

# The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 31

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

THE PAMPHLET of the Polish Socialist, Rosa Luxemburg, *Socialism and the Churches*, originally issued by a Left-Wing Socialist organisation in Ceylon, is now available in this country (Pioneer Book Service, 27 Thursley House, Holmewood Gardens, London, S.W.2, 1s. 6d.). Rosa Luxemburg (1870-1919) was a famous figure in the international Socialist movement of the pre-1914 era, simultaneously the stormy petrel of the radical Social Democracy of her day and a top-drawer Marxist theorist who wrote a *magnum opus* on *The Accumulation of Capital*, then and for long after regarded as a major contribution to Marxist economic theory. She was foully murdered by a gang of (pre-Hitler) Fascist thugs in January 1919 after assisting to found the German Communist Party.

*Socialism and the Churches* is interesting as the work of one of the finest brains to be found anywhere in the modern International Labour movement, and most certainly one could not possibly imagine a British Socialist of the present-day vintage writing it. (For that matter, Luxemburg would probably be as disappointed by the present-day German Social Democrats as Keir Hardie would surely be by the present-day Labour Party). But it must be stated that this particular pamphlet, though stimulating enough in its way, represents an agitational polemic against the reactionary clergy of her day, rather than a serious work of scholarship or research into the evolution of Christianity.

## Kautsky

It has, accordingly, little if any permanent value as a serious critique of Christian origins and social evolution. In this respect, it does not even begin to compare with the major work of her Social Democratic colleague and party comrade, Karl Kautsky (1854-1938), whose *Foundations of Christianity* (which I reviewed some time ago in these columns) which remains a contribution of permanent intellectual value for the study of Christian origins, in particular as one would surely expect from a Marxist, on the sociological side.

In the intellectual tradition of Marxist theory, Rosa Luxemburg undoubtedly occupies a very high place, perhaps on an equality with Kautsky and only a few degrees below Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. But this well-deserved reputation must be held to be based upon her sociological works, in particular, upon her *magnum opus*, *The Accumulation of Capital*, and upon her slighter, but devastating attack upon German Imperialism in her *Junius Letter to the German Social Democracy* (1915).

Furthermore, though this could perhaps be more fittingly commemorated in a professedly Socialist journal rather than here, she will always be remembered (along with her fellow-martyr and workmate, Karl Liebknecht, as the inspirer of the heroic though abortive insurrection of the Spartacus-Bund in January 1919. This magnificent act of courage cost her her life but, had it only succeeded, would surely have saved Europe from Hitler and Germany

from her subsequent humiliating relapse into barbarism.

*Socialism and the Churches* presents a point of view that at first sight appears to have more in common with that of Christian Socialism than it does with that of the Marxist philosophy of historical materialism, on which in the political and economic spheres "Red Rosa" was such an erudite and eminent exponent. For here she addresses a polemic against the clergy, in particular the

Polish clergy (Rosa Luxemburg was a Polish Jewess by origin) for their rapacity and political subservience to the then reactionary military autocracies of the German, Russian and Austrian Empires into which pre-1914 Poland was partitioned.

(The original edition of this

pamphlet was published by the Polish Social Democratic Party in 1905). Here our author had an easy task for the subservience of both the Orthodox and Lutheran clergy to, respectively, Tsar and Kaiser, was notorious. "God bless the squire and his relations, and keep us in our proper stations", this feudalistic anthem represented the unvarying attitude of the Churches in imperial Germany, Austria and Russia.

## The Acquisition of Riches

It made little difference whether they called themselves Lutheran (Germany), Orthodox (Russia), or Roman Catholic (Austria); all were pillars of their respective autocracies and of the still semi-feudal despotisms represented by the (pre-1914) regimes of Eastern Europe. On this aspect of the relations of socialism and the Churches Luxemburg writes sharply and effectively. She had, after all, an easy task in contrasting texts from the New Testament denouncing the acquisition of riches—written at a time when Christianity was still a struggling sect with a clientele of slaves and impoverished proletarians—with the wealth and luxury later acquired by the Churches of her own day, of which she gives some particularly glaring statistics. This represents a point of view with which many Christian Socialists from Charles Kingsley to, say, the present Bishop of Southwark would be in substantial agreement.

However, when our Socialist author cites communistic statements made by fathers of the Church like St. Basil or St. John Chrysostom (a particular favourite of Christian Socialists) and then goes on to reproach the modern Christian Churches for not living up to these idealistic exhortations, she really indicates a somewhat naive (and incidentally quite un-Marxist) approach to the whole problem of Christian evolution; one specially surprising for so eminent a Marxist philosopher, even in an admittedly popular pamphlet like this.

## Christianity and Social Evolution

*Socialism and the Churches* is, we repeat, an excellent popular pamphlet and no doubt proved a most useful addition to the Social Democratic propaganda literature of the period. It is not at all surprising to learn that it has, since its author's death been reissued in Soviet Russia (1920) and France (1937) apart from the current English

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

## Socialism and the Churches

By F. A. RIDLEY

edition in both England and Ceylon.

