

FREETHINKER

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THE ROOTS OF EVIL

THIS IS THE TITLE of a book by Christopher Hibbert, now out in a paper-back Penguin at 9s 6d. It is an invaluable reference book for everyone who is interested in (or just talks about) crime and punishment. The print is rather pale, but there is an excellent index and bibliography. The book is crowded with information and wisdom and although on page 106 Paine's "Age of Freedom" clearly means "Age of Reason", who am I to carp at fallible proof-readers?

Mr Hibbert traces the history of crime from the time when

"The Germans, as described by Tacitus, sixty years after the death of Christ, considered only treachery, desertion, cowardice, and sexual perversion to be crimes serious enough to be punished by death",

through the fearful ages of faith and heresy (when "sin" really got going and "retaliation" and "vengeance" took over from "compensation")—right up to the present day.

We learn that in the 14th century Pope Clement V wrote to Edward II concerning heretics:

"We hear that you forbid torture as contrary to the laws of your land; but no state can override Canon Law, Our Law; therefore I command you at once to submit these men to torture. . . You have already imperilled your soul as a favourer of heretics. Withdraw your prohibition and we grant your remission of sins."

And Edward gave in "through reverence for the Holy See."

There is discussion in the book about "criminal types" according to the 19th century Italian doctor Cesare Lombroso and others, and reference to insanity, epilepsy, and to conscience or the lack of it found in the "sociopathic personality". The history of prison reformers, prison conditions, the police (both its corruption and problems) are all dealt with most readably, as are arguments about corporal and capital punishment. Now that our Home Secretary, to his everlasting credit, has refused to agree to the flogging of a 19-year-old prisoner, it should comfort even the blood-lusters to read just how futile a

method this is in the treatment and reform of criminals. In answer to all those who accuse the humane citizen of being "sentimental" or "caring more for the criminal than for the victim", Hibbert writes that their attitude

" . . . too often means nothing more than to regret that the pleasures and satisfactions of revenge have been denied. Only by thinking of the criminal can the numbers of victims be reduced; and only by imposing useful punishments—including the liability to make compensation to the victims or the victims' family—can society be honourably satisfied. Flogging is not satisfactory punishment, not so much because it is violent—all punishments are violent to some extent—but because it is morally damaging and ineffective." (p. 443.)

In the same way he defies those who would retain the death penalty with proof that there never has been any virtue in it as a deterrent, and, as to the fears prevalent today since its abolition in this country, he writes:

"In all European countries it has been found that released murderers have very rarely been any further danger to society. A recent report issued in America indicates that paroled robbers are a far greater danger to life than paroled murderers are."

Presumably no one is going to suggest that house-breakers should be locked up once and forever.

The author suggests that newspapers tend "to invent crime waves when published statistics provide no evidence that they exist". He reckons that fewer crimes are committed per head of the population these days, although if you include all the parking and motoring offences in the statistics (as we do) the opposite appears to be true. All the same, he warns,

" . . . it is dangerous to feel satisfied as to be unjustifiably alarmed. The influences which turn men to crime may be different and less compelling than those of the past, but thousands of men become criminals just the same."

As for crime increasing as religion loses its icy grip on people's minds, this idea would, if only from the above, appear to have been refuted. Atheists (like the Jews) come out well from the statistics. Hibbert reports, "Men who merely professed themselves to be Christians were as likely as atheists, if not more likely than atheists, to become criminals . . . the sex offender is more frequently than not 'a professed member of a religious denomination' ". A recent American study showed that "over eighty-eight per cent of five hundred criminals examined attended church although irregularly, and only three per cent did not attend at all". And it does not appear that Hibbert is biased in the Humanist direction.

This book makes compulsive reading. Secularists and Humanists will find ample confirmation that in our attempts to ensure that only wanted children are born, that all children receive attention, affection and education about sex, and in our efforts to fight poverty, ignorance

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and superstitious theories about human behaviour, we are in fact attacking the very "roots of evil". To fertilise these roots with religious platitudes about immorality and retribution is disastrous. If we are not officially criminals our-

selves, we are all involved, and, one way or another the cause of crime in others. To accept this responsibly is perhaps the first basic step towards a happier and safer society.

HUMANISM, HOME AND FAMILY No. 2

Isobel Grahame

I HAVE ALREADY suggested that HI (Human Instruction or Self-Knowledge) must be made a school subject from primary standard upwards and onwards, if we are to produce generations of competent parents with sufficient insight into themselves to equip them for home and child management and the arts and sciences concerned with Lifemanship. That would be a start; but of course ideally it should all begin even earlier, and I don't really know which should come first—egg or chicken, family or parents.

Nice families are still supposed to begin with love and marriage, but conjugal love enduring throughout lifelong marriage is a comparatively new Western invention, especially for men. If love and marriage are to keep on going together like a horse and carriage, then powerful natural impulses must be harnessed and driven skilfully between the shafts of our complex and often cruelly irrational social machinery.

