

# The Freethinker

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Editor: F. A. RIDLEY

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DURING the Italian "Risorgimento" (political awakening), when the Italian Liberals found their path to an united secular Italian State blocked by the activities of clericalism, the Italian statesman, Count Cavour, coined the slogan, "A free Church in a free State." This celebrated aphorism, which implied as its logical corollary the complete separation of Church and State, soon became the watchword of Liberal and Socialist anti-clerical movements in other lands besides Italy, and has actually been put into operation in the majority of modern communities.

Amongst the more conservative societies where the principle of a State Church is still operative is Great Britain, which actually contains two separate State Churches, with separate doctrines and ecclesiastical organisations, respectively, in England and Scotland. Theologically speaking, the British monarch is something of a chameleon or, to vary the metaphor, a Siamese Twin: Anglican and Arminian (believer in Free Will) south of the River Tweed; Presbyterian and Calvinist (believer in Predestination) north of that same stream!

The close connections between Church and State in Britain have become strikingly obvious during the past weeks with, in particular, reference to the recent Coronation rite, in which the Anglican Primate played a role hardly inferior to that of the newly crowned monarch herself. As this column predicted at the beginning of this year, 1953 is the Anglican "Holy Year," and His Grace of Canterbury and the Church which he rules are taking full advantage of the privileged position which adheres to an Established State Church. No doubt much the same position exists north of the Tweed in relation to the Established (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland.

We, accordingly, regard the present time as a specially opportune one for reviewing the whole question of the future relations between Church and State in this country. For the Coronation, whilst it has not actually brought to light any facts not previously known, has, none the less, fixed public attention in an unusually vivid manner upon a state of things which would surely be anomalous in any community, and is particularly so in one that avowedly accepts the criteria of the Democratic State.

We have outlined the essential facts of the current religious situation in previous articles, so we may, perhaps, be excused if we confine ourselves here to a bare mention of the relevant facts. Recent religious statistics—incidentally, mostly compiled by Christians—indicate that the proportion of regular church-goers in England has fallen since the turn of the century from about 31 per cent. to about 13 per cent.: a drop of over 100 per cent. Further, that the incidence amongst the actually religious minority is increasingly unfavourable to Anglicanism. The aggregate number of members of the Nonconformist Churches appears to be now actually greater than those

who attend the so-called "Church of England." Whilst the much better organised and disciplined Roman Catholic Church in England is rapidly gaining on Anglicanism and, at its present rate of increase, should pass it numerically in the course of another generation.

Thus, out of the total population of England, the proportion of active members (regular church-goers) of the Established Church numbers about five per cent. and, even at that figure, appears to be on the decline. And this is "The Church of England by Law Established": the *National Church!*\*

The above state of things is comparatively recent, and British politics are notoriously slow-moving. The original "Church of England," as founded upon the breakaway from Rome, was a primarily *political* creation, the formularies of which were deliberately made as ambiguous and comprehensive as possible, so as to include everyone except Catholic and Protestant fanatics. (The Thirty-nine Articles represent a masterpiece of theological facing-both-ways.) To a large extent the compromise succeeded and, since the extreme Protestants under Cromwell unsuccessfully attempted to displace it, the "Church of England" was really what its name implied. Down to the present century it was, probably, the most representative religious body in England. But to-day? No logical argument, religious or political, can be adduced in support of its privileged position, parliamentary representation, and State endowments.

One may also relevantly add that the Coronation ceremony is supposed to represent not merely Britain, but, equally, the whole "Commonwealth and Empire." It is utterly fantastic that "The Church of England" should claim and exercise special privileges on such an occasion. Other religions—Hinduism and Islam certainly; Roman Catholicism probably—have more adherents in the British Commonwealth than Anglicanism. Since one can hardly conceive all these mutually hostile creeds combining to crown the Sovereign, the only reasonable ceremony agreeable to everyone would seem to be a purely secular ceremony.