However, even in a Socialist pamphlet written for popular reception, one would have normally expected, particularly from an author of the intellectual calibre of Rosa Luxemburg, at least some reference, if only in passing, to what is surely from any Socialist point of view, the basic problem presented by Christian evolution: how came it about that what began as (in part at least) a revolutionary messianic movement aiming at the violent overthrow of the Roman Empire and social order (as is transparently clear from what is probably its oldest extant scripture, the Apocalypse) eventually became transformed into the autocratic Church of Rome and Orthodox Churches, firmly allied with the traditional ruling classes in perpetuating the old social order based upon the exploitation of the masses. Karl Kautsky touches upon this crucial question for the sociologist, and in particular for the Socialist, in his *Foundations*, though its later developments were outside his period. A later Marxist author, Archibald Robertson, has lucidly surveyed these aspects of Christian social evolution, relating in particular to Christian origins and the Reformation, but Rosa Luxemburg scarcely refers to this central problem.

#### Back or Forward?

The fact of course is—and it should not be necessary to remind Marxists of this surely elementary deduction from the theory of historical materialism—Christianity, like every other historical movement, had willy-nilly to conform with the material conditions of its time, and with the current social evolution necessitated by them.

Socialism (at least in any recognisable modern sense) was not a viable way of life in any pre-industrial social order. The means of production cannot be commonly owned in say, an agrarian society. What the early Christians cited by Rosa Luxemburg—Tertullian, Chrysostom etc.—really advocated was not socialism (Christian or any other variety) but indiscriminate charity, whether actually dispensed by the Church or the state. Similarly, those Christian communist sects that undeniably existed, from the Donatists (4th century) via the Lollards (14th century) to the Anabaptists and Fifth Monarchy Men who gave so much trouble to both the pope and Luther at the Reformation, had no concrete plans for a Socialist order arising from the potentialities inherent in their own times. All that they could do was to hark back wistfully to the dim Golden Age in the long ago, to some Garden of Eden where (as the medieval Lollards significantly phrased it) Adam delved and Eve span. And where was then your gentleman? In the beginning where were your class distinctions? Modern, post-industrial socialism does not hark back to any such Garden of Eden where Jehovah "walked in the cool of the day". Instead, it looks forward to the International Co-operative Commonwealth in which gods and ruling classes, divine and human exploiters, will both alike have walked simultaneously *out* of human history.

#### BAN ON DR. ROUX TO CONTINUE

THE South African Minister of Justice has refused the request of the Rationalist Association that Dr. Edward Roux should be allowed to continue as its active chairman. The Association's appeal was accompanied by a list of its speakers and lectures during 1963 and 1964, and attention was drawn to its non-political nature. The Association is convinced that the ban on Dr. Roux cannot possibly have been on the basis of anything said or done by him in his capacity as its chairman. For the present, however, Dr. Roux must remain Chairman in absentia.

## Opus Dei

[This article is summarised by C. Bradlaugh Bonner from the July issue of *L'Idée Libre*, which took the information from *Espoir*, a weekly published at Toulouse by Spanish refugees].

On October 2nd, 1928 there was founded in Spain "The Sacerdotal Society of the Holy Cross and the Work of God", since known as Opus Dei, by a priest, who has since become a bishop, José-Maria Escriva. The Society's members reunited after the civil war, and in 1943 received the approval of the Vatican, numbering among its members 12 cardinals, two patriarchs, 26 archbishops and 110 bishops. This papal approval was reinforced by a series of pontifical decrees, and was placed under the protection of Cardinal Teschini, one of the most powerful and reactionary of ecclesiastical potentates.

Opus Dei is constituted on the lines of the Jesuits. Its central office is in Rome and its Director for life is its founder, Monsignor Escriva. It differs from the Society of Jesus, however, in being largely secular in membership; and is divided into two sections, one for men, the other for women, independent save that both are responsible to the Director. According to the American weekly *Life* of March 18th, 1957, Opus Dei then had nearly 100,000 members in four grades, distributed in Spain, Germany, Ireland, Latin America, and Canada, and, then recently, in France. The first mentioned grade was the "numerarios", drawn from university intellectuals; the second the "oblates" from all classes of society; the third the "super-numerarios"; and the last and most numerous—from whom is expected little more than regular pecuniary contributions—the "co-operadores". It is claimed that many non-Catholics belong to this last group.

All members are bound to secrecy, as required by the decree of the Sacred Congregation of July 24th, 1947. From the rank of the "numerarios" a certain number are received each year into the priesthood, e.g. in 1955, 36 intellectuals from six different countries—doctors, lawyers, engineers, chemists etc. took orders. Most of these continue to exercise their profession. A somewhat similar organisation is the Jesuit "Templars".

New members are sought with the greatest care and secrecy; and the main aim is to infiltrate into positions of influence in the universities, the liberal professions, particularly the civil service and education, as well as the armed forces and the police. Nor is finance forgotten. Radio-Luxemburg revealed that in 1926 two key posts in the Bank of Spain were held by members of Opus Dei, who also control banks such as Banco Popular (People's Bank) of Madrid and the Credito Andorra. Opus Dei also owns wholly or in part several newspapers, and controls more than one publishing house.