Humanists and Freethinkers, being rational people, are firstly concerned with how life actually is, rather than how it ought to be. The state of marriage is not a romantic situation, and not every romance contains the germ of dogged stickability necessary for weathering conflicts of personalities until they become blended and mellowed into satisfying harmony. The time, tenacity and talent required to achieve such a synthesis is often seen in retrospect by both partners as an unexpectedly maturing and unifying experience from which love grows. An experience they might never have enjoyed if what proved to be a challenge had first been mistaken for an impasse from which the only escape was divorce.

I see no ethical reason why people who do not want to breed should not agree to live together for mutual comfort and companionship without the formalities of marriage, but there are some formidable practical and emotional hazards which they will need to negotiate with a degree of forbearance and insight which I should think is rare outside the ranks of the Archangels.

There is no contraceptive technique yet developed which is safe, effective and aesthetically acceptable under all conditions, so it would be realistic for social convention to require members of the opposite sex who do decide to live and love together in their own way to make some formal declaration that they acknowledge and will undertake ultimate responsibility for the long-term results of any accidental pregnancy which might occur.

Teaching parental responsibility

In order to protect and maintain the quality of human being, and with the hope of improving it, every child should be early and repeatedly imbued with the principle that once a live birth has been allowed to take place the rights of the child to its parents' devoted and dutiful care are paramount. If this maxim were to become as integral to education and social training as simple arithmetic and the prevention of fire, it might become the most effective means of birth control ever devised.

Girls used to be conditioned to feel personal failure and disgrace in remaining unmarried or childless. This reproach was due to a limited concept of female sexuality on the one hand, and a distorted image of male virility on the other. It is no longer necessary or even desirable for every fertile couple to feel a duty to breed, and this relief should go a long way towards reducing some of the misery and emotional havoc caused by ham-handed child management and incompetent homemaking on the part of reluctant parents pressurised by society into raising families they are constitutionally unsuited to cope with. Of course contraceptives must be available to women in the way they have for so long been available to men.

I am squarely convinced, however, that when a man and a woman have agreed to breed, some kind of marriage with contractual promises binding on them both is necessary; also that *affectionate love*—not merely sexual competence between the partners—is absolutely essential for providing children with that indefinable sense of security they need to face a manifestly insecure world where the only absolute seems to be the constancy of change. Mum and Dad must seem to be unchanging whilst actually growing up with their children—successful parenthood is the most difficult art in the whole human repertoire.

The importance of Altruism

I would like to suggest that during periods of intense glandular change and imbalance such as puberty, menopause and the male climacteric, it is tragically easy for the unwary, the uncertain, and the lonely to get "hooked" on sex in circumstances where affectionate love and stickability are impossible. There may be bitter disappointment and heartbreak ahead for such helpless sex addicts when in course of time they experience withdrawal symptoms. If this theory of mine is right, then it follows that all adult pairs, whether married, breeding or no, are really just as much in need of a sense of affection and secure devotion as children are. Altruism is an essential ingredient for human health and happiness.

This capacity for altruism which we inherit from our ancestors—the higher mammals—must be the solution to my egg-or-chicken problem. Without altruism, family, home and humanism cannot properly begin.

From A. SOLOMON, Brussels

DEFINITION OF HUMANISM ON A POSTCARD

HUMANISM may be defined as a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority. It is based on the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason, and on the conviction that human experience is the source of all knowledge and moral values. Humanism is not a closed system of thought, but a living philosophy of life which constantly enriches itself with the growth and progress of scientific knowledge.

[Your own definition in not more than 150 words is invited. Please send it to the Editor.]

A GOOD SCOTS HERRING

Phyllis K. Graham

AND JUST WHAT is all this hullabaloo about Duns Scotus? Are we retrogressing to mediaevalism in feeble protest against the ravages of progress? Or escaping to the nursery—charades and all that and the fun of dressing-up—in a frantic endeavour to avoid facing up to our terrifying problems?

Our learned representatives dig out this musty old Scots theologian from his seven-hundred-year-old burrow and present us with his dry bones for oracle and panacea. Simultaneously our ineducable TV autocrats insult the memory of English genius H. G. Wells, one of the most brilliant thinkers of his age and of all time, a radically human fellow-countryman only twenty years dead.

The cruel mis-handling of the Wells TV broadcast is on a par with the deliberate under-valuation of another great national treasure, happily still with us. Future centuries will accord Bertrand Russell the supreme honour granted only to a handful of the human race; just as they will evaluate at its true worth the restless, prophetic genius of H. G. Wells. Men everywhere will be glad to warm themselves at the fire of one incandescent mind and rejoice in the light of the other.