The current state of things is, we repeat, quite recent in origin: it forms, in fact, part of the revolutionary change of climate characteristic of our times. That the position which it represents is completely anomalous as and when judged by any democratic criterion, and utterly irrespective of any views one may hold either about Christianity in general or Anglicanism in particular, appears as irrefutable; privileged minorities have, surely, no place in any *real* democracy.

In Great Britain, unlike the European continent, politics

[\* We have no comparable figures for Scotland and Wales. To judge from the way the Sabbath is kept in both countries, the hold of religion is, perhaps, somewhat stronger. The Church of Wales was disestablished by the Liberal Government of Asquith and Lloyd George.]

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

## A Free Church in a Free State

— By F. A. RIDLEY —

and secularism have never had any intimate alliances. Whereas in European lands the parties of the left, Liberalism, Socialism and Communism, have usually been found to be opposed to clerical pretensions, if not to religion itself as such; here, neither Liberalism nor Socialism has ever assumed an aggressively anti-religious or even anti-clerical character—a state of things fully recognised, for example, even by the Vatican. Nor has the "Church of England" herself failed to move with the times. It would no longer be true, as it once was, to designate Anglicanism as "the Tory Party at prayer." (In point of present-day fact, the Anglo-Catholics, the most active party in the Church, appear to lean to "Christian Socialism" rather than to Toryism.)

Accordingly, there is not, at present, any definite political movement interested in what is now the elementary democratic demand for "the free Church in the free

State," for a secular constitution, like that of the U.S.A. in which all religious and anti-religious beliefs are precisely equal before the law. Politicians, with but rare exception, reflect rather than create public opinion. Once create an effective "demand" for something, and one will find no lack of politicians to press for its adoption! One of the most immediate and pressing demands of the secularist movement must now be for the end of the simultaneous undemocratic anomaly: for the immediate and simultaneous disestablishment and disendowment of the State Churches of England and Scotland.

Let us hope that, if there is to be yet another Coronation it will be a purely secular ceremony, perhaps the N.S.S., the R.P.A., the Ethical Union and the World Union of Freethinkers may be officially represented on such a future occasion on terms of complete equality with the representatives of the churches.

## Robert Taylor The Devil's Chaplain (1784-1844) By H. CUTNER

(Continued from page 171)

THIS time it was the Society for the Suppression of Vice which was responsible for the prosecution, sending a professional shorthand writer named Stevens to hear Taylor at the Rotunda on the Good Friday and the Easter Monday of 1831.

The offending passages are marked in the lectures in the *Devil's Pulpit* entitled the "Crucifixion" and the "Cup of Salvation," and some are worth reproducing here:—

O awful mystery! O love divine! There you behold the Almighty God arraigned as a felon at the bar of Pontius Pilate. Him, who hath only immortality, tried for his life; Jesus Christ, the righteous, found guilty: the author of nature suffered: the Immortal God expired: the Everlasting ceased to be: the Eternal was no more: the Great *I am* was *not*: the Living God was dead. There was a radical reform in the Kingdom of Heaven; the borough-mongers were turned out; the Jure-Divino-ship of God himself was no longer respected; "God over all" was put under; "Blessed for evermore" was no more blessed; "Holy, Holy, Holy" was wholly kicked out; "Jehovah's awful throne" was declared vacant; and the provisional government devolved into the hands of that venerable republican, Lieutenant-General Beelzebub.

"For ever, O Lord, thy word is true in Heaven." And so it is; but it was never true on earth: and none but a fool or a dunce would have ever dreamed that it was so.

No satire or fooling could be more legitimate than this—for anything more downright stupid than some of the Good Friday and Easter Sunday Church ritual and prayers could hardly be imagined outside a lunatic asylum. As Taylor pointed out, a hymn like that of Watts's No. 18 was sung quite solemnly, and surely nobody ever wrote bigger drivel:—

And now I drink my Saviour's blood,  
I thank thee Lord, 'tis generous wine;  
Mingled with love, the fountain flowed  
From that dear bleeding heart of thine.

Or this one:—

This soul-reviving wine,  
Dear Saviour 'tis thy blood;  
We thank that precious flesh of thine,  
For this immortal food.