As has already been mentioned branches of Opus Dei are to be found in other countries than Spain. In France the society has been very active since 1952 especially in the universities and there particularly among the students; then in the army, in the publishing world and lastly in politics, e.g. Robert Schumann and others. Although its central offices are in Rome, the organisation is not so widely developed in Italy as in Spain. In Germany the centre is at the monastery of St. Maria Lach, which was also the centre of Adenauer's support. Among the thirty other countries in which this organisation is active we may note that centres have been established in the universities of London and Oxford. Although Opus Dei may be monarchist fascist in Spain, it may take other aspects in other lands.

## Reflections on Credulity

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

MAGDALEN GOFFIN'S long essay, "Some reflections on superstition and credulity", in *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, is an extraordinary production, and it is little wonder that it has been lambasted alike by Atheists and by her fellow Catholics. It might well be sub-titled "*Credo quia absurdum*", for after she has picked Catholicism to the bones, it is difficult to see that she has any carcase left! When she takes as a basic proposition that men reject Catholicism not because of what it is, but because of what they think it is, she is, of course, merely uttering commonplace tactics of Catholic apologetics. Normally however, Catholic apologists proceed to explain where the erring heretic has got things out of focus. Magdalen Goffin's article is remarkable in that having recognised that men reject the Church because it invites us "to worship but a shrunken God", she then gives an account of its sheer follies and superstitions, e.g. the sale of indulgences, the Holy House of Loreto, exorcism, the rubrics of the sacraments, and even of such fundamental doctrines as baptism, hell, and the Real Presence, in such terms that we are left reeling and staggered as to how she could possibly do it and yet remain a Catholic. Finally, she makes the astonishing plea that "Rome should not be outlawed because she continues to sanction superstitions once part of the belief of every Christian, nor should she be sneered at because she tolerates credulity where it is a necessary accompaniment of any faith at all".

Faith, then, in whatever shape or form, is apparently so desirable (even when loaded with so many excrescences that to plain uncomplicated persons like ourselves it would seem utterly devoid of all attraction), that we are asked to hold fast to it at all costs. Protestants tried to purify Christianity of all this dross four centuries ago, and finally the more clear-sighted among us realised that none of it was worth clinging to.

Magdalen Goffin's arguments seem a lamentable climb down from the thundering authoritarianism of Rome of the Ages! Certainly one would prefer the ingenuity of Father Thurston, or the wit of Ronald Knox. She seems to think she has only to parody the famous remark of Margaret Fuller, "I accept all the difficulties", and they have been overcome! If Protestantism cleared itself of the tinsel at the Reformation, it seems high time that the One True Church did.

Yet, after all, has Magdalen Goffin apprehended a truth about it? Can it really do so? Is it showing any signs of doing so? The visitor to Lourdes, though he will undoubtedly find an air of tranquility within the *Domaine de Masabielle*, discovers stores as large as our biggest supermarkets, with a sickly array of miniature altar-cum-musical boxes, and thousands of pinchbeck medals and rosary beads of every price, size and hue.

Only a few weeks ago I found myself in Aylesford. There at least, in a restored Carmelite monastery, I expected serenity, and abstraction from "the things of this world". There was a field full of motor coaches, a crammed repository, and an ice-cream booth of proportions not unsuited to a seaside resort. Magdalen Goffin no doubt assumes that credulity and superstition are necessary human elements in a divine system and will die out. Perhaps Freethinkers also too readily assume they will die out, and that Chaucer's pardoner is a thing of the past, but some of us have not forgotten the "miracles" at Stockport in the early 1950s. We may better ask if such

charlatanism is not an essential ingredient of popular Catholicism, for people who otherwise would be entirely seduced by bingo, TV, dog-racing and what have you.

Magdalen Goffin is very bold to quote St. Paul that "by making the truth publicly known . . . we recommend ourselves to the honest judgment of mankind!" She suggests that modern Catholics should combine the attitudes of Voltaire—to dissolve with the acids of sarcasm human aspects of belief—and of St. John of the Cross—to keep one's intellect alive to the underlying truths. It is to be questioned whether Magdalen Goffin has not so well adopted the attitude of Voltaire as to leave little work for a St. John of the Cross! No Freethinker is likely to dispute her assertion that "superstition and credulity are, in their application, relative terms".

Certainly, it may be unfair to blame Abraham because he thought (a) God could be propitiated by human sacrifice, but this can only worry people who keep themselves within the context of Christianity. It is not going to worry Freethinkers. We have grown out of all this anyway. The core of the matter is exactly what she quotes from Dr. Johnson, that the fundamental objections to Roman Catholicism are objections to Christian orthodoxy. So she proceeds to take the doctrine of hell as a sort of test case, choosing this because, as J. S. Mill remarked, "compared with the doctrine of endless torment any other objection to Christianity sinks into insignificance". Roman Catholicism, she needlessly reminds us, has never relinquished it. As late as 1952, in *The Teaching of the Catholic Church*, Dr. Arendzen, a writer of weight, painted it in lurid tones worthy of Father Furniss. Magdalen Goffin states the doctrine, and she states the traditional apologetic for it—Rome's "recognition" of the annihilating effect of sin. But merely to state the doctrine is such-and-such, does not say that the matter is won. In fact, Magdalen Goffin suggests that theologians "making use of current imaginative and conceptual expressions . . . perverted it into an everlasting state of positive suffering". In suggesting this is a perversion it is at least open to question whether she can be said faithfully to render the teaching of her Church, and it is to say the least doubtful if she renders it a service.