Back to the womb

But *our* generations? Oh, no. We never get our priorities right, we Anglo-Saxons. Some of our Continental friends may possibly be wiser. But we prefer to play safe with our nursery toys. We're afraid of our own progress, we're scared of genius in our midst, we're "chicken" about any sort of *thinking*, except by thinkers centuries dead. We prefer the fairytale "logic" of old man Scotus to the luminous vision of intellects like those of Bertrand Russell or H. G. Wells. Because, like infants and elephants, we hate change, which means we fear progress. The psychiatrists call it trying to creep back into the womb, and how right they are. For our Nicodemian lament that we can't do it, Holy Mother Church has a ready and cheerful solution, "Water and the Holy Ghost". Her capacious womb positively gapes to re-engage the English. And how many of them secretly long for the old happy (*sic*) warmth of ignorance, darkness and maternal protection! They don't, unfortunately, envisage the reverse process, which is neither consoling nor romantic. For HMC shares a perverted instinct with certain of the brute creation, those mindless ones of whom she is the prototype. Those of her progeny who do work their way to the light and manage to get themselves born she endeavours to "safeguard" by swallowing alive.

Waiting and watching for the prey

And this is, in truth, the very act now in process, the ugly elemental fact of anti-life beneath the pomp and circumstance of Pope Paul's "golden framework" to the new Agape of Christendom. Behind the pretty tableaux of Roman dignitaries "resplendent in crimson capes and skull caps", Anglican dittoes in "the more sober . . . scarlet and white", "brown-habited friars" and the tra-la-la of assorted religious orders and the trappings of learning, all gorgeous and galoptious against the solemn setting of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford (where Scotus operated and Cranmer was tried and condemned for heresy)—behind all this alluring splendour is a not-so-fascinating graffito. Anyone with eyes to see (and prepared to use them) can decode this indecent "writing on the wall". The subject: Rome's determined re-ingestion of the

lustly Protesting child that got itself born more than four centuries ago.

Alas, there are signs that the lustiness is withering to weakness, and Mamma is quick on the spot to seize her opportunity. More than four hundred years she has watched and waited, slyly insinuating her serpentine maternity whenever and wherever a weak point offered, edging her world-length of glittering scales ever closer and closer to her predestined prey. Those of us who are not mesmerised behold this horrid sight without pleasure and with keen apprehension. How long, we ask, before, betrayed by our weaker members, our official enwombment begins? *We* shall fight our detested parent like hell, but the thought of the tooth-and-nail struggle to come hardly consoles us.

The mummers and the mummified

Meanwhile the face-saving farce goes on. Duns Scotus' dry-as-dust mental mcandering (most of it missing anyway) is revered and examined and pored over like the mummy of a king of Egypt. Alas for the mumming and the mummers, one touch of the cool air of commonsense and the whole thing crumbles. As Norman St John Stevas somewhat acidly comments in the *Catholic Herald*:

"Duns Scotus taught that we can prove neither the existence of God nor the doctrines of the Church: we have to accept them both on the authority of the Church itself. Dialogue along this basis would drive us rapidly, I expect, to a dead end." Moreover, "Scotus' views on birth control are even less promising. He held that the purpose of procreation was to populate heaven in general and fill the places left by the fallen angels in particular. Like St Bernadine, he believed that marriage was divinely ordained to 'fill paradise'. I don't think that one would go down any better with the Anglicans than the Indians."

It might, though, with a steadily rising percentage of those afflicted with the current epidemic; Roman fever leaves 'em soft enough in the head to believe anything.

Red Herring Industry

Mr St John Stevas wonders—as well he might—what Pope Paul had in mind "when he suggested that the writings of Duns Scotus might prove a useful foundation for an Anglican-Catholic dialogue". Perhaps we unhallowed onlookers might hazard a guess. Peter's See—and notably the present occupant—is tops in the red-herring industry. And the hoary old Scot is as useful a sample of this type of fish as any other. Presuming, that is, there are enough fools around to be put off the main trail; and the age-old Fisher of Men is perfectly aware that it's safe to assume that there are.

For Papa Paul has urgent need of high-scented means of diverting our attention. From such main issues as birth control, for instance, on which he *still* maintains mysterious and obstinate silence. From secret issues like the Church's death-struggle with communism, ubiquitously waged, relentlessly escalated, under secular camouflage. From innumerable deprivations of Vatican Diplomacy, that other, more horrific type of VD that scourges humanity—and which, be it known, is liable to infect the light-minded who indulge in popish promiscuity. Above all—from Albion's point of view—he needs to distract us from the cryptic transactions going on in our midst.