And here is Taylor's "blasphemy" in the Indictment:—  
"Or, as I have read those lines of Dr. Watts plagiarized, and have but little altered, in the composition of quite as good a poet as Dr. Watts—the Rev. Dr. Towzer, a famous hand at doggerel:—

'Tis the same blood in wine or swipes,  
'Tis God's own blood, we vow;  
And when we feel it in our tripes,  
We feel we don't know how."

"Nothing," added Taylor, "can be more sublime than this language: only the awkwardness of it is, when the who use this sort of language, as that of the most fervent piety in their mouths, would represent it as blasphemy ours: and would punish *us* for only quoting and repeating their own *ipsissima verba*, their *very, very* words."

One more passage:—

BUT HOW COULD ANY MAN WALK WITH GOD? With their indefinite indescript and indescribable God, the incomprehensible and infinite space-filling God? WHEN GOD CANNOT WALK HIMSELF. (Why, to be sure.) HE WOULD BE AT HIS JOURNEY'S END BEFORE HE SET OUT. AND AS HE FILLS ALL SPACE, HE MUST BE STILL IN ALL SPACE, LIKE A GOUTY OLD MAN IN HIS ARMCHAIR, AND STAY AT HOME THROUGH ALL ETERNITY.

It is obvious with what pious horror Mr. Stevens, professional shorthand writer, must have taken down these terrible "blasphemies"; and in addition, he pointed out court how some young man first read out a passage from a blasphemous work like Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, and how Taylor was always dressed in full canonicals as if he were a real clergyman. Stevens was supported in this by another witness called Smith.

Unfortunately, on this occasion, Taylor was not tried by a fair-minded judge like Lord Tenterden, but by the Chairman of the Court of the Sessions, Robert Hedger, whose portrait, sketched in the prefatory memoir to the *Devil's Pulpit*, describes him as "a man whom no good man calls friend or companion; a man who has emanated from one of the vilest hotbeds of vice that this metropolis ever contained, and who retains the character and habits that were there generated." It was not much use before a man of this character to make the sort of defence which Taylor was famous. He spoke for five hours pleading that the Society for the Suppression of Vice consisted mostly of clergymen who obviously hated him. They were afraid to enter into any discussion with him, traduced him on every occasion, and nicknamed him the "Devil's Chaplain" because they declared that he was "either the Devil himself or some emissary of his."

Taylor denied that he blasphemed the Scriptures; rather for some of its beautiful language he had a high veneration. But no eloquence, or appeals for fair play or justice, or any argument which declared the inherent right of everybody to genuine free speech, were of much avail before a man like Mr. Hedger, who sentenced Taylor to two years imprisonment in Horse-monger Lane Gaol, and to

treatment—which must have meant, perhaps, that he was not allowed to write or study as he had done in Oakham Gaol. In addition, he was fined £100 and had to find considerable surety for a further five years good behaviour. The money was raised by subscription in 1832—proof that even in those poverty-rife days there were always men and women ready to support in every way the “greatest of causes.”

Taylor must have suffered very badly in prison, though exact details of his confinement are not known. His letters in the *Lion*, written in Oakham Gaol, show how hard he found the imprisonment there; but at least he was able to produce two big books and fill a large portion of the *Lion* every week. In Horsemonger Lane Gaol he does not appear to have written anything; and little appears to be known of his circumstances on his release in 1833, except that he had a violent quarrel with Carlile for which that intrepid fighter for free speech was fined. The present writer has been unable to discover the cause of the quarrel, but it may have been in connection with Miss Richards, the lady to whom at that time Taylor was engaged. It was Carlile who introduced them and it is quite possible that Taylor would have married Miss Richards if his new venture in publishing a little magazine called the *Philathean* on September 21, 1833, had been a success.

This magazine was published weekly at 2d. It consisted of a lecture on “Astronomical Theology”—others were being delivered in the “Temple of Truth” at 8, Theobald’s Road, on Sunday evenings—and the “Life and Opinions of Talasiphron,” which actually was his own autobiography. The last number was published on January 18, 1834, though it gave no indication whatever that it would suddenly cease.

