kelso's hard work paid dividends with the passing of an Adoption Act. That year Ontario had a record of 66 adoptions. In 1931, there were 931; 1,313 in 1941; 3,678 in 1951, and 5,056 in 1960. From 1921 to the present 76,661 children have been adopted in Ontario.

Older children also present a problem in the adoption process. Because many of them have endured such strain during their lives it is thought they might have great difficulty in giving and receiving affection. Chances of adoption for these children appear slim.

Another area of special need is the physically handicapped. Parents who want to adopt such children must realise the nature of the handicap and the limitations involved as well as the additional demands that must be met. Yet these children will respond noticeably in a loving, warm home.

With the tremendous increase in adoption services for all types of children, continuous efforts are being made to obtain a home for every child in need of a family. Canada is playing a notable part in the movement to modify adoption laws so that every child can grow up with a family it can call its own.

[Reprinted from the Canadian magazine, *Liberty*, September, 1963.]

CORRESPONDENCE

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

ON THE TRIAL OF JESUS

In THE FREETHINKER of August 2nd, 1963, a gentleman by the name of Cutner expressed his opinions about my book *On The Trial of Jesus* (now: Basil Blackwell, Oxford). I am not concerned with Mr. Cutner's opinions, but I am concerned about the fact that he should have resorted to the tactics of imputing to me a view which is the exact opposite of the view I expressed.

Mr. Cutner (p. 247) wrote: "The accounts in the Talmud, Mr. Winter solemnly warns us, 'confuse critical readers'. How right he is!"

How right Mr. Cutner is, will be seen by comparing his statement with what I actually have written in *On The Trial of Jesus*, page 180, note 23: "... there are statements in the Talmud which, in conjunction with the deliberate misstatement in John 19, 16, are apt to confuse uncritical readers".

Mr. Cutner made me say the opposite of what I said.

(DR.) PAUL WINTER.

[Mr. Cutner has, of course, already apologised to Dr. Winter for this slip in our issue of September 13th.—ED.]

DR. SCHONFIELD AND MR. CUTNER

With reference to the discussion between Dr. Schonfield and Mr. Cutner on the Gospels, I have taken the trouble to go to the original sources in a collection of writings grouped together as *The Apostolic Fathers*.

Dr. Schonfield is quite wrong in suggesting that Papias and Justin mention the Gospels as we know them. "The Fragments of Papias" that have survived indicate that the Gospel of Luke and John were not known to him. Further his knowledge of the "Gospels" didn't go farther than acquaintance with a Gospel attributed to Matthew and competing versions of another Gospel attributed to Matthew.

It is surely a tragedy that Papias's large-scale work, *An Interpretation of the Oracles of the Lord*, has been lost or—more

likely—destroyed by fanatics. Otherwise we may have been in a position to get a little closer to the authentic story of the early Christian Church.

"AKIBA."

"HEAVENS ABOVE"

I cannot share your critic's high opinion of the Boulting Brothers film, *Heavens Above*. I found it too silly for words, and certainly too silly to have satirical value. Few members of the audience are likely to think of "the serious reality behind the slapdash elements"—as F.H.A.M. hopes—because of the farcical exaggeration.

As for a "determined freethought follow-up", which F.H.A.M. calls for, any Freethinker basing his criticism of the Church of England on such material would be a laughing stock, and deservedly so. Far from using "the cinema and comedy to drive home the true lessons of the secularist attack upon the Church", the Boulting Brothers have avoided it completely. Instead they have given us a kind of Whitehall farce, saved from complete banality by a few episodes (such as the fall in the grave) and a few, mainly minor, acting performances.

ROBERT DENT.

WHAT IS GOD?

It seems to me that Mr. Simons restricts the use of language and meaning far more than is really necessary. I concede that an extremely restricted use of language is necessary to the effective discussion of matters physical or chemical. I concede that words such as "absolute", "transcendental", "spiritual", have no meaning or value in physics, chemistry, astronomy, etc. But science is not the sole product, nor is scientific discussion the sole purpose of language or logic. In dealing with the non-physical aspects of reality, such as the mind itself, or aesthetic or moral values, it seems to me rash to condemn any words as "meaningless bits of jargon". The value or meaning of any word must always depend upon the context in which it is used, and its suitability or unsuitability to the context will depend upon the speaker or writer who makes use of the word.

