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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

"The Shape of Things to Come"

BY the time that these lines appear in print the Olympic Games (1952 edition) will be definitely concluded. The innumerable athletes of all nations will have departed to their respective domiciles, near and far; the Olympic Stadium, the centre of world attention during the past weeks, will cease to be the "nine days wonder" that it has been in July, 1952, whilst the little Finnish capital will terminate its all too brief glory as a world Metropolis, and will become, once again, merely a distant outpost of civilisation in the bleak and frozen north.

We make no apology for again returning to the theme of the Games. "Christmas comes but once a year," whilst the Olympics only recur after a duration of four years, and in 1956, where shall we all be? He who could predict this with any approach to confidence would, indeed, be bold, perhaps, indeed, foolhardy would be the more apt term. What with "cold wars," "iron (and dollar) curtains," democracy in, apparently, unceasing danger, and "rearmament" in an ever-mounting, ever-accelerating pace, it will, indeed, be something not far removed from a miracle if "peace"—or what passes for such in our uneasy world—still endures by 1956. Nor, despite death-rays, atomic bombs and other unprecedented horrors of a prostituted science, is it easy to see any speedy termination to what, in such a dire eventuality, would be actually the first real "world" war in all recorded history, that is, the first war in which the whole of our planet was really engaged. "The Thirty Years War" of the Seventeenth Century could easily, under such conditions, be duplicated by the "Thirty Years War" of the Twentieth.

The Games that have just terminated represent not only or merely a great athletic Festival of an International character. They represent, we repeat, a Festival of an entirely Secular nature; an epitome of what a Secular civilisation would resemble; perhaps, ultimately, they constitute—in the phrase of H. G. Wells—"The Shape of Things to Come"—the epitome and embodiment of the Secular spirit that would permeate and dominate such a civilisation if and when mankind does ultimately emerge from his present "Slough of Despond" into, what Mr. Churchill has rhetorically styled, "The Sunny Uplands of the Future."

For the Olympic Games represent, in our submission at least, perhaps the most progressive and encouraging feature in our war-torn, fear-racked world. At Helsinki in the past few weeks and, it would hardly be too much to say, in Helsinki alone, has the Brotherhood (and Sisterhood) of Mankind been temporarily realised. In this splendid carnival of sport, true equality, true fraternity have been actually realised, if only for a moment and for a limited portion of Humanity, religious bigotry, racial prejudice, the colour bar, elsewhere rampant, ideological hatred have all been discarded. The "cold war" has gone warm in the frozen north! The "Iron Curtain" has been temporarily drawn aside in the Finnish capital

disclosing the fundamental Humanity on both sides of it, elsewhere concealed by prejudice and obliterated by hate.

What we have witnessed at Helsinki during the month of July, 1952, is a magnificent demonstration of human solidarity; a kind of temporary forecast, we may hope, of the Human International of what we hope and believe will eventually arise: "The United States of the Planet," "The Parliament of Man," "The Federation of the World."

The above may well sound high, even extravagant praise for what is, after all, ostensibly an athletic Festival, unconcerned with ideologies and the things of the mind. However, compare what we may term the Spirit of Helsinki with the current state of the world outside; a world armed to the teeth, riddled with hatred and fear, obsessed by unprovable dogmas and unreasoned prejudices; waiting to rush to arms at a moment's notice; a world which, ever since 1914, which future historians may well term the year One of the decay of "modern" civilisation, has just staggered helplessly from crisis to crisis in hopeless impotence.

It is, indeed, both a reproach to the human race and a glaring commentary upon the present level of its civilisation, that it is only in the realm of sport that it has, thus far, been able to transcend its rivalries and mutual suspicions. That in an age and world, rent and riven as, perhaps, never before by racial, national and class hatred, it is only in the athletic arena, in the Brotherhood of Sport, that the abstract conception of human solidarity can be adequately translated into a concrete reality. What the great thinkers of Humanity, what the religious, social, and political apostles of Human solidarity have, so far, miserably failed to accomplish has, so far, only been achieved in and by an International Athletic Festival.

And here, as in so many other departments of human activity and progress, it was the ancient Greeks who first showed the way. The classical Olympiad represented the basic unity of Greek civilisation amid the welter of rival cities and warring states with their endless rivalries about which the great history of Thucydides has so much that is revealing to tell us. Similarly, in the modern world, where the would-be unifying forces of class, religion, and politics seem far more successful to-day in dividing rather than in uniting mankind, it is again to the lighted torch of the Olympic runner, the symbol of the Games, that we must look as, apparently, the solitary place left in our post- and pre-war world where "a man's a man for all that," and where the fundamental values of Humanity emerge from the current welter of envy, hatred, greed, and fear.

Thus far, we have considered the Olympic Festival in its broader, social aspect, but there is also a narrower, but equally authentic aspect of the Games to consider. Whilst, as we have observed before in this column, the ancient Olympics emerged under the shadow of Olympus, the sacred mountain of Pagan mythology, and under the divine protection of its tutelary gods, they yet came in

time to represent the very essence of a Pagan cult of the body, which not so much denied as ignored the dark superstitions of the soul. It was as such, as a de facto embodiment of Materialism, of a Materialist way of life, that Christianity suppressed the ancient Games in its hour of triumph.

Similarly their modern success mark the resurrection from the Christian past of an essentially Pagan, an essentially this-worldly attitude of mind. Nor is this fundamental fact effectively disguised by the transparent lip-service to Christianity displayed in the official prayers which accompanied the solemn opening of the Games. This need deceive no one. The Olympics are a cult of the body, not of the soul. More precisely, they represent an unitary, a monistic conception of life and of the human personality: the classic "healthy mind in the healthy body"; the virtual motto of a Pagan culture and of a Pagan philosophy of the greatest Secular Festival in our world.