Again, she quotes those words of Christ usually accepted as the scriptural authority for the sacrament of baptism: "Unless a man is born of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven". No one, she says, now takes these words literally. Do they not? Even if *extra ecclesia nulla salus* is commonly given a wider interpretation than its literal meaning, the present writer never heard the doctrine of baptism both preached from the pulpit, or accepted by laymen (of many different levels of education) during her years in the Catholic Church, except in a quite literal manner.

And it is all very well for Magdalen Goffin to complain that the Council of Florence perpetuated the "superstition that God punishes retributively". Is she so certain that this is not an idea in fact essential to the nature of Christianity? It really is far too facile a mode of debate to think that just because *she* has been so extremely "enlightened" as to recognise that all these difficulties exist, they are thus, somehow, automatically cleared up merely by the stating thereof! Freethinkers are of the opinion that too many, indeed all, of the "superstitions and credulities"

(Concluded on page 246)

## This Believing World

SO RELIGIOUS teaching is at last being exposed, not by blatant infidels, but by eight university training college lecturers (*The Observer*, 11/7/65), who "have expressed growing concern about the apparent ineffectiveness of religious education in primary and secondary schools". Religious teachers are accused of giving "the Bible a type of validity and authority no longer accorded to it by educated Christians". This may be true, if we all understood what was meant by "educated" Christians. Are these not the backbone of religious speakers on TV and the radio? And how many of them clearly indicate that the Bible for them has no longer "validity and authority".

★

MOREOVER, it appears that a recent National Opinion Poll survey, published in *New Society*, "showed that an overwhelming majority of parents, irrespective of their own beliefs, want religious education for their children". And this came "both as a surprise and a relief to the various church organisations" which had been worried by "humanist propaganda". But in spite of this, "criticism by Christian educators" has been mounting. Useless "vandalism" and other crimes by children have steadily increased, so no wonder Christian educationists are worried. Christian teaching in schools has morally failed.

★

WHAT is the situation regarding unity between the Church of England and the Methodist Church? No sooner are we told that talks were going on divinely, than we are hastily informed that some hitch has occurred—which makes more talks absolutely necessary, for alas, even the Methodist Church itself is hopelessly divided. Nobody seems to know the "doctrinal" points on which either of the two Churches are agreed upon. At least we know where the Church of Rome stands in the Vatican, with "no surrender" as its motto. But where stands the Church of England and the Methodist Church? This is where we came in!

★

THE RURAL Dean of Manchester, Canon Green, claims that "unwed mothers are pampered" (*Sunday Mirror*, 20/6/65). They are "better looked after, more cosseted, and treated more kindly than married mothers", a statement which is surely nonsense. He is "perturbed by all the kindness lavished on the unmarried mother, and wonders if it is not misdirected". Most of us, especially if we are not Christians, are perturbed at the Canon's callousness. When the happy times come when a baby can be had at will, when there will be no slur on being a mother, it is possible there will be no Canon Greens to complain. In any case, it is as well to note that the Archdeacon of Northumberland does not agree with him.

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NO SPIRITUALIST would ever give up his poltergeists, who pop up every so often, and in most cases are only ousted by Christian priests with "bell, book and candle", or some other equally divine mummery invented by the Christian Church at the height of its power. The *Sunday Mirror* (27/6/65) has been looking into the poltergeist who clung to an eleven-year-old schoolgirl, and the paper has not yet made up its mind whether the infernal imp is "hallucination, imagination, or trickery". Yet, it declares, "the haunting of young Virginia Campbell could be nothing but fact". This is on the authority of Dr. G. Owen of Trinity College, Cambridge, who is—we are told—"the world's leading authority on poltergeists".

★

DR. OWEN has written a book on the "problem" and,

though he has not seen Virginia's poltergeist himself, he is quite satisfied that the "witnesses" heard "actual noises", and saw "actual motions of real objects", and therefore could not be tricked. Dr. Owen is therefore now quite certain that there is "a physical force" around Virginia, "which is not yet known to science" but is presumably well known to Dr. Owen.