The reason, however, must be the fact that Robert Taylor decided to marry an elderly lady of means. This led to an action for breach of promise by the discarded Miss Richards, who was awarded £250 damages—a sum which Taylor would not or could not pay. At all events, he seems to have removed to France, eventually settling at Tours where he practised as a surgeon for ten years, dying on June 5, 1844. But whether his death took place at Tours as the *Dictionary of National Biography* states, or at Jersey as stated by J. M. Wheeler in his *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, is not known to the present writer.

Taylor’s marriage was a very happy one, and he appears to have left a large number of manuscripts, though nothing is now known as to their whereabouts or whether they are even still in existence.

(To be continued)

## Holy Ghost on Interest

By TOM HILL

(Concluded from page 175)

PARTICULARLY large is the part played by the Holy See in banking. Apart from the Holy Ghost banking department, it controls the Istituto Centrale di Credito di Roma, Banco Cattolico del Veneto, Banco San Geminiano e San Prospero, Banco Veneziano, Banco Agricoltore, Istituto Regionale del Credito Emilia e Romagna, 55 “Catholic” and about 100 “people’s” banks. Investments outside Italy are valued at several billion dollars. The Catholic Church controls the Banco Hispano-Americano with headquarters in Madrid and a ramified network of subsidiaries throughout Latin America. In Switzerland, the Jesuits are in control of the Elektro-Bank, which in turn controls the large Italian power companies. In France, they have wormed their way into the Franco-American Bank, which finances fascist movements in the S. Americas. The Papacy has important shares in the French Banque de Paris and des Pays-Bas; controls mining concessions in the Portuguese colonies and a good part of the milling industry in South America, etc. These are not visible treasures which can be dubbed “fakes,” but invisible possessions of unquestionable value.

Other sources of invisible income and profiteering on a grand scale are the emission of shares, fees for the issuing of patents of nobility, licences for aristocratic orders and for commercial enterprises applying to launch items for the souvenir industry, etc. A Swiss Protestant paid four million lire for the permission to manufacture 80,000 musical boxes in the shape of St. Peter’s; another doer-of-business with the Holy Ghost invented another toy: a white key made of plastic, and when you peeped through, it showed His Holiness enthroned. For the permission to sell 400,000 of them to Holy Year pilgrims at 450 lire apiece, he had to pay 19 million lire to the Holy See.

The Holy Father is far from being shocked when lush modes on posters invite the drones of the world to come to Monaco to bathe, and gamble, since he holds 25 per cent. of the Casino shares; for about 220 million lire he has shares in the S.A.D.E. Electricity Trust (Venice), whilst in the even greater Edison Trust, of Milano, he has invested

500 millions. In Northern Italy he owns the “Maino” Textile Mills (valued at ca. 7,000 million lire), though generally he prefers not to show his hands too openly, but to have as many fingers as possible in many pies.

In the famous Fiat Motor Works he holds 74,000 shares; in 39 Italian towns anyone using gas has to contribute to the profits of the Holy Ghost as a big shareholder in “Ital-Gas”; he tells his dupes that the only remedy for illness in prayers to the Lord who has seen fit to ordain illness; yet at the same time he is a partial owner of chemical works (for instance, 75 million in “Rumianca” N.V.) and whoever prefers to swallow pills automatically contributes to the Holy Kitty. Italians do alike, if they send a telegram, buy rayon stockings (Snia Viscosa), wear hats, drink beer or Coco-Cola (under the control of Signor Delborgo, Papal Marquess). Members of various Boards of Directors are not only rich backers of de Gasperri, but also close relatives of His Holiness: there are two Pacelli among them, a nephew of Mr. Pope himself, and others.

One thing is certain, that the Holy Father himself does not follow his Christ\* who is said to have commanded ‘If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.’ (Matt. xix, 21.)