I fail to see e.g. how the moral value of atheism or freedom of thought can be estimated in terms which belong to a purely empirical context.

PETER P. CROMMELIN.

ATHEISM

Why do so many Atheists persist in putting us in the invidious position of having to prove that there is no God, by interpreting atheism as a denial of God, or allowing others so to define it?

The word equates, simply, with godlessness, i.e. the state of being without god. Never mind whether there is none, or one or a million—we just don't accept the idea of which godship consists, and it is the job of those who contend for it to furnish the evidence which could convince us of the truth of what they claim to know.

COLLIN COATES.

TIT FOR TAT

I see from a story in the national press that the Pope has accepted the resignation of Bishop Francis Walsh who refused to dismiss his divorcee housekeeper when ordered to do so by the Vatican. As a face-saving compensation for the loss of the diocese of Aberdeen, Dr. Walsh has been "given" the empty honour of the title of honorary Bishop of Birta. Now I think we may take it that the people of Birta, in Southern Turkey, have not been consulted in this matter; and surely this sort of discourtesy on the part of the Roman Catholics has gone too far.

They come to England and set up a Cardinal of Westminster; but I wonder what they'd say if the Protestants in Rome proclaimed a Bishop of Vatican City, or even a Bishop of Rome? I do so wish the Protestants would; for, as an atheist, I'd love to see the ermine fur flying on both sides. But one must admit that the Protestants seem to be more gentlemanly, and it is the Catholics who need to be taught the sharper lesson.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

SPECIAL OFFER

Rome or Reason by R. G. Ingersoll.
 Thomas Paine, by Chapman Cohen
 Marriage: Sacerdotal or Secular, by C. G. L. Du Cann.
 Robert Taylor and What is the Sabbath Day? by H. Cutner.
 From Jewish Messianism to the Christian Church
 by Prosper Alfarcic
 Chronology of British Secularism by G. H. Taylor
 Lift Up Your Heads (Anthology for Freethinkers) by W. Kent.
 Value 10/9d. for 6/- including postage,
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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH, 1963. Present: Mr. D. H. Tribe (President) in the Chair, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. McIlroy, Mrs. Venton, Messrs. Ebury, McIlroy, Owen, Shannon, Timmins, the Treasurer (Mr. Griffiths) and the Secretary. Apologies from Messrs. Barker, Hornibrook, Leslie, McConalogue, Millar and Mills. New members were admitted to Glasgow, Marble Arch, North London and Parent Branches. It was agreed to donate £10 10s. towards the Thomas Paine statue in Thetford, and to affiliate to Justice the British Section of the International Commission of Jurists. The inaugural meeting of the Thomas Paine Society on October 6th was noted. The Secretary was appointed to participate in a debate with a rabbi in the West End on December 22nd, under the auspices of the New Friendly Debating Society. He reported a good meeting at Glasgow on September 8th, and a Brains Trust of which he had been a member at St. Mary's Church, Peckham. A leaflet in connection with the Royal Shakespeare Theatre Company's production of Rolf Hochhuth's *The Representative* was approved. Mr. McIlroy would arrange for distribution outside the Aldwych Theatre, London on the opening night. The Scottish *Sunday Post* had refused an advertisement of the Society. It was agreed to seek rates from other papers. A Fyzabad Branch meeting report was received with approval. Merseyside and North London Branch matters were also dealt with and the possible formation of a Leeds Branch noted with satisfaction. A protest would be sent to the Home Secretary deploring the vicious sentence on George Clark. The next meeting was fixed for Wednesday, October 23rd, 1963.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

To distribute National Secular Society leaflets ("Do you know that the Roman Catholic Church has tried to censor this play?") outside the Aldwych Theatre, London. Contact W. J. McIlroy (Hon. Secretary, Marble Arch Branch), 140a Hornsey Lane, London, N.6. Telephone: ARChway 0959.

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