## Questions Without Answers

DAVID TRIBE'S long poem, *Why Are We Here?* (Outposts Publications, 10s.), begins when the ocean mists seem to become a parboiled Venus or an aged cretin and innocence and peace dissolve into the parquetry of night and day while a human foetus floats on the waters of maternity. A human life is born, naked as the oyster-polished buttocks of a pearl. The poet then shows us the child as a drum skin waiting for the stick of life, and life, when it comes, as a confusion of beauty like the smell of jelly cooling in a window, and existence the pain of frustrated thoughts; and times when reality is seen to be the stimulation of susceptible senses, and times when the cloud shadows of gods are more real than the El Dorado joys on earth. In the end the knight's gentleness turns to gentility, and man's thoughts die and the crucifix of luck is death. This account of life is punctuated with choruses by "the flakes" of moods and emotions and appearances trying to summon themselves into a reasoned whole.

This is not perhaps an easy poem to read, for there are no surprises, no new thoughts, no intense condensations, no technical fireworks. One has to rely on the skilful formality of the presentation to realise that the poet is suggesting that life is question and answer death. Man must accept question as the essence of matter if he is to be, to build "the blessed bane of life"; for answers are negation and destruction. This, in fact, is not worked out explicitly; yet it is only when we grasp this formal theme that we can appreciate the apparent fatuity of some of the lines in the choruses which superficially are pantomime jingles. They are, actually, an underscoring of the absurdity of questioning "what is" when man should define "what is" as question.

Make no mistake, Mr. Tribe has many felicities. He can speak of "fields of wheat like fairground sand" and "houses framed in icicles and white honey-comb". Still, in the test of such an extended poem, he does lack self-censorship. Just as some of his pantheistic passages suggest a unitarian sermon, so do some of his words ("we canticulate", "the child palpates his way", etc.) propose the pompous parson when such an effect is not intended.

However, the whole sustained work is indeed an achievement, and no less so because one might have thought that such pieces are no longer being written today when poets are mainly concerned with complex and contradictory moods held in suspension by high electric-neural interchange. On one level one is reminded of the old nature poets who were content simply to describe; yet, as I have said, Mr. Tribe uses his simplicities to make a formal construction to undermine professional-paraclete profundities.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

### WITHOUT COMMENT

St. Jude is the patron of helpless causes, or cases, which is why you see so many grateful thanks to him in the personal columns of the evening newspapers, particularly in the North-West, round about the time of the 11-plus results.

—NESTA ROBERTS, (*The Guardian*, 20/7/65)

# THE FREETHINKER

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

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THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One year £1 17s. 6d.; half-year, 19s.; three months, 9s. 6d. In USA and Canada: One year, \$5.25; half-year, \$2.75; three months, \$1.40.

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

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

### 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. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

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

### INDOOR

Portsmouth Humanist Society (Friends' Meeting House, 25 Northwood Road, Hilsca), Friday, July 30th, 7.30 p.m.: Discussion, "Humanists in the Nuclear Age".

## Notes and News

WITH THE Labour Government—even with its slender majority—apparently determined to continue in office, the pollsters seem to have turned their attention from politics to religion. The latest study, conducted by Derek Wright, Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Leicester, entitled *Attitudes towards the Church in Wellingborough*, involved the questioning of as many as 66 subjects drawn from four different housing areas. Area 1 contained large detached houses, area 2 private semi-detached houses, area 3 a council estate, and area 4 old terraced houses. The sample was—we read in *New Society* (24/6/65)—46 per cent male and 54 per cent female: which means there were, in plain figures, 30 men and 36 women. Of these quite a large proportion, 41 per cent, had attended church as often as monthly or weekly. Which alone would suggest that Mr. Wright's sample was unrepresentative. But, of what possible use could figures be when based on such a tiny number of people?

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"THERE IS a persistent failure in the West", wrote Edward Crankshaw in a book review (in the *Observer*, 18/7/65), "to understand the savagery of the war being waged by the Soviet Government on organised religion". Things are, he added, worse now than for some years past. "Monks and nuns have been driven out of their establishments at rifle point and left to starve or freeze in the forests: those who have sought to succour them intimidated or arrested". It was not clear whether Mr. Crankshaw was here drawing on the work under review, Michael Bourdeaux's *Opium of the People* (Faber, 30s.), "the explorations of a young Anglican priest looking for God in Russia and finding Him in unexpected places—and not finding Him, frequently, where He is said to be". Recent persecutions are the subject of only a very small part of

the book which "comes as near as any book can to answering in human terms the question: what is the state of religion in the Soviet Union today?"—a question which Mr. Crankshaw, as an agnostic, "found it hard to answer with conviction".

★

AN EXTENSIVE scheme is being planned—we read in the *Guardian* (19/7/65)—to banish the dark and gloomy effect introduced in the nineteenth century into Manchester Cathedral. There are no worries about the structure said the architect, Dr. R. B. Wood-Jones, but a great deal could be done to reflect a "sense of joy" essential in the Christian faith. The Cathedral dated back to the fifteenth century, but there had been a series of major restorations in the nineteenth century. The roofs were originally richly coloured, but this was later removed; an attempt was now being made "to bring the building into line with the modern concept of a cathedral—full of light and colour". But, as Dr. Wood-Jones must know, the real gloom of Manchester Cathedral derives not from its dull roof and bad lighting; nor will a few thousand more watts dispel it. The place is dead.