"Jesus convert England" (Catholic daily prayer)

It may be a nice irony of history that Pope Paul should

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NEWS AND NOTES

ATHEIST, SCIENTIST and Nobel prizewinner Dr Francis Crick has criticised Lord Annan for being willing to read the Lesson in the college chapel, even though he is an agnostic. This attack was published in an article "Why I am a Humanist" by Dr Crick in the undergraduate newspaper *Varsity*. Dr Crick hopes that Dr E. R. Leach (the new Provost of King's College Cambridge to succeed Lord Annan) will not continue "this regrettable practice". Dr Leach has replied that if he were asked to read the lesson, he probably would. "I do not see why not. I do not think of Humanism as anti-Christian". Which is surely to make nonsense of Humanism. How can one be actively and positively in favour of, say, democracy, without being equally positively opposed to the enemies of democracy? The enemies of Humanism are the doctrines that imply that man is helpless without divine intervention; that man is born in sin (as a result of the "Fall") and has to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ; that this life is only a rehearsal for something better after death; that even if Jesus never lived or was not a god, he is supremely important, and that those who don't think so are at best deprived—at worst damned. If Dr Leach and his fellow agnostics are not opposed to these doctrines, then they cannot be expected to be fully prepared to attack them, and a Humanist who does not attack the rotten Christian fabric in our society before trying to build something sound and long-lasting can only succeed in producing something fundamentally rotten.

Secularism wins again

THE *Observer* (Oct. 16) reports that the British Council of Churches (a mixture of the major protestant churches with RC observers) has produced a "controversial report" on the Christian attitude towards sex outside marriage, which is, it says, not invariably wrong. Specific rules about sex are "out" (St Paul or no St Paul) and cautious and qualified approval has been given to contraceptive advice for the unmarried, four letter words, masturbation and reform of the abortion law. The report has, as yet, no authority beyond that of the working party of clergymen, educationalists, writers and medical experts who produced it. The report even endorses the suggestion of Dr Alex Comfort, the anarchist-Humanist, that "Thou shalt not exploit another person's feelings and wantonly expose them to an experience of rejection" and "thou shalt not in any circumstances negligently risk producing an unwanted child". Considering that when Alex Comfort said this he was bitterly abused (and of course misquoted) by Christians, it is ironical to think how the mighty are fallen into accepting secular-Humanist ethics as their own. Ethics which, no doubt, will (if the report is adopted) be called "Christian". While welcoming any sign of greater toleration and compassion (even if bound up with hypocrisy, expediency and the generally unlikeable way Christians follow our lead while trying to apply the muzzle!) we should remember that even the "Quaker View of Sex" was not officially accepted by the Society of Friends, although it gave the Quakers good publicity while it was being considered. The Anglican Church still wants unity with Rome, and the Pope is busy trying to preserve medievalism.

Relevant to Humanist arguments

TIMOTHY EVANS was legally killed for a crime which

it is now believed he did not commit. Whether or not he did kill his wife does not concern us, for he was never tried for this crime. The lessons and facts that emerge from this grisly and tragic case are surely very relevant to Secularists; a man has been killed legally "by mistake"; this man is said to have had the mental age of 11 and an IQ of 65 and even the British don't hang children: one legal expert (Mr Justice Brabin) in 1966 has proved another legal expert (Mr John Scott Henderson, QC) to have been wrong in his 1953 verdict that there had been no miscarriage of justice; Mr Justice Brabin admits that "stale evidence is bad evidence" and that in the 16 years since the trial (and 12 since the last enquiry) evidence can lose its shape and validity. Secularists may dare to point out that the evidence regarding the life of the gospel Jesus has even less claim to be treated as infallible and that even if there was ever a Jesus, there were some 50 years before even the first of the gospel accounts is said to have been written. It has taken the Vatican nearly two thousand years before deciding to offer a scrap of "forgiveness" to the Jews for committing a crime that is probably purely mythological, and for which the Jews have suffered intolerable persecution. The posthumous apology now offered to Timothy Evans may at least comfort his mother. Evans was a Catholic and his priest kept him kneeling in prayer for so long that his knees were indelibly marked. He was begged to confess and did not do so, insisting all the time that Christie was guilty. The priest, then, must have been convinced of his innocence. If the confession is sometimes considered sacred, and cannot be used as evidence to condemn a man, should not conviction of innocence sustained under Catholic confession lead to the most strenuous attempts to save a man's life? The case of Timothy Evans should not be forgotten.

The real horror—birth

IT IS NOT the killing-death that arouses the most horror, it seems. It is birth. The *Sun* (Oct. 13) reports that when Julie Andrews was shown giving birth to a baby in the film "Hawaii", society women in New York walked out. They couldn't stand it. As David Nathan wrote, "It would be a brave producer who would dare to show the birth of a baby after 'Gun Law' . . ."

A GOOD SCOTS HERRING

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pick a Scot to bring England to heel. He seems, though, to expect overmuch of the ancient Hibernian, who is to provide both "*formidable weapons* in the struggle to disperse the black cloud of atheism which hangs darkly over our age" and "*a golden framework* for this serious dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion as well as the other Christian communities of Great Britain". No doubt the canonisation of the venerable Duns Scotus will proceed as soon as problematic Pius XII and good Pope John have been raised to the altars, and the requisite "miracles" hashed up from the dark and dubious kitchens which cater for such specialities. Or will Duns Scotus shine unique among the Saints, with the single, stunning, stupefying thaumaturgical jewel on his shaven head—the Doctor who accomplished single-handed the long-delayed cure of Anglican heresy—the humble Friar, seven centuries dust in Scottish soil, who wrought the Conversion of England?