The lighted torch of the Olympic runner is now dimmed, we hope, only until 1956. But that torch has lit a light in the hearts of men; the light of human solidarity in a hate-racked world; the hope of Mankind's Secular Future: "The Shape—we hope—of things to come."

F. A. RIDLEY.

THE ART OF THE MAGICIAN

PROFESSOR E. M. BUTLER'S previously reviewed *Myth of the Magus*, has been supplemented by his illustrated *Ritual Magic* (Cambridge University Press, 1949; 30s.). This work opens with a dissertation on Akkadian and other ancient inscriptions. As he contends: "The fundamental aim of all magic is to impose the human will on nature, on man or on the supersensual world in order to master them." This is indeed the objective of modern science, despite the profound difference in the procedure pursued. Old time alchemy has been superseded by chemistry, and astrology by astrophysics, which are both materialistic investigations, while ritual magic was chiefly concerned with the control of a supposed spiritual realm.

The Akkadian inscriptions translated into Assyrian during the reign of Assurbanipal in the Seventh Century B.C., date back at least to 1800 B.C. These were addressed to the Chaldean divinities and were largely directed against the demons of disease and other calamities, while conjurations of a similar character were customary in ancient Egypt, Greece and elsewhere. They survived the advent of Christianity, were preserved by the Jews and even persist among ourselves.

In the Apocryphal *Testament of Solomon*, and also in the Kabbala, magical ceremonial is ever in evidence and throughout the barbaric and Middle Ages never lost its assumed efficacy. The adherents of the "Solomonic" cycle of magic, if driven underground, were never suppressed. In his critical study of "Solomon's" disciples, Butler deals with the vexed problem of the so-called Bluebeard of Orleans, Gilles de Rais, who lived in the early Fifteenth Century of our era. This aristocrat was a spendthrift landowner who was put to death for his probably exaggerated sins. His generosity and wanton extravagance had reduced him to indigence and he seemingly strove by magical means to recover his earlier affluence and power. Evidence of his guilt was provided by the torture of his alleged accomplices, and he was threatened with torture and perhaps racked himself into a confession of crime. Yet, our author concludes that the

researches of Reinach and other investigators at least suggest "that Gilles was the victim of a conspiracy to secure his lands and rapidly diminishing fortune, and that the charges of sodomy, sadism and mass murder of children were false. . . . In the first place it is difficult to believe that a man of such proven gallantry and so deeply religious as Gilles could ever have committed such crimes; and in the second the details supplied by the accused and his 'accomplices' are bald and unconvincing, whereas one can well imagine a man in that age and in dire financial straits having recourse first to alchemy and then to black magic in order to replenish his coffers."

The influence of magical observances in Seventeenth Century France is shown in the astounding conduct of Madame de Montespan, long the favourite of Louis XIV and the mother of his children. In order to retain the Sun King's affection, his mistress resorted to magic. The Abbé Guibourg solemnly officiated in the amatory rites—the black masses—in which it is alleged that children were sacrificed. "On the first occasion," avers Butler, "Madame lay down naked on the altar, Guibourg vested and entered; he set the chalice on the belly of Madame de Montespan and proceeded to say Mass. At the offering of the elements, a small child was produced and stabbed in the throat; the blood was caught in the chalice, flour was added and a wafer made." The Princes of love were then invoked to preserve the King's and Dauphin's affection, and honour and glory were implored for the royal favourite's relatives and servitors. Some of the blood and the consecrated wafer were then added to the King's food. These obscene rites were repeated and even the Mortuary ceremony was afterwards substituted for the Amatory Mass, when Louis had succumbed to the wiles of another mistress.

One curious ceremony included the sacrifice of two pigeons' hearts which were placed on the altar. As Butler states: "The petition addressed to the Holy Ghost [that the Queen should remain barren and that every favour should be granted to Madame de Montespan and her confederates] and the offering of doves (associated both with his and the cult of Venus) certainly strike an unsuitable note, being on a primitive level of childish superstition more appropriate to savages than to a scintillating Court star and a Catholic priest. . . . This first constraint of the Amatory Mass was apparently effective; but even as the reigning favourite she [de Montespan] never felt secure; and indeed with a man so temperamentally fickle as the King and surrounded on all sides by enemies and intrigues, her brilliant position was always precarious." The machinations above described were to some extent made known to Louis and, by degrees, the one-time favourite was superseded and finally dismissed from Court. She became very devout and ultimately died in the odour of sanctity.

Ritual Magic contains a discriminating study of the chequered career of Benvenuto Cellini. His was a very complex character. When engaged as an artist by Pope Clement VII, he was imprisoned on a false accusation of stealing jewels, yet he managed to escape captivity. Still, like many of his Renaissance contemporaries, he was addicted to magical practices, but many of the tales told of him are of doubtful authenticity.

Nearly all those engaged in magical invocations were bent on the recovery of buried treasure, while others were either the authors or the victims of rank delusions. Perhaps Cagliostro was the most famous practitioner of the occult arts, yet, in the Eighteenth Century, Casanova extensively contributed to the revival of magical customs

and beliefs. He was a swindler of the first water and flourished in the most exalted circles.