★

OUR colleague in This Believing World justifiably asks where the Anglican and Methodist Churches stand on unity: a rather complex question that we don't presume to answer. We can, however, add a footnote. Opponents in the Methodist Church to the proposed terms of reunion are reported to be "closing their ranks" (*The Guardian*, 20/7/65). A group of Lancashire Methodist ministers met in Preston on July 19th and issued a statement saying that it had decided to take its views to "a meeting more representative of the dissentient opinion in the whole of Great Britain". The Rev. K. Mackenzie, superintendent of the Morecambe Methodist circuit explained that some of the ministers wanted "clarification" of the new position concerning acceptance of the historical episcopacy. It would seem, then, that our TBW colleague isn't the only one who isn't clear about the position on unity.

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ONE OF the curious results of the new US Federal programmes in education is, according to *Church and State* (July-Aug. 1965), "the functional interlocking of church and state which they foster". This is true of both the Economic Opportunity Act and the Elementary and Secular Education Act. All around the United States officials of the Roman Catholic Church are "seizing the reins of leadership" in the programmes. As Dr. Maurice M. Hartmann, director of Community Service put it, "The war on poverty coincides with the teaching of the Church". Now that the Federal Government is waging it, that is!

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IT WAS reported in the same issue of *Church and State* that a new municipal judge in Los Angeles, Mary Elizabeth Waters, had refused to perform marriage ceremonies for Roman Catholic couples. A Catholic herself, Judge Waters has cited her Church's canon law that only a Catholic priest can perform a valid marriage ceremony for Catholics. Public law in California, however, provides for civil marriage and makes no exemption in the case of any religious denomination, and when Presiding Judge Francis A. Cochran heard of Judge Waters's refusal, he despatched another judge to take over in her place. "Judges should not allow religious beliefs to interfere with their duties", Judge Cochran said.

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WE HAVE been asked by the publishers, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., to point out that the correct title of their Berdyayev anthology reviewed by F. H. Amphlett Micklewright (16/7/65) is *Christian Existentialism*.

# The ABC of the Traditional Arguments for the Existence of God

By GONZALO QUIOGUE (Manila)

A. *The ontological argument.* St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) stated the argument: "God is Perfect Being and Perfect Reality. As such He exists, because existence is implied in perfection and is one of His basic traits. If He does not exist, He is not perfect. But since He is perfect, He must exist".

*Comments:* Immanuel Kant, the great German philosopher of the 18th century, was right in saying that "existence" is not a trait, because anything conceived by man exists either as a fact or as a figment of the imagination, or as an abstraction. The ontological argument wants to prove the existence of God by assuming that His existence is contained in His definition. If this argument is valid, we can logically say that a "perfect mountain" must exist, for the "same reason that existence is implied in perfection". Also, a perfect valley, a perfect lake, a perfect tree, etc. This argument claims logical necessity for its obvious absurdity.

B. *The cosmological argument.* This argument, simply stated, runs like this: Everything has a cause, and this cause is the effect of some other cause, and so on . . . until the series of cause and effect reaches the First Cause, God, the Uncaused Cause. A chair, a table and a house are here because a carpenter made them. Likewise the universe is here, because God created it. Nobody created God, because He is not a contingent being like you and me. Our existence depended upon God and our parents. Everything was caused by some other thing, except God, the Uncaused Cause.

*Comments:* Our conclusion that a carpenter made the table is the result of our daily experience. This cause-and-effect thinking in our daily life was erroneously applied by the theologian to the totality of the universe. He said the universe must have had a Maker for the same reason that a table had a maker. An infinite series of gods in regress, each made by the previous one, would look awkward. Hence, as a solution, a dogma was invented—the dogma that God is an Uncaused Cause or First Cause, an Unmade Maker and an Unmoved Mover. If someone will ask: Instead of inventing God behind the universe to explain the latter, why not regard the world of nature as the Uncaused Cause and the Unmade Maker? There are two explanations to this:

1. Sincere theologians and religionists, people who truly believe in the existence of God, must have a God. They feel good and they find relief and comfort in the thought of Him. The universe of nature is not a conscious

entity, not a sentient being. Hence there must be a personal God with Whom religionists may commune—to unburden themselves of their troubles and to ask for help that their fellow humans cannot give.

2. Insincere theologians and other cash-minded people who are giving top priority to the money-making activities of religion must maintain a steady God-belief among all religionists for obvious reasons.

The universe, like space, time, and quantity, has no beginning. The universe has always been here in continuous flux, in an ever-evolving pattern. The stars or suns and planets are being formed from time to time by the condensation of hydrogen gas and dust in the immensity of cosmic space. The planets are too relatively small to have enough mass and pressure to generate stellar heat—thus they become planets instead of suns or stars. And when a planet happens to be at the right distance from its sun, not too close and not too far, sunlight and age-long interactions among the planet's chemicals produce organic matter, first in the form of plants and then of animals.