The Church is apt to demand that taxpayers of every denomination pay for the maintenance of Catholic schools, whilst the Holy See, in the name of the Trinity, goes on profiteering on a grand scale; and in no Christian country the Church can be forced to show her hand, to publish balance sheets and report to anybody how they fare. Clerics can keep secrets and Vatican officials are as silent as the tomb of St. Peter.

\* It should also be kept in mind that the Vicar of Christ has heavily invested in the American armament industry.

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## This Believing World

The Cambridge magazine "Granta," read by the university students, had the audacity to publish a "blasphemous" poem and has, in consequence, been banned until the end of the year. The poem shocked the university proctors so much that although its author is allowed to sit for his tripos exam, he would afterwards be rusticated (dismissed) temporarily. It appears that the poem is "crude and offensive and uncomplimentary to God." An "M.A." in London and another "M.A." in Cambridge acted as "informers"—they objected to it, no doubt because they were very religious. But what a pity that the proctors and the M.A.s cannot haul the poet before a good old-fashioned judge like Mr. Justice North—that brave Roman Catholic who gave G. W. Foote twelve months hard for publishing "blasphemous" articles and pictures.

Let there be no mistake about it. We still have Blasphemy Laws and they can still be put in force by the law—and a more impudent travesty of justice cannot be imagined than condemning anybody for "blasphemy." You can poke as much fun at Jupiter or Pan or Venus as you like, but you must not joke at the equally mythical gods, Jehovah and Jesus. The law is "agen" it, and on this Tory and Labour Home Secretaries are united as one. They wouldn't dream of changing it.

All university students who agree that this kind of "censorship" is idiotic should join forces with this journal and help us to drive the iniquitous Blasphemy Laws out of existence. We were glad to see that the "blasphemous" poet said he did not care what the sensitive proctors and other religious people thought, but that is not enough. As Foote used to say, let us fight the bigots, and the more readers we can get the better we can fight. We wonder how many of the university students in the country will join us?

To prove that such a struggle is necessary, take the U.S.A. which now has two Bills ready to be introduced into its Senate making it a crime to send "blasphemous matter" through the post. Those in power are cleverly exploiting the present witch hunts, to bring back religion into something of its old power. A Communist must necessarily be an Atheist and so, by linking Atheism and, of course, "obscenity" with Communism, such Bills against "blasphemy" may have an easy passage. Anything may then be "blasphemous" and any policeman can decide what is or is not blasphemy. Even a post office clerk may be allowed to judge whether a magazine should or should not go through the post. No better weapon against Free-thought has ever existed than our Blasphemy Laws, and don't the priests know it!

And in the meantime there are plaintive and utterly un-humorous complaints that religion is not "making better use of the Radio." A gentleman called Rogo filled some columns in *The Recorder* urging that the present "abbreviated" Matins and Evensongs were "simply not good enough." We must have "Evangelism of high order" and make the "somewhat remote Christ" a "practical entity." How Rogo would revel in arranging religious programmes if he had the chance—complete morning, afternoon, and evening services, with one programme only on Sundays, religion and nothing but religion. TV should also fill the home with visual religion. The pity of it is that Rogo cannot give us the exquisite pictures of "anointing" the Queen at the Coronation, an anointing which even the Archbishop dare not televise, no doubt quite rightly. That ritual may be very sacred, but how very, very primitive!

## Theatre

**Second Best Bed**, by N. Richard Nash, at the Arts Theatre is an American play again about Elizabethan England, but as a play it has a few imperfections which make it all the more regrettable that we should reach across the Atlantic for someone to write plays about Shakespeare.

Although Shakespeare is brought into it, he does not appear as a great figure or any better than a very ordinary man. But who among us can say how Shakespeare was. Your idea of his character would be no worse than mine, so we do not dispute Alan MacNaughtan's excellent acting of the part in which he does not remind us of his literary works so much as of his sex life. Anne Hathaway is beautifully played by Avice Landone in a subtle and refined performance in which she shows us a most likeable shrew. Her battle of plates and pans with Will of Avon has only been bettered in Noël Coward's *Private Lives* which—after all—was much about the same thing and done with only four characters.