Witchcraft was for centuries the common belief of Christian Europe, and its history, both in Europe and America is appalling. Again, black magic has been ascribed to all secret societies and this infernal art has been associated by the Catholic Church with Freemasonry. As Butler observes, when we recall the superstition so prevalent in the Eighteenth Century then: "The attitude of the Church is comprehensible enough, granted its basic assumption of its monopoly of the truth; but even its staunchest friends must feel that in this instance it went too far. Beginning almost automatically with a Bull excommunicating all Freemasons in 1738, Clement XII gave as his reasons the secret nature of the institution and the highly suspicious fact that men of all religious persuasions were allowed to enter it; and an edict of January 19, 1739, made membership a crime punishable by death, and it was said that a Frenchman who had published a book on Freemasonry suffered this penalty, which however only seriously menaced those who lived in the Papal States." Yet, even as late as 1873, Pius IX declared that: "Satan himself was the founder of Freemasonry," and the Grand Orient of Paris gave colour to this charge when belief in God and immortality were no longer required for entry.

T. F. PALMER.

THE GOD-MUDDLE

(Concluded from page 243)

BUT Rationalists, of all people, should not help to perpetuate these muddling tactics of Christian translators by referring only to "God" or "Lord." Instead, by *always* referring exactly and correctly to "*the Hebrew-Christian tribal god Yahveh*," we shall make the mythical nature of Christianity at once to leap to the eyes of even the most stupid of Christian churchgoers who happen to hear of Rationalist argument in this adequate way. Scientifically speaking, this method is, of course, the correct application of the true universal statement, "*There are no gods . . .*" to a particular instance, Christianity, with the addition of the up-to-now *not* so widely realised implication, "*including the Hebrew-Christian tribal god Yahveh, his son Jeshua, and his fellow traveller, the Holy Ghost.*"

We need not bother about possible objections by the semi-Rationalists against including Jesus (in Hebrew: Jeshua or Joshua) in the class "god," as he has never been anything less than a demigod. This fact is come to stay, thanks to Albert Schweitzer and others, even among the theologians. Says the reviewer of *Themes and Tendencies of Theological Study (Times Literary Supplement, August 24, 1951)*: "The same Bultmann (German theologian) who reduced 'the Jesus of History' to legend now threatens to reduce the *kerygma* (the Christian Message) to mythology."

(2) While by the correct reference to "Yahveh" instead of "Lord" the Christian mythology is constantly laid bare and driven home, we must further prevent and eliminate the Christian apologist's attempt at eventually abandoning Yahveh to mythology and escaping into metaphysical nothings with "God." Here the stock-trade trick is to pretend that by "God" he does not mean any particular (national) god, neither Yahveh nor anyone else, that "God" is a supreme being without name regardless of all gods, etc. But we see exactly that he still uses

the class-name "God" without referring to any member of the class "gods" at all! In fact, he *assumes* that, nevertheless, he *refers* to one object that exists *over and above* the class-name and all its members. This is precisely an elementary logical error called in modern logical terminology—the *Category-Mistake*. The noted logician, L. S. Stebbing, famous as an exposé and debunker of the "scientific" theologisers, Jeans, Eddington and Co., point out (*Modern Introduction to Logic*, p. 455): "To assume that there is a class over and above the set of individuals is to fall into the absurdity of the Chinese philosopher. What we are calling 'the class' is not, however, *another* individual, or object of the same type as its members, nor a property; it is the set of things which have the property. There is, then, no one object to which the class-name applies. . . ." So the Christian apologist can escape nowhere into truth. He may want to reject Yahveh and still to maintain God. But it is a fallacy. Here the atheist's principle "*There is no God . . .*" remains valid in the exact logical interpretation by adding this implied modification "*. . . over and above the class-name 'god' and the individual (non-existent) members of the (fictional) class 'gods'.*"

Thus the traditional age-long God-muddle, under philological and logical analysis, has dissolved itself into *two* falsehoods, one-empirical, the other-logical: "Yahveh"—a myth, and "God"—a fundamental logical error, both being mere words, without corresponding reality, but the former still with a *pictorial* meaning, whereas the latter with *no* (cognitive) meaning at all, logically void.

SUMMARY: In view of the above reasons I propose the following modern *re-phrasing* of the case for atheism:—

(1) "There exists no particular (individual, personal) gods, *including* the Christian gods: Yahveh, Jesus and Holy Ghost."

(2) "There exists no *general* God, *over and above* the class-name 'god' and the individual (non-existent) members of the (fictional) class 'gods'."

And whither now?

Well, after the dissolution of the God-muddle the emancipated Christian dupes will be left with no other choice than *the scientific humanistic attitude*. And instead of exhortations to plain magic, the American top politicians will have to seek wisdom for, and give accounts of, their intended actions in regard to world affairs in terms of *scientific hypotheses*, viz., the highest probabilities, subject to subsequent confirmation.

GREGORY S. SMELTERS.

A CATHOLIC—COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEAL

Pietro Nenni, pro-Stalinist (Communist) leader of Italian pro-Communist Socialist Party, is offering a deal to Premier De Gasperi and his Roman Catholic "Christian Democratic" Party. If Italy's general election next year is conducted according to proportional representation Nenni's party would end its electoral alliance with the Communists and run independently; after the elections Nenni would prop the weakening "Christian Democrats" by forming a coalition with them. The price: Italy would give less aid to the "Atlantic pact" alliance. This right-wing "neutralism" would help Stalin, Nenni thinks. Many Roman Catholic leaders in Italy's Government like Nenni's scheme. It would not be the first time the Kremlin and Vatican have got together, of course. After World War II in Italy, Communist Members of Parliament gave the Roman Church enough votes to make Roman Catholicism the State religion.—From the *Socialist Monthly*, New York, U.S.A.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PAPACY. By F. A. Ridley. Price 1s. 3d.; postage 1½d.