C. *The design argument.* Briefly, this argument says that the order and wonder we see in nature and the universe show that there is a Supreme Intelligence at work in this world. Contemplate the orderly revolution of the nine planets around the sun without sideswiping each other. Consider the rotation of the earth on its axis every twenty-four hours and its revolution around the sun each year. Feast your eyes on the bright colours of falling autumn leaves. See the beautiful flowers in springtime and hear the sweet chirpings of birds as they fly through the cool fragrance of the season. All these were designed by the Good Lord for the enjoyment of His children.

*Comments:* To some extent there is order, wonder and beauty in nature. But this is only one half of the picture. The other half is terrible chaos. Where is the order and beauty in a big fish swallowing a little fish? A snake swallowing a mouse? A rapacious hawk tearing a pigeon to bits? A hungry lion's mouth clamped tightly on the throat of a struggling zebra?

Where is the order and harmony in nature in the terrific explosions of star-suns, in the eruptions of volcanoes, in great floods, tidal waves, typhoons, hurricanes, tornadoes and terrible earthquakes and pestilences that kill thousands of humans and animals? A religious person gazes lovingly at the order in nature that strengthens his religion, but looks away from the chaos that weakens such creed.

## FREEDOM

A successful party politician and an unsuccessful independent candidate were arguing the subject of "success".

Party politician (exasperated): "You remind me of an egg without the 'little lion' nobody wants you!"

Independent (cooly): "Quite true!, my friend: but you must admit that the egg without the lion is very seldom addled: is far bigger and much more tasty, and the hen that lays it has much more freedom than her sister in the cage".

P. BULLOUGH.

## REFLECTIONS ON CREDULITY

(Concluded from page 243)

of which she complains are an essential part and parcel of Catholicism, both historic and continuing. That is why they find it infinitely simpler to reject the whole lot, and, instead of wasting their mental energies on conundrums incapable of solution, expending their intellectual powers on building up a new world with their backs turned against a system of perplexities which has engaged the speculative intellect of mankind for two thousand years too long!

# English and French Writers

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

THE DAY of the source book seems to be with us and to be making its impression in many subjects. Difficulties in a ready obtaining of the original writings make such books of use to the student, whilst lack of time goes far towards justifying a method of reading reliable extracts rather than the whole text. John Plamenatz has used this method to present the liberal tradition to English readers.

In *Readings from Liberal Writers, English and French* (Allen and Unwin Ltd., Minerva Series No. 13, 21s.), he commences with Locke, whose works upon civil government and upon toleration gathered up and detheologised the controversies of the seventeenth century, and thus laid the roots of an evolution in political and social democracy. Constitutionalism is represented by Montesquieu, whose *Spirit of the Laws* was an important work in the carrying over of jurisprudence into the same liberal, empirical framework. Constant, like Burke and Rousseau, affords a useful touchstone for liberalised opinion at the period of the American War of Independence and the French Revolution. Hume is representative of the carrying of empirical thought into further stages. Mill the rationalist and Lord Acton the liberal Catholic are excellent representatives of liberalised opinion in the mid-nineteenth century, whilst De Tocqueville's essay will always stand as the most important analysis of American democracy at the same period. Nor is it without relevance to find that the series of selections is rounded off by R. H. Tawney whose study, *Equality* was probably among the more important works to emerge from Fabian Socialism, and left its mark upon a great deal of socialistic thinking as it sought the development of a more equalitarian society.

At first sight, it might seem that there are marked differences between these various thinkers. Of those who belong to the more modern section, Mill was an agnostic rationalist, Lord Acton was a liberal-minded member of the Church of Rome, a very great historian and always under suspicion from the authorities of his Church, Pro-

fessor Tawney was a Christian Socialist whose *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* caused him to be much disliked by the more reactionary members of the Church of England. But there is one decided bond between them, an appeal to the scientific, empirical method of thinking which has marked English thought from the days of Locke and of Hume. Concern with freedom of thought and speech leads on to a concern with the functions and the limits of governments. The liberal becomes essentially humanistic in his generalised concern for man within the world. It is this approach to thought which has linked him so closely to utilitarian strivings after human happiness and to care for human progress and development. Whatever immediate relationships may have arisen for the individual in his particular environment, the liberals here quoted form a community representative of a whole area of thought that has done much to determine the democratic phases of Western civilisation.

The present selection of their writings is a highly important anthology serving as a guide to anybody who wishes to explore and to follow up the development of liberal thought over three centuries. A scholarly essay is contributed by Dr. Plamenatz. The closing paragraphs may quarrel with Mill upon certain details but they express a faith in man which is fully in accord with the tradition which he is setting forth in this anthology. Secularism, freethought, rationalism are the heirs to this tradition and represent it to the full. But it is essential that the present day exponent of the tradition should be fully aware of the attitudes and claims of his forebears. It is to be hoped that anybody who claims to stand within the liberal tradition of freedom should possess himself of this excellent work and should make himself a master of its contents. The book in itself is nothing less than a thorough education in the liberal spirit, an end which anybody claiming to be a thinker truly free should seek to possess.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### FROM ITALY

I am rather surprised that you never mentioned in THE FREETHINKER that the Italian President, Saragat, is a convinced Freethinker. This is not secret; everyone knows it. But it just goes to show that Italy is the land of freedom! You can think and almost do exactly what you like.