Many of the remaining characters in this play are necessary and have been overdrawn in the writing. John Fernald—the producer—could have put his weight against this and checked the tendency for caricature; otherwise he has done good work. Valerie Hanson was perhaps slightly more strained as Nellie Garris in an imaginative performance as a girl of too-easy virtue.

The play is not tidied up in the last act, and the sincerity of the characters of Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway jar severely with the remaining parts, in spite of a good cast. It is also jarring having to hear these Shakespearean people use phrases and words that are unmistakably American.

RAYMOND DOUGLAS.

### HOMO SAPIENS

I watch with interested eyes  
The race of men,  
I hear them laugh, and note their sighs,  
And wonder when  
These man-sized babies, not in arms,  
Reach adulthood;  
Their infantleness me alarms,  
As well it should.

The greatest need of all mankind  
Is to grow up;  
Adolescence oft is blind  
To sorrow's cup.  
When all attain to man's estate  
And childhood leave,  
This world will then be truly great:  
Till then, I grieve.

—BAYARD SIMMONS.

### "The Freethinker" Fund

Previously acknowledged, £71 16s.; A. Hancock, 3s. (25th donation); Mr. T. Benton, 10s.; Anon., 2s. 6d.; M. B., 6s.; Berckmans, 4s.; Mr. McKee, £1; C. H. Norman, £1 1s.  
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## To Correspondents

**L. HANGER**—Congratulations on auspicious arrival. Let us hope that Satanic qualities are acquired and not hereditary. Thank you for your stories, which will appear in due course.

**RUPERT L. HUMPHRIS**.—We note your views on Mr. Bennett's recent article, but will you, please, make your letters shorter? Our space is extremely limited.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 4s. (in U.S.A., \$3.50); half-year, 12s.; three months, 6s.

Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only and to make their letters as brief as possible.

Lecture Notices should reach the Secretary of the N.S.S. at this Office by Friday morning.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, and not to the Editor.

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### OUTDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: H. DAY and A. H. WHARRAD.

Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Sunday, June 7, 8 p.m.: J. W. BARKER and J. MILLS.

North London Branch (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, June 7, noon, L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Saturday, June 6, 7 p.m.: Messrs. T. W. MOSLEY and A. ELSMERE.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Marble Arch).—Every Sunday from 4 p.m. onwards: Messrs. O'NEILL, CLEAVER, WOOD, EBURY, TAYLOR, and RIDLEY.

### INDOOR

Junior Discussion Group (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Friday, June 5, 7-15 p.m.: LUIS VARGAS, "Shaw, Dramatist and Reformer."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, June 7, S. K. RATCLIFFE, "Fair Weather Religion."

## NOTES AND NEWS

The 1953 Annual Conference of the National Secular Society took place at Leicester on Sunday, May 24. Delegates from many parts of the country were present, including a representative from Scotland, Mr. Hamilton, Chairman of the Glasgow Branch. Members came from overseas, as far afield as the Belgian Congo. A specially noteworthy feature of the 1953 Conference was the number of fraternal greetings sent by overseas organisations. These included The World Union of Freethinkers, and the Freethought organisations of France, Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The delegates much appreciated these gestures indicative of the international solidarity of our movement.

Conference re-elected Mr. F. A. Ridley as President of the Society, and Messrs. P. V. Morris and W. Griffiths as, respectively, Secretary and Treasurer. The Annual Report, read by the President, besides reporting a full year's programme of propaganda, announced a gratifying increase of membership, amounting to 16 per cent. Conference business included a revision of some of the rules of the Society, and the passing of a number of resolutions. The concluding one, substituting the teaching of Comparative Religion in the schools for that of Dogmatic Theology, provoked a particularly good discussion. A public meet-

ing in the evening, which included questions and discussion, was addressed by Messrs. McCall, Hamilton, Ebury, and Kirk. The chair was taken by Mr. F. A. Ridley. As always the Leicester Secular Society proved most helpful and co-operative, and loaned the N.S.S. their fine hall in Humberstone Gate. A full report of the proceedings of the 1953 Conference will appear in our issue of June 12, when normal publication conditions are resumed after the Coronation.