THE FAULTS AND FAILINGS OF JESUS CHRIST. By C. G. L. Du Cann. (Second Edition.) Price 6d.; postage 1½d.

ACID DROPS

We heard the other day a broadcast talk on the future of Christian missions by a delegate of the International Missionary Council which held its meeting this year in a small town in Germany. The delegates themselves, representing many Christian sects except the Roman one, appear to have met in perfect Christian "fellowship" (as they love to call it), but the future of Christian missions was recognised as about as precarious as possible. The speaker was obliged to admit that nobody really wanted to hear the Glorious Message but, from his welter of words, one could gather that if Christians themselves were unable to stick to each other, there was very little hope for Missions.

In this connection, we came across an article written by the Editor of *The Churchman* in which he shows why it is quite impossible for there to be "reunion with an unreformed Church of Rome." He does not mince matters. In fact, he roundly accuses Rome of bolstering up its claims with a tissue of lies, and is specially severe on the "cult" of the Virgin and her "Assumption," while Mary as "Mediator" makes him almost see red. He thinks that Rome is heading for a "Jesus and Mary" Church and how can "Bible-loving Christians for a moment consider such an apostate organisation?"

Well, we can answer that one—there never will be a "reunion." What might well happen is the complete absorption of the Church of England into Rome. Like Newman, it will find divine rest in Rome—God's Own Church—from which it should never have seceded, and no proof will be demanded that it is God's Own Church. No real Christian wants such proof. When Rome says anything, it is so, for it is merely the mouthpiece of Jesus Christ and he could never utter anything which required proof. And if the Rev. F. Colquhoun cannot see this now—he will, one day, if he lives long enough.

Every effort has been made by American Roman Catholics who always pretend to their dupes that they and they alone favour "genuine" free speech, to prevent the film "The Miracle" being shown in America. Apart from its subject, its director was Rossellini, a Roman Catholic who divorced his wife and married a non-Catholic. This was terrible enough, but as the picture showed a simple peasant girl being seduced by someone she believed to be St. Joseph, there were the usual howls of protest from priests and cardinals and the "Appellate Courts of the State of New York forbade the film to be shown."

On appeal, this decision was reversed by nine judges of the United States Supreme Court, who held that "expression by means of motion pictures is included within the free speech and free press guarantees of the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution." The judges made mincemeat of Roman Catholic objections—and naturally Cardinal Spellman has now forbidden any Catholic to see the film. But the squabble shows how much "freedom" would be left to any country which wholly accepts Rome—and how, for that matter, it is necessary never to relax a moment to keep whatever freedom political and religious "ideologies" have left us.

Although Jesus Christ is almost always referred to as a "Man of Sorrows," and often pictorially depicted with a most lugubrious expression, modern Christians much prefer to refer to him as a sort of jolly Sunday School Teacher ready to have a drink or a smoke with anyone. In a recent number of the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* an artist

called Ivan Pusecker gave us a portrait of Jesus "wreathed in smiles," enough to make an old-fashioned Christian squirm and almost have a fit of apoplexy. Jesus with a face like that could never have indulged in his "Woe, woe unto you!" against everybody and everything else he was always attacking. Still, the old order must go one day, and you can't have the Bible written in American slang and still retain an out-of-date Jesus.

A Statue of the now famous Fatima Virgin has been smuggled into Russia—it must have been by a miracle, for we cannot see otherwise how it could have passed the Iron Curtain. Anyway, it graces an American priest's house and is the object of adoration of all foreign and Russian Catholics. Their principal object in praying before it is the conversion of Russia—evidently, the utter failure of converting England has made believers switch on to Russia. Some hope!

THE WIND IS WHISTLING THROUGH THE OLD BELIEFS

A hush, as of a dying, whispered prayer,
The whimper of a fading, Heavenward sigh;
A zephyr moves the scarce disturbed air,
And clouds are creeping o'er the steepled sky.

A rustling, as of faintly falling leaves,
A murmur from the lands of lesser breeds;
Climbing crescendo, progress hauls and heaves,
The earth is trembling 'neath the crusted creeds.

The breath of heresy has open'd the casements,
Has dusted out dull dogma, fore and aft;
Has cleared the cob-webbed corners, brightened
basements—
And superstition feels the deadly draught.

The fastening hangs loose upon the door,
The taper dims above the pondering chiefs;
The mystic curtain sags and sweep the floor,
The wind is whistling thro' the old beliefs.

ARTHUR E. CARPENTER.

ISRAELI STREAMLINES THE BIBLE

Tel-Aviv.—A storm of protest has broken out here over an Israeli teacher who took it upon himself to rewrite the Old Testament.

In his streamlined version the teacher, M. Segal, omitted four of the Ten Commandments and left in very little about God. He has also touched up the original Biblical grammar.

The storm broke when Segal had his "new" Bible printed and put up for sale in two sections—one for kindergarten children, the other for older readers.

Newspapers branded the enterprise as a sacrilege, and indignant citizens asked whether it was part of a Communist plot. There was even a heated session in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) about the book. Many suggested that it should be banned, but Education Minister Ben Zion Dinaburg replied that although Segal's onus would not be admitted as a textbook in Israel's schools, there was no legal basis for its prohibition.

What prompted Segal to rewrite the Bible?
In his introduction he said something had to be done to make the good book popular. It was in danger of being forgotten in Israel. Actually, all Israeli schools use the Bible, not only as a religious work, but as a textbook on Jewish history.