THE JESUS MYTH

Gregory Smelters was born in Latvia in 1907 and, after being brought up as a RC, became an atheist in his early teens. He is a graduate in classics and during the war was a Displaced Person. He has been contributing to this paper since 1936 and lives in Sydney.

ISN'T it plain commonsense to state truthfully that not only gods are myths, but also that a "human" son of a god is as mythical as his father-god? Therefore I am profoundly amazed that modern freethought writers have left the commonsense view to theologians, viz. to state the simple inference that "Jesus the Christ" of Gospels as a begotten son of the West Semitic god Yahweh—or as an incarnation of Yahweh's wisdom (Logos), or as an incarnation of a pre-existent son of Yahweh—or, finally, as an incarnation of Yahweh himself (Luke 1, 68; John 11, 30 and 38)—is perfectly as plain a myth as Father Yahweh himself.

The modern theologians who thus beat all freethought mythicists are Dr (theol.) Rudolf Bultmann and his most recent populariser, Dr David E. Jenkins, fellow and chaplain, the Queen's College, Oxford. Writes Dr Jenkins (in his *Guide to the Debate about God*, p. 58, on Dr Bultmann's exposure of Christian mythology):

"Such a mythical approach to reality is quite out of the question for modern man. Talk which interweaves supernatural events with natural ones (e.g., takes miracles as both 'miracles', i.e. divinely caused, and events, i.e. ordinarily observable) or intersperses historical happenings with happenings with a supra- or extra-historical source (e.g., supposes that an historical personage 'comes down from Heaven' or is in a literally descriptive sense 'the son of God') is always mythological . . . This means that practically the whole of the Bible is strictly non-sense today."

Although Dr Jenkins does not mention "Jesus", the destructive reference to him is perfectly clear and intentional: "Jesus the Christ" is now as mythical as Father Yahweh himself, and freethinkers need not bother any more to elaborate weightier arguments—in fact, there exists no more unanswerable, destructive proof of Jesus-myth than this commonsense conclusion which goes back to Dr Bultmann.

Composite myth

Dr Bultmann had notably shown that the story of "Jesus the Anointed of Yahweh" is a composite myth, with these elements:

- (1) "Jesus" is an adopted son of Yahweh.
- (2) "Jesus" is a begotten son of Yahweh, out of Miriam the Jewess—begotten (a) by Yahweh's own breath-soul (Holy Ghost), or (b) by Yahweh himself, "the power of the Most High";
- (3) "Jesus the Hebrew" is an incarnation of the pre-existent son of Yehoshuah of Yahweh.

Writes Dr Bultmann (in his *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 131):

"According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus becomes the Son of God by the Spirit upon him at the baptism. But also the mythological conception of a divine son begotten by some deity—an idea which not merely Greek tradition knows, but which is also current in the Babylonian and especially the Egyptian king-legend—was evidently taken over by Jewish hellenism in Egypt and transferred to the devout men of the Old Testament. Hence, it is no wonder that early in hellenistic Christianity the legend springs up that Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1, 20), or by the 'power of the most High' (Luke 1, 35) and was born of a virgin. This understanding of Son of God was surpassed by the second type of understanding accord-

ing to which Jesus Christ is the pre-existent Son of God became man."

Here, writing as theologians, both Dr Jenkins and Dr Bultmann, use only "God". This trivial convention, arisen in Middle Ages, due to Latin which has no article, should not mislead any freethinker. It was notably a taboo in the New Testament days to use the sacred name "Yahweh". But modern scholarship leaves no doubt as to who is "God" (actually, "the god" in Hebrew and Greek texts): "The God of Jesus and of his followers is indeed Yahweh of Moses and of Israel" (Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion*, end paragraph). "Jesus' idea of God does not essentially differ from that of the Old Testament and of Judaism" (R. Bultmann, *op. cit.*, p. 23). The less stressed component of the Jesus-myth, viz. 'Jesus as an incarnation of Yahweh' is best attested in The Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs (Benj. II, 18-21): "The King of Heaven appeared upon earth in the form of a man in humanity. And the Lord (i.e., Yahweh) shall judge Israel first for their unrighteousness, for when he appeared as God in the flesh to deliver them they believed him not."

The "fiction" of the "historical" Jesus

In the light of these and other myths, we can understand why another prominent theologian also had concluded that "Jesus of History" is a fiction of unbelieving Christians and "Jesus of the Church" is a logical impossibility: "Beyond question, this so-called 'Jesus of History', the 'real' Jesus in distinction from the Jesus of the Church's faith, is a creation of phantasy, the arbitrary invention of the unbeliever. Still, it always remains possible and quite intelligible that men should declare the figure revealed by scholarship to be impossible" (N. Micklem, DD, in *The Christian Faith*, p. 180, London, 1936).

Now, need I add that this alone finally disposes of the existence of the Gospel "Jesus" once and for all?