Only in the closed Roman Catholic circles is there lack of freedom, but it is voluntary, taken upon themselves by those who cling to the priests' skirts. The great mass of the Italian people is not at all interested in ecclesiastical and religious problems. The only thing that is important for them is the economical problem. This explains why the Vatican and higher Roman Catholic circles are so money-bent: they are Italians!

MARY BLAKE, (Padua)

### THE WAY FORWARD

As a Humanist, World Federalist and Esperantist I applaud E. G. Macfarlane (THE FREETHINKER, 18/6/65) in wanting a democratic system of world organisation which "unlike communism and fascism, includes freedom of thought, speech and association as civic rights".

But I see no reason for thinking that to do that we must also fight nationalism and love of one's country. As a citizen here in North America I have two loyalties, I love my state and am proud to be called a loyal Badger (that is what we call citizens of Wisconsin) and I am also proud to be an American—a citizen of a great republic a federal union operated with a common language. And I hope some day to be able to say I am a citizen of the UN and loyal to all humanity. It seems to me it would be smart for all peoples including flag wavers of all nations, to join in working to substitute law for war.

When our federal union was formed in 1789 most all the states had state religions, while the federal union provided for separation of church and state. Now all states have come over to the federal position. Is it not reasonable to suppose that this would happen under world union? Our union of 50 states has had peace for 100 years, if for 50 states why not 150 states?

GLENN P. TURNER, (Middleton, Wisconsin).

### ANSWERS TO A CLERICAL CRITIC

It is unusual but refreshing to find a glimmer of humour in THE FREETHINKER, which is why I enjoyed the Reverend Mr. Craddock's rambling letter in your July 16th issue. Is he a real person or is this a leg-pull?

Assuming the former, I am amused to learn, and from such a source, that the Bible is the Jews' effort "to explain the then known history of man" and is not therefore the inspired word of god. That the world is a "few million years" old, by which admission he has thrown over the creation. And that the ignorance of the Freethinkers leads to self-shame and chaos.

I, who lay no claim to ignorance, and am neither ashamed nor chaotic, have always maintained that intelligent people think themselves out of religion rather than into it. The Reverend gentleman's letter, although confused and muddled, makes one thing quite clear. He is in no danger of losing his faith.

COLIN FRANKLIN.

I feel that the Editor was being too polite to the Rev. Craddock. I would describe his comments as unscientific rubbish and extremely ignorant of what Freethinkers have done to make society more tolerable. I hope he did not apply the same lack of reasoning to his medical practice as he applies to his "scientific" interpretations as a clergyman.

I am very proud to put my name to this letter for if I make any scientific statement I make sure that I am thinking like a

scientist. In the Rev. Craddock's place I would have been ashamed to put the letters M.B.,Ch.B., after my name.

Unfortunately the medical profession is dogged by people who if they were ever taught any scientific thinking and method seem unable to retain it. After the religion ridden and completely unscientific report on venereal disease perpetrated by the British Medical Association I found it impossible, as a person who wishes to live up to the term "medical science", to remain a member of that organisation.

My knowledge of developmental and adult human psychology helps me to an understanding of how a person with reasonable intelligence can come to have a defect in his powers of reasoning such that he believes in a force that he cannot perceive with any of his senses, not even indirectly as one might detect a proton with a radiation counter, or infer a solar magnetic field by the splitting of a spectral line. But I find it much more difficult to understand an educated (and to a great extent scientifically educated) man writing what the Rev. Craddock has written.

Why must religious doctors trot out this nonsense about pain being ennobling or "... producing marvels of courage and even happy acceptance ..."? Perhaps in my experience of human suffering I was able to see my patients without the need to cash in, in a religious sense on their unhappiness.

I suppose I must in despair place the Rev. Craddock into the same category as a religious medical colleague who when she discovered that I was an Atheist could not understand how it was possible for me to be a doctor, but what astonished me more, enquired what it was that stopped me murdering her there and then! In the face of such mental blindness how can reason hope to prevail?

I am a "... member of a society whose greatest joy is in service to others especially the helpless ..." which is exactly why I joined the National Secular Society and support THE FREETHINKER to help a little to combat the sort of ignorance that the

Rev. Craddock propagates, ignorance which has impeded human progress for too long. As a doctor my job is to make people happy here and now and not waste time and effort cluttering people's short lives with nonsense about heaven and a heavenly father, in fact I have spent a lot of time undoing the damage done by the ghastly influence of religion on people's lives and thinking, and usually, of course, in the face of religious opposition.

Perhaps the Rev. Craddock would like to make another scientific effort at explaining where this place is that he is going to when his circulation fails and his brain cells die. Which galaxy is it in, or is it beyond the parts of the universe that recedes with the speed of light—a convenient suggestion Rev. Craddock? At least the chicken in the barn is not suffering from delusions and hallucinations, and practising deception on his fellows.

I should feel sorry for the Rev. Craddock, but I find it very difficult when I consider the damage his kind has done and continues to do to society.

KENNETH E. JONES, MB, CHB.

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