Segal also claimed that originally the Bible was only a book dealing with the history of man.

The Commandments deleted in Segal's version are those relating to the relationship of God and man. He also saw fit to discard the Commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The dance round the golden calf and the smashing of the tablets on Sinai are deleted. The ten plagues are mentioned, but Segal says God had nothing to do with them.

In some parts of Segal's work God appears briefly, but apparently only for the sake of art.—*New York Post*, April 19, 1952, reproduced by *The Age of Reason*, U.S.A.

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VINCIT VERITAS

I

THERE will be many of our readers who, like myself, have been reared in the Christian tradition, but are devoid of the Christian virtue called FAITH, and are, therefore, unable to accept the Scriptures at their face value.

In my dictionary FAITH is described as: "Belief or trust in the statement or word of another, such as we accept and act upon it with full assurance; belief without proof; belief or trust in a religious system, as extending into and pervading the unseen; that which is believed; the religion believed in; fidelity; word or honour pledged; creditability or trust." By faith I mean "belief or trust in a religious system."

In our generation we have been given the power to think and to reason, and who shall blame us for exercising this power even if it is exercised against the trend of orthodox religious belief when it does not respond to our reasonings, but depends on the possession of FAITH.

We are, I believe, sincere, honest and law abiding citizens, but we respectfully submit that any religion, Christian or otherwise, must be able to stand up to the daylight of research and truth—call it "Higher Criticism" or "Modern Research" or what you will. In the absence of FAITH, we, with the best of intentions, are unable to accept anything which is not reasonably supported by proof, and which will not bear the light of day or respond to reason.

In our young days we had inquiring minds and we asked questions. We were told in reply that the Scriptures were divinely inspired. If we replied that the inspiration was faulty because there were anomalies and contradictions in the Gospels, we were told to have FAITH. Well! We just hadn't got it! It was not given to us, but instead we had the power to think and to reason.

As the years advanced we exercised these powers more and more, always searching after knowledge and truth in all sincerity. FAITH being still absent we got further and further away from orthodox religion, but this did not lead to any unhappiness.

All the readings and research we were permitted to pursue during a busy life, have not brought us any nearer to the beliefs which our fathers would have us accept. We have given each denomination an honest trial and have endeavoured to appreciate their beliefs and teaching, Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. They have all left us cold, mainly I believe, because not one of them attempted to explain the foundations on which their beliefs and teachings were constructed.

We have been told that prayer is necessary, but in our experience prayers have never been effective, particularly those offered in the Churches every Sunday, "Give peace in our time, O Lord!" We have lived through two world wars and two very deplorable minor wars before that. We are now facing up to a third world war and prayer is not being adopted as the means to avoid it. The darkness of loss has been with us and a lapse of thirty years has not removed the heartache.

The theologians and the Churches still quibble over words that have no authority, and the slums are still with us. The tuppences are still collected from the poor to bolster up an organisation which is probably one of the wealthiest in the world.

We can still look up into the Heavens and wonder at the great mystery of Creation. The fields, the trees, the lakes and the mountains still have their beauty, and we ponder with awe at the glory of the laws of nature. The inspirations of Handel and Beethoven are not wasted upon us, but the inspiration of the New Testament has escaped us except for the beauty in parts, which were spared from the waste paper basket at Nicea in 325 A.D. The glories of Shakespeare do not need any emphasis. They have been proclaimed by the world and will continue, perhaps long after the bulk of the New Testament has found its proper level.

We have looked in vain to the B.B.C. to give us some enlightenment, but, alas, there we have only found an orthodox autocracy, no room for beliefs outside those rooted and expressed in the Scriptures and on which the Christian religion is founded. True, one or two eminent scientists have been permitted to express views contrary to the scope of these beliefs, even to the extent of declaring no belief in the existence of God. We do not venture as far as that, but we look up with wonder to the stars and submit to the dynamic force of the expanding universe, whilst at the same time not appreciating the Churches' belief in a personal God. I use the term "God" for want of a better designation.

A few of the things we want to know more about and are looking for an authoritative exposition upon, are as follows: What happened at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. when 2,048 ignorant and superstitious priests assembled to decide the most decisive event in the history of the Christian Church? (Canon Robertson in the *History of the Christian Church*.) Out of this assembly grew the Nicene Creed, which is still in use in our Church services. The origin of the Apostles Creed is unknown. (See *Encyclopædia Britannica* under "Creeds.") The origin of the Athanasian Creed is likewise unknown. Neither came into use until hundreds of years after the death of Christ, some say as late as the eighth century. Christianity was ultimately accepted by the Emperor Constantine, as the official religion of the Roman Empire, and Farrar in his book entitled *Paganism and Christianity* says, "There is indeed no fact more potent in history than that with the triumph of Christianity under Constantine, the older and finer spirit of charity died out of the world, and gave place to an intolerance and bigotry which were its extreme antithesis, and which only in recent years have come to be mitigated."

It would take a book rather than a newspaper article to deal adequately with the history of the Bible. Books on the subject are numerous and can be obtained from any modern library. I have indicated just a few. We want facts and not phrases, proofs and not words, and evidence in place of metaphysical experiences, either real or imagined. Reason is our only reliable guide.

W.T.B.

CATHOLIC EVIDENCE

IF your editorial of June 22 was meant to be a rejoinder to my article published in *The Faith* (June, 1952), I am afraid your shot strayed wide of the mark. You have evaded the main issue. But as your readers cannot rightly judge unless they are given a fair chance of looking at the other side of the shield, I beg you leave to state briefly my position.