Christian support of Atheism

A second fundamental point where Dr Jenkins beats freethought writers on the existence of God is his likewise conclusive disposal of "the god God" of theism (this term may be inferred from his own expression "the g-o-d-ness of God" on p. 109). Again, he uses the commonsense argument (of Schleiermacher) against the existence of God. The cogent argument is this: "to exist" means in our everyday (and scientific) language "to be somewhere and some time". Since this norm is denied in metaphysical theology by defining that God of theism (not the quite anthropomorphic Yahweh of the Bible) is nowhere in space-time, then God of theism plainly does not and cannot exist at all.

Writes Dr Jenkins (p. 49):

"It is taken for granted that the data of Science and, in some sense, the data of Morality exists, i.e., 'is there'. Consequently, existence ('being there') is judged in accordance with this norm. But the existence of God is specifically excluded from any sort of continuity with this norm. So God (the God of theism) must be taken for granted as not existing. Apologetic difficulties about the God (i.e., Yahweh) of the Bible and Christianity . . . have combined with ontological difficulties about talk about such a God to produce ontological impossibility. God does not and cannot exist."

The remarkable, super-atheistic theologian thus conclusively disposes of the existence both of "Jesus the

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THE JESUS MYTH

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Anointed" and of "the god God" of metaphysical theology. I defy any freethinker to beat him!

After enjoying this splendid (but suicidal) blow-up of Christian orthodoxy by Dr Jenkins, it was a nauseating experience to go through Dr (Sc.) J. Lambert's (Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford) jumble of fallacies in his attempt to refute *Scientific Humanism*" (London: SPCK, 1965, p. 17).

The man claims that the physicist's two ways of describing light as waves or as particles "are not very dissimilar from the theological patterns of explanation such as the Christian doctrine of the Trinity" (p. 4). Such language only proves that he knows nothing of modern biblical scholarship, let alone about Dr Bultmann's dismissal of the triad, Yahweh, Son and Co. He also drags in irrelevantly Jung's "archetypes" to support belief in resurrection-myths, stating that this "archetype" is in *his* mind because "Man is created in God's image, and bears some imprint

of this in his mind" (p. 6). Again, he knows nothing about the Hebrew fairy-tale of Yahweh, Adam and Eve being rejected nowadays even by the Vatican Jesuits as Mesopotamian folk-lore. He is not even aware of his brethren in Cambridge who, like Canon H. Montefiore, dismiss resurrection "appearances" as hallucinations (*Time Magazine*, March 6th, 1964, p. 42). He also jumbles together the truthful authority of science with the lying authority of the Church, and then fallaciously objects to Humanists that they do not accept traditional authority, but accept the authority of science! He quotes anthropologists (Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski) on primitive religion providing for savages "a moral order which gives them security and moral values which make life bearable" (p. 12), but hides the fact that Christian mythology and magic rituals that arose in ignorant ages are dangerous fiction and delusion in our days of scientific knowledge, forcing despicable hypocrisy and false pretenses both on priests and educated believers.

The purpose of Dr (Sc.) Lambert's whole pamphlet is this to defend, at all costs, a decaying Christian mythology and sorcery in our scientific age.

REPORT ON THE FUTURE OF FREETHOUGHT IN FRANCE

M. Jean Cotereau-Viala

M. Cotereau-Viala succeeds Mr Bradlaugh Bonner as President of the World Union of Freethinkers. He presented this report to the recent Congress in London.

THE STATUTORY DECLARATION of the French Federation of Freethinkers affirms that the Freethinker considers the emancipation of man must be sought in all domains, and reaffirms its determination to strive against all forces or institutions which tend to diminish, subject or pervert the individual.

Can this declaration be maintained in the future? We judge Freedom of Thought to be the highest of all freedoms; their crown and essence. As long as there remains any obstacle to any of the freedoms which are the rights of man, the Freethinker will have a duty to do.

Should the Mind be freed first, or man's material betterment be first assured, or should the two advance hand in hand? Our French anti-clerical action is based on the conviction that religions are not only erroneous in principle, but evil in action, bringing division among men. By turning their thoughts away from their proper duties and developing superstition and fear of death, religion tends to produce clericalism, fanaticism, imperialism and mercantilism; by adding its influence to the forces of reaction, religion maintains the masses in ignorance and servitude.

It may be claimed that the Roman Church of 1966 is no longer what it was under the Pius popes; **it is our conviction that the apparent conversion of the Vatican to our ideas of progress is only a mask behind which to re-establish and extend its ancient domination.**

The social evolution, due to scientific and technical development, still leaves the masses concentrated in factories and cities and subject to profit-seeking capitalism. Mechanisation through automation and the computer, invades more and more the various domains of human activity. Though leisure is increased; how is it being used? An international technocracy may establish a new class system with a new priesthood. In France the higher education which trains the technicians is largely the preserve of the "upper classes", and so conservative and clerical. Instead of choosing political careers, outstanding personalities prefer to direct the anonymous masses through commissions of Economic Development.