Our contemporary, *The Literary Guide*, announces a change of editorship: Mr. F. C. Watts, for reasons of health, is resigning the editorship and is succeeded by Mr. Hector Hawton. Mr. Hawton has made a considerable reputation in recent years as a free-lance philosopher and journalist, and many of our readers are, no doubt, already familiar with the products of his stimulating pen. We are all expecting great things from Mr. Hawton and wish him every success as editor of our contemporary.

After the lightning comes the thunder! In 1953, the Anglican "Holy Year," we have the spate of religious propaganda turned on full blast and non-stop, by His Grace of Canterbury, *et al.* Next year, 1954, fresh horrors are in store for us. For, not content with "screening" our civil servants and sending over McCarthy's myrmidons to spy on the B.B.C., the U.S.A. is sending over the celebrated "revivalist," Mr. Billy Graham, complete with Bible and hell fire, to save us from the perdition from which his evangelical predecessors, Moody and Sankey, Torrey and Alexander, have so signally failed to save us in the past. As Churchill once remarked: "What sort of people do they think we are?"

## Joan of Arc

### Is the truth coming out at last?

By RAYMOND DOUGLAS

FOR centuries, in defiance of free thought, historians have followed the line of the Roman Catholics in accepting the story of the Maid without question. With incredible gullibility the leaders of thought and literature, and not least the creative artists of theatre, film and painting have added to the gigantic, monumental pedestal that has as purpose to raise her near to a heaven in which she never believed.

In all probability there is not a document in existence (or as yet discovered) that can prove to us without doubt that Joan of Arc was a witch of the Old Religion (La Vecchia Religione), and that she was a priestess of the cult and—at the time of her death—the substitute of the Supreme God Incarnate representing the religion of Witchcraft in France. We do know, of course, that the English regarded her as a witch, and that she was tried and condemned as a witch. The enemies of the fifteenth-century English, including the Roman Catholics, explain this as being a natural stigma to attach to Charles Dauphin, viz., that to inspire his army he employed a witch. In the days of the great witch drives, with Christianity as the religion of the forces in power, no statement could be found with which to greater disgrace the Dauphin. So it seemed most natural that the English should insist on a trial that would see her justly condemned as a witch, thus bringing to a logical conclusion the accusation they had made against Charles for employing one who was obsessed by the principle of evil.

Naturally, this did not suit the Dauphin who, as head of the Royal House of France, had to appear as a devout Roman Catholic. So a quarter of a century later there was

a form of retrial, in which only three could be traced to attend who were also present at her trial in Rouen. These three witnesses were either bribed, or their memory was hazy with decrepit age, for they could say nothing that would go against her being posthumously reinstated to the Roman Catholic faith. Her family all bore favourable witness to this end, probably because—being short of money—they accepted payment to do so. That they were pagans is hardly to be doubted, but that did not matter to the Dauphin who, in spite of his long wait, could once again look the Pope in the face.

These peculiar things happened because five centuries ago the people's religion was the Witch cult, although Christianity was the religion having the power, and it was—as you may well know—ruthlessly and unmercifully striking at the pagans with all the force of hatred urged by the existence of the *Malleus Maleficarum*.

The village of Domremy to-day cannot appear much different from the time Joan spent her short span of life there. Its two hundred houses, the old church and even the house where she lived (if it truly is the one!) are still in evidence, though most of the houses have been replaced. There was a monastery and a small castle, which have ceased to exist. But the hills are unchanged and the Bois Chesnu still exists, near where her Voices would come and speak with her; the Fairies who dwelt in the hills and the woods, and kept well out of the way in their underground dwellings which the uninitiated could not find. Jeanne met and spoke with the Fairies—those nomadic people who were among the most ardent upholders of the Witch cult—although she firmly denied this at her trial, for that would be conclusive evidence that she was not Christian. The Meuse Valley was noted for its paganism, and many of the raids on villages, made by the bestial and brutal lords of the land in the name of Christianity, were in the form of punitive expeditions. On their approach the people fled, to return on their departure and contemplate the destruction. Yet there are such odd things as lords who were married to Fairies and—so it would appear—made no secret of it, so it may be concluded that where there was rank and power there was also corruption to hold the avenging forces of religion at a convenient distance.