In my article in *The Faith*, I took exception to your contention that "the evolution of Catholic dogma has been so drastic that orthodoxy and heterodoxy have frequently changed places" and I drew a clear-cut distinction between revealed, defined truth (defined dogma) and private, human opinion of theologians. I stated that *inter alia*: "In the long, laborious process of development of Catholic dogma it is quite possible to find theologians and even some Fathers at variance with one another on points of doctrine, not as yet defined, and even at variance with what was subsequently defined, but it is impossible to find a single example of a defined dogma officially disproved or in any way contradicted by the official Church. It is revealed, officially defined truth that is unchangeable, not human opinion."

The crucial point of the whole question is not whether there ever has been difference of opinion among some Catholic Theologians, but whether there has been any change in official, defined Catholic doctrine. It is here that the matter hinges. Nowhere, however, in your article, do I find on this point the slightest counter-evidence, nay, I note with pleasure a partial admission. For you frankly own that since the General Councils, "no addition nor, of course, subtraction, can be made from its (i.e., the Church's) dogmatic system, infallibly enunciated by the General Councils of long ago." But you seem to ignore an elementary tenet of the Catholic Church when you state that since the mid-nineteenth century she has changed her attitude in respect to the infallibility of the Church. It seems that you are labouring under the false impression that the definition of Papal Infallibility has stamped out of existence the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Church. Not at all. The Church may be said to have two organs of Infallibility: the Pope and the General Council, i.e., a meeting of Bishops, representative of the entire Church, *united with the Pope*. There is no *theological revolution*—as you call it—in all this.

The doctrine of Papal Infallibility did not crop up overnight in 1870. It was acknowledged by the ancient Fathers and it can be traced back to the earliest centuries of the Christian Era. When circumstances demanded it, the Popes did not hesitate to exercise their prerogative, many centuries prior to the Vatican Council.

I would encroach too much on your valuable space, if I were to go into any detail on the subject, but I refer you for fuller information to the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, art. *Infalibilité du Pape*. Tome 7e, 2e partie, Coll. 1638-1717. Paris, 1927, and to Fr. Vincent McNabb's *Infalibilité*.

"The Dogma (i.e., of Papal Infallibility) itself"—you argue—"puts the power of making dogmas into the hands of an individual entirely outside the collective control of the Church. It was, in fact, a theological revolution, *pure Protestantism*." This, again, is sheer misrepresentation of Catholic teaching. The Pope has no power to *make* dogmas. But as Supreme Pastor and Teacher of the whole Church, as Vicar of Christ and Successor of St. Peter, he has the power and privilege to declare infallibly what is contained in Divine Revelation. So that the content of a defined dogma must ultimately be traceable, and is infallibly

contained, either explicitly or implicitly, in the sources of Revelation (i.e., Scripture and Divine Tradition).

Nor is the Pope "an individual outside the collective control of the Church." The Pope, in his private capacity, as a private individual, is *not* infallible. He is infallible as a public person in relation with the Universal Church. The wording of the Vatican decree brings out this very clearly: "We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office of Pastor and Doctor of all Christians . . . is possessed of that Infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding Faith or Morals." (Confr. Constit. Dogm. I De Ecclesia Christi, cap 4). For an authoritative commentary on the decree one may see Bishop Gasser's speech delivered at the Vatican Council on July 11, 1870. (Confr. Mansi, IV (52), 1204; *Coll. Lac*, 388; also C. Butler, *The Vatican Council*, Vol. II, chap. XXIII.)

In the light of what has been said, you will understand, I earnestly hope, that Adam Möhler's quotation from his *Symbolism* is not to the point. Möhler is arguing against the Protestant doctrine of private judgment, not against Papal Infallibility. His words are obvious to any unbiased mind: "To no individual considered as such (i.e., in his private capacity), doth Infallibility belong." But Infallibility does not belong to the Pope as a private individual, he is possessed of it—as the Vatican decree clearly declares—as a public person in relation to the Universal Church, as an organ and mouthpiece of the Church itself and for the benefit of the Church.

(REV.) JOSEPH MIZZI.

[Fr. Mizzi raises too many technical theological points to reply to in a footnote. We shall reply to his letter in a subsequent editorial.—EDITOR.]

REPLY TO PAT SLOAN

IN his letter on Russia Mr. Sloan seems to identify himself with a mid-Victorian idea of morality, quaint in someone of Left-Wing views, and reminiscent of the radicals of the William Jennings Bryan era in America, who combined Bible-banging with advanced politics. The Victorians regarded the expression of sexuality as taboo; so does Mr. Sloan. I agree that gangsterism, the atom bomb, etc., are immoral and must be extirpated. But why lump sexuality—"sex and crime"—with these? Free-thinkers should be pleased that "sexuality and vulgarity are completely absent" from Soviet plays and films. Certainly no one wants vulgarity, and the treatment of sex in American films is invariably embarrassingly vulgar. This is, however, no reason for stifling sexual expression altogether. French films by contrast generally manage this subject extremely well. The Freudians have demonstrated the disastrous price that mankind often has to pay for the suppression of infantile sexuality; the obverse of the puritan attitude to sex—hate and cruelty—is well known.

My point about functional architecture was that it is a revolutionary style, the style most suited to the Twentieth Century, and that, therefore, one would expect it to be enthusiastically adopted and developed by a Socialist country. The "primitives" of architectural functionalism are certainly stark, but coloured tiles, bas-reliefs and sculpture are used freely to-day. That a supposedly revolutionary society should revert to a traditional style recalling the office-blocks of New York in the 1890's seems a little odd.