The young mind today is conditioned by television, radio and the press. These might have been potent instruments for the emancipation of the people, but are in truth a powerful means of their subjection. The modern world has developed spiders' webs of pressure groups to ensnare men's thinking. To strive against these, anti-religion is not enough; our activities must widen. Deification is no longer the prerogative of religion; radio stars, film stars, football stars, are deified; race and ideology become religions. All the same the old enemy remains which it is our vocation to combat. The Vatican may allow its priests to marry, RC wives to use birth control, and there is talk of liberty among religions. The Atheist still remains beyond the pale; and the One and Only Church will train the young—and the present French government will not be backward in helping it do this.

The Freethinker's aim still remains that City Without God, in which mankind is free from all religions. Since the Churches take thought to modernise their doctrines and methods, Freethought must do the same. We must be prepared to discuss problems which interest the younger members of our world, whether of passing attention such as historic studies, or permanent questions of social, scientific, technical or economic nature. We must be ready to take part with believers in dialogues of public interest.

Nor must the Churches be allowed to monopolise humanitarian charity. The Pope, with a certain lack of logic, appeals to believers and non-believers, including the condemned atheists, to join in the amelioration of human misfortunes.

Scientific study may reveal within Nature, and solely in the natural order, motives for man's living superior to the ancient illusions. For now is there any motive better than to wish to improve man's lot morally, socially, physically and psychologically?

"Man," said Buisson, "is the product of universal evolution acting in a small planet where he attains awareness of himself." Today science and technology provide us with the means of directing in some degree that evolution. To perform this direction men must be free of all servitudes.

FREETHINKER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Letter Network (International): send s.a.e. to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

Manchester Branch NSS, Platts Fields, Car Park, Victoria Street, Sunday evenings, 8 p.m.: Messrs COLLINS, DUIGNAN, MILLS and WOOD.

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

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

INDOOR

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester), Sunday, October 30th, 6.30 p.m.: PAUL STRIBBE, "Ethics in Industry".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, October 30th, 11 a.m.: Dr JOHN LEWIS, "Euhemerism and Existentialism"; Tuesday, November 1st, 6.30 p.m.: MARTIN ENNALS, "Racial Discrimination".

South Place Sunday Concerts (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, October 30th, 6.30 p.m.: Gabrieli Ensemble. Hadyn, Beethoven, Bartok.

West Ham and District Branch NSS (Wanstead and Woodford Community Centre, Wanstead Green, E11). Meetings at 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month.

The Progressive League. Weekend Conference at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Herts. Friday, November 4th to Sunday, November 6th, "Creativity in the Man-Woman Relationship". Full details from Mrs Joyce Coles, 120 Corringway, London, W.5.

Worthing Humanist Group (Morelands Hotel, The Pier), Sunday, October 30th, 5.30 p.m.: Dr DAVID DAICHES, "Some Problems for Humanists".

BOOKS WANTED

The Church and the People and Social Record of Christianity, both by Joseph McCabe. Details to Ian Hall, 38 Dudley Road, Grantham, Lincs.

BOOKS OF INTEREST

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- Lift Up Your Heads (An Anthology for Freethinkers) *William Kent* 3s. 6d. p. 8d.
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LETTERS

"Determinism and Free Will"

MR LAMONT points out that theologians like Augustine and Martin Luther denied free will, preaching divine determinism or predestination. This doctrine was actually *predeterminism*, maintaining that each man's fate is foreordained and unchangable, whereas determinism asserts that our lives are controlled by random factors and not that anything is inevitable. Luther's doctrine of "justification by faith" becomes invalid when determinism is taken to its logical conclusions—since there is no justice in making faith a passport to paradise when the free will to accept or reject faith does not exist.

I concede being a little rash in saying all Christian teaching has free will as its basis, but the great majority of it does. I cannot see how any Christian (Luther, Calvin, etc.) could reconcile Christianity with a denial of free will—without it "sin" cannot exist. Why then preach Christ as the Saviour when there is nothing to save us from, if not our sins?

Secondly, while accepting chance to be an "ultimate trait of nature" Mr Lamont believes that it merely "opens the door to free will", but chance factors do not cease to operate once that door is open. Even were we faced with a set of alternatives "freely" to choose from, we cannot be governing our own destiny when chance determines which alternatives we are to be presented with.

Thirdly, I find it ironic that Mr Lamont should consider that my own life "constitutes a refutation of the deterministic viewpoint", when it was an analysis of my own life which led me to the conclusion of determinism. Although I rejected Roman Catholicism, the great majority never rebel against the faith in which they are indoctrinated, *unless some chance event makes them seriously reconsider their beliefs*. As I pointed out in a previous article, "How I Became an Atheist", it was my own unhappiness which first made me question the existence of a loving, merciful god. Since chance and environmental factors caused my discontent, it was they that determined my rebellion, and not free will. Without them I would undoubtedly still be a Catholic.