Michael (referred to historically and religiously as the Archangel Saint Michael) was perhaps the first of the Voices to speak to Joan when she was in the garden of their house. She was very young at the time, and appears to have been frightened by the stranger. He must have been the god incarnate covering a wide area and embracing Domremy, and as this form of deity was generally acquired by people of rank who secretly or openly practised the Witch religion, Michael might have been an assumed name. He might have been Robert de Baudricourt, Captain of Vaucouleurs—the nearest town to Domremy—who was a rather coarse and unimaginative individual, perhaps having more dignity than most people in this hard-living fifteenth century. Catherine and Margaret (who are generally referred to as Saints) were Fairy priestesses who seem to have prepared Joan for her great mission from the time she was thirteen. These people would come to her at any time, but mainly when she was in the fields with the cattle or in other lonely places where they would not be disturbed. To her and in her own religion these people were truly the messengers from a god she could see during the great quarterly festivals; to her they were the "saints" of her religion and she loved them. She admitted at her trial that she had embraced them, kissed their feet, touched them, felt the warmth of their bodies, etc. These were real people and

no ethereal beings with which the Christians have tried to create Joan's saints.

We may imagine that the village priest (the Christian one!) might sorrowfully stand at the door of his church on the nights of the great festivals and watch his villagers stroll past with blue-flaming torches as they would go to keep their tryst with the great horned god, in whom they believed because they could see him. What had the Christians on him? They could show only an image of their god as a dead man on a cross. In the fields, at a customary meeting place, people from villages and hamlets far and near gathered in their thousands to meet their living god, pay him homage, dance the variations of the ring and the catherine wheel with a speed and fury that should amaze even the twentieth century, and spend a night of festivity and lewdly obscene jollification that would be more than sufficient to send our Christian priest rushing prostrate to his altar and spending the next three months praying for their souls.

It was not so easy to draw a line between the two religions. Many people followed both religions, feeling no doubt, that by doing so they would be sure to find their way to heaven one side or the other. Gilles de Rais is a notable example of this, and it is rather interesting to note that Charles Dauphin appointed him to protect Joan wherever she went, and he was only parted from her on the day of her capture. It is also of interest that Charles made him Marshal of France at the time of his anointing at Reims, for it seems hardly likely that Charles did not know of Gilles de Rais's indulgence in Witchcraft. This suggests strongly the possibility that Charles was the Supreme God Incarnate in France; that is, the figure-head of the Old Religion as well as being the head of the Royal house and consequently an official Roman Catholic. There are other indications of this.

(To be continued)

## THE SINNER

My last glass now is emptied, my last girl's lips are kissed,  
Empty my bed of all but my bones, and they will not be missed.

Godless I was to the many, feckless I was to the few,  
Faithless I was to the faithful: to my faith I was always true.

Had I a faith to guide me? (Ah, what can the gods know?)—

I had a faith that was stronger by far than theirs with a badge to show.

Beauty I worshipped all my life, nor broke that faith for gold;

Hunger she gave me in return, the outer gate, and the cold.

Wild nights with the girls that were happy, wild nights with the boys that were gay:

I lent my heart to the moment, but I did not give it away,  
That from my birth dedicated to the goddess that knew no creed,

That the inviolate answer in the measureless depth of my need.

Sinner I was in the passing, breaker of rule and of rote,  
I turned from the signs and the symbols, but I did not turn my coat.

Now I do know for the last time, empty of purse as of breath,

Faithful I was to the call of my heart—yes, faithful unto this death.

JOHN O'HARE.

# Patriotism

A DIALOGUE. By W. RITTENOUR

**PATRIOT:** It's the duty of every man to be loyal to his country