I know that the great literature *of the past* is reproduced (selectively) in multiple editions in the U.S.S.R. But I said that *present* Soviet culture was utilitarian. Writers have to concern themselves with technical and production problems. To celebrate natural beauty, for example, is decadent (cf. Akhmatova). Shostakovitch was censored for expressing his more personal feelings during the Siege of Leningrad—although his music must have had validity for thousands of sensitive people—and has now had to conform to official hand-outs on what a composer should feel. The result of all this muzzling of free and individual self-expression is to produce unspontaneous and stereotyped works of art. Recent Soviet films have tended to be prolix and unoriginal, faults not compensated for by colour and warm humanity, nor by seraphic portraits and sculptures of Stalin, which are always somewhere in the background, conspicuously replacing the religious effigies of previous days.

This is what I meant when I said that Soviet civilisation was suffering from "rigor mortis." I was using the expression "civilisation" in a restricted sense (v. Clive Bell: "Civilisation"; the note of prophetic warning sounded by this pioneering book is really confirmed by present-day Soviet developments). Perhaps a better word would have been "culture" (which I used elsewhere), although, again, not as anthropologists use this word, but in its more general usage. The *economic* vitality of the Soviet State cannot be denied; that contemporary Soviet Communism is a vast improvement on what has gone before I do not gainsay.

A. P. PERRIN.

THE NEWEST MORAL PROBLEM

MR. DU CANN is an able lawyer: he talks for two columns saying what we all know, and completely ignores the vital point. He tells us several times (I quote his exact words): "If the wife requires the aid of A.I.D. (as it is delicately called) she had better get divorced . . . the decent thing for a woman to do with an impotent husband is to divorce him, and find another who is potent."

But divorce is what she does *not* want. She wants to retain the man's name, his house, his money and his society, and keep it safe and legal that he will support her child born in wedlock. Naturally a frustrated female with a castrated man, will not tell her neighbours if she contemplates having a child, but why she should make the performance depart from the natural and involve the services of a doctor is beyond me. Seldom a week passes without a case of a doctor losing a dangerous drug or a chemist making a great mistake in quantity. God alone knows what the "Donor" syringe may contain. In her autobiography the late Isadora Duncan tells of her desire for a child. In Italy she saw, working in a field, in the heat of the day, a handsome man, naked to the waist. She went up to him, and said she would like to have a child by him. Many English readers were shocked at the great dancer's courage, yet so many can approve and contemplate this test-tube routine!

The Marxist outlook of my youth still serves me: I wonder has Mr. Du Cann thought of the economic angle. It is my considered opinion that vaccination, vivisection, inoculation, serum therapy, medical "science" and "research" ought to be classed under the generic name of Jiggery-Pokery. This latest addition of the test tube baby racket comes in the monkey gland category. The testicles are taken from the Simian to rejuvenate Man. In turn his "seed" is masturbated from him and injected into a

woman! As the old hymn says: "What will the harvest be?"

Of course I note that Mr. Du Cann views artificial insemination with the repugnance of a healthy-minded man. But his insistence on divorce, and his horror of "adultery" imply a loyalty, and a hang-over. I have long since ceased to bother as to whether an action was legal or sinful. To me it would seem quite reasonable for a young married woman to say to a fine healthy fellow: "Look here, Tom, it's no secret to you, that since his crash Jim has been impotent. I love the poor martyred creature, and would never desert him, but I want a child. And so does Jim. You know how he adores your little girl. He would be delighted if he could take out *my* baby in his invalid car. Well, what about it?"

I think Barkis would be willing. But that would be far too simple, and would give nothing to "socially unnecessary labour." Parsons, doctors, lawyers, chemists, instrument-makers, and the Sunday Press must all get their rake-off from this filthy ritual, the perversion of a natural act. To me that is very repugnant.

J. EFFEL.

N.S.S. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 31st JULY, 1952

Present: Mr. F. A. Ridley (in the chair), Mrs. Venton, Messrs. Griffiths, Ebury, Hornibrook, Tiley, Cleaver, Barker, Gibbins and the Secretary. Apologies from Messrs. Johnson and Taylor away on holiday were read.

A letter from Dr. Max Isenberg on behalf of the United Secularists of America, "the youngest organisation of Rationalists," was read, and the Secretary's letter in reply, reciprocating fraternal greetings, was endorsed. A letter from the Home Office in reply to one from the Society regarding the Conference resolution on the exclusion of distinguished scientific and other visitors from this country by the Government was read; it quoted the reply of Sir David Maxwell Fyfe to questions on the same matter in the House of Commons, stating that he had "decided that it would not be in the public interest to allow foreigners to come to this country to attend the proposed meeting of the Executive Council of the World Federation of Scientific Workers—one of the Communist-dominated international organisations whose primary object is to organise support, under various disguises, for Soviet policy." Acknowledgments of letters to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary informing them of the resolution on Franco-Spain, passed at the last Executive Committee meeting, had been received, but it was noted that the Leader of the Opposition had chosen to ignore a similar letter. Commenting on the value of such protests, Mr. Ridley said that they had a salutary effect on those in power; pointing out that in the latest Spanish trials the accused, although found guilty, had received comparatively light sentences.

Forty-one members were admitted to the Parent, Fyzabad and Manchester Branches, 27 being due to recent advertising in "The Freethinker." Reports were received of Mr. Cutner's debate on Spiritualism, Mr. Clayton's holiday campaign in and around Blackpool, and open-air propaganda by Messrs. Brighton, Woodcock, Barnes and Mosley. Mr. Cleaver reported on his efforts to sell "The Freethinker" in Piccadilly Circus, aided by Miss Nelham; after only a few weeks they were now selling upwards of two dozen copies weekly, and had made a number of regular readers. His report was warmly received as an example of constructive service to the movement.