Finally, I agree that free will is not (necessarily) tied up with supernaturalism and can be consistently maintained by a Humanist, Freethinker, etc.; I never stated otherwise. What I did state was not that an unbeliever must be a determinist (as indeed he need not be) but that the thesis of determinism causes the whole structure of Christianity to crumble. I still believe this to be a valid point.

Salford, Lancs.

MICHAEL GRAY

The Lord Willis v the LDOS Debate

THE TANG OF BATTLE is in the air, and I hope that all Secularists (whatever their labels) will rally to the Lord Willis versus the Lord's Day Observance Society debate on November 4th. The LDOS are not relying too heavily on Divine Help, but are preparing to spend £10,000 on propaganda and country-wide petitioning. We would *still* like to hear from would-be supporters of our Sunday Freedom League, so, readers of the FREE-THINKER, please do write to us!

Lyndon Vale, Paulton,
Nr. Bristol, Somerset.

JOHN and DAVID SHEPHERD
The Sunday Freedom League

PUBLIC DEBATE

THE SUNDAY OBSERVANCE LAWS

SPEAKERS

LORD WILLIS

HAROLD LEGERTON

General Secretary, Lord's Day Observance Society

CHAIRMAN

LORD SORENSEN

CAXTON HALL, CAXTON STREET, LONDON, SW1

Nearest Underground: St James' Park

FRIDAY, 4th NOVEMBER, 7.30 p.m.

Organised by the National Secular Society

The article "Let's make Sundays Brighter" by Lord Willis and published in the FREETHINKER on October 14, has now been reprinted in leaflet form by the National Secular Society. Copies are available on request from 103 Borough High Street, London SE1.

POINTS FROM NEW BOOKS

Oswell Blakeston

THAT poetically savage novelist, Michael Baldwin, has written a new book of short stories, *Sebastian and Other Voices* (Secker and Warburg, 25s), which reveals a staggering range and depth of insight. All the stories are told in the first person, and one is a sadistic Test Match bowler and another an East Ender who is in love with her brother.

The first piece is a report to a publisher on the MS of God's autobiography. God has appeared in the garden of a famous literary critic to deliver his work. He was handsome, the critic writes, in an unconventional way and appeared to be no more than seventy years of age, "which may show a limited capacity to absorb real experience". He also smelt of the furnaces of Belsen and the factories of Ock-Toc-T'An.

From the first line, the reviewer was enthralled: "Before I shat, nothing was. And I shat not shit but stars." For seven days and nights the critic could not stop reading, although he wondered how much of the work would pass the censor. The bit where God says that millions who have sought spiritual harmony have simply been seeking sexual harmony in disguise? The passage which describes cosmic onanism as Continuous Creation? But the work would undoubtedly be a literary sensation casting a new light on Light and a new malicious dark on Dark. The one problem is—who will pay a printing bill of seventeen thousand pounds?

And every day further chapters arrive so that the critic cannot keep pace with the prodigalities of Authorship. What is to be done? Must the publisher send God a polite rejection slip and simply recognise the profound unalterability of everything?

In another story another problem is raised, the old one which haunted theologians—is one Siamese twin responsible for the guilt of another, can one go to heaven and one go to hell? The story ends with a cry protesting that God can no longer exist: "Someone in my predicament, or that of the spastic, the cancer-ridden, the cripple, the needlessly and heedlessly condemned—one of this company would have crossed the dark divide to murder him. . . . Someone would have throttled him."

A third story is about an unorthodox parson who believes that God is stock-piling hydrogen bombs. ("Who has not the balance of power but the Power itself?")

Certainly, then, this is a book which anyone who cares about modern writing and contemporary predicaments should read; and it is a book, as I hope I have suggested, of particular interest to Freethinkers.

With great compassion, David Lytton in *The Freedom of the Cage* (Bodley Head, 25s), tells the story of a man who hears the Prime Minister of the Orange Free State boast of money given to "help" the natives. By upbringing, the listener should accept such double-talk; but he has learnt through his own bitter life that to help is to love. At one point he says: ". . . I was quite clear that there could be no God or if there was, then the line to him was down".

OBITUARY

MR JAMES CORSAIR who died recently at the age of 80, had been a member of Manchester branch of the National Secular Society for many years. He was at one time a regular speaker at the outdoor meetings.

Mr Corsair was a former president of Manchester Poetry Society, and he was an enthusiastic gardener.

The funeral took place at Stockport Crematorium.

FREETHINKER FIGHTING FUND

THE FREETHINKER is the only weekly Secularist-Humanist paper in the country. It is still only 6d. How much do YOU care how many people it reaches? To advertise we need money, and our expenses are ever-increasing. Whose copy are you reading now? Have you got a subscription? Couldn't you contribute something to the Fighting Fund, say 6d or 6s or £6 or £60? How much do you really care about Freethought and helping other people to hear about it? Do, please, help if you can.

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