P. VICTOR MORRIS, Secretary.

SHAKESPEARE AND OTHER ESSAYS. By G. W. Foote.
Price, cloth 3s. 9d.; postage 3d.

REMINDER TO BUREAUCRATS

THE purpose of circulars and forms, so beloved by "organisers," is to save time, and those who draw them up might well remember that all who receive them are not cast in the same mould. For example, it is offensive to be asked to fill in one's "Christian" name in a blank space when one is a Secularist or a member of a non-Christian sect. "Forename" is all-inclusive and, therefore, is the term that should be used on all forms issued by Government Departments, Local Authorities, Nationalised Industries and Business Houses, in the interests of courtesy and efficiency.

A printed postcard requesting the Secretary of the National Secular Society to conduct a funeral service was recently received, bearing the salutation "Reverend Sir." It caused more amusement than annoyance, plus a certain doubt regarding the business acumen of the firm of Undertakers who had had this card printed as if no Secular Services ever took place.

Suppose you desire to leave your body to be used for the benefit of scientific research after you die? It is a wish that I am inclined to believe will be felt by a larger proportion of those without belief in any religious creed than of the faithful of any sect. In case you do not know, you can render this service to the community with the co-operation of the Anatomy Office, Ministry of Health, 23, Saville Row, London, W.1.

A member of the N.S.S. recently offered a body for anatomical examination to this Department, and received a grateful acknowledgment accompanied by a form requiring "the religious persuasion of the deceased," and a duplicated sheet of directions with the information that after examination burial of the body "is conducted by a Clergyman of the Faith which the deceased professed during life," and that "the name of the Clergyman who performed the ceremony" is inserted on the Burial Certificate.

Naturally, the recipient of these documents was not entirely satisfied with them, and wrote to the Secretary of the National Secular Society inquiring whether a Secular funeral could be had in such circumstances. He thereupon wrote to the Inspector of Anatomy and asked the following two questions:—

(a) Would your Department accept the body of one described on Form A.A.1 as Atheist, Rationalist, Agnostic or of no religious persuasion?

(b) Where requested, would arrangements be made for Secular services to be conducted by persons representing the opinions held by deceased who professed no religious faith during life?

The Department's prompt reply left nothing to be desired. It said: "I have pleasure in assuring you that my Department is prepared to accept subjects of any or no religious persuasion and that, when requested, arrangements could be made for a Secular service to be conducted at the graveside."

Nevertheless, the inquirer in question could have been saved all doubt, and correspondence could have been rendered unnecessary, if the public servant who drew up the form and directions had remembered that Christians are far from comprising the whole of the community. A further letter was sent to the Department, therefore, suggesting that a change of wording be adopted to make their printed and duplicated information suitable for distribution to the public generally. This letter has not so far elicited from the Department the acknowledgment and comment it deserved.

P. V. M.

REVIEW

IN these days of decline many are casting round for salvation. Therefore a book with the title *Salvation without Saviours* (by W. H. Parke) should prove arresting. As, moreover, it has a sub-title, *The rout of the divinities*, it is calculated to catch the eye of Secularists. The cover is decorated with a hammer and sickle above the words "Workers of all Lands Unite," so that this closely-printed work of over 200 pages of prose and verse must have, shall we put it, a wide proletarian, or Left-Wing appeal. And in keeping with that appeal it is moderately priced at 2s. 6d. It is published privately, but none the worse for that. The author is erudite, and can turn out verses very prettily, and has had a long connection with Left-Wing Socialism, of which he tells us, so that his argument is partly biographical.

What is Mr. Parke's message? Let him tell it in his own words. "Christianity is one of the two major evils that are the main obstacles to world progress, both of them vested interests. . . . The oldest and strongest of these vested interests is that of priestcraft and superstition, misleading and enslaving the mind of the people; while the other, that of Capitalism . . . enslaves their bodies."

Nowadays many such messages fall naturally into two parts: (1) the destructive, or sweeping away, stage, and (2) the re-building stage. Most thoughtful people in this mid-century would agree as to the sweeping away, but few, alas, can agree on the second stage. Perhaps we need more teaching. At any rate, Mr. Parke closes with a quotation of Tom Paine that the world needed teachers, not preachers. And so say all of us!

B.S.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

OUTDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday evening, 7 p.m.: H. DAY.

Kingston-on-Thames Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: J. M. ALEXANDER.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Plattfields).—Every Sunday, 3 p.m.: (St. Mary's Gate, Blitzed Site), every Sunday, 8 p.m.; (Alexandra Park Gate), every Wednesday, 8 p.m.; (Deansgate Bomb Site), every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK and BARNES.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, 12 noon: L. EBURY; (Highbury Corner), Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Saturday, August 9, 7 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY and A. ELSMERE: "Things Christians Ought to Know."

Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barker's Pool).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. A. SAMMS.

South London and Lewisham Branch N.S.S. (Brockwell Park).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Hyde Park, Marble Arch).—Sunday, 4 p.m.: Messrs. WOOD and O'NEILL.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH. By Colonel Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1½d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? By Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1½d.

WHAT IS THE SABBATH DAY? By H. Cutner. Price 1s. 3d.; postage 2d.

WILL YOU RISE FROM THE DEAD? By C. G. L. Du Cann. An inquiry into the evidence of resurrection. Price 9d.; postage 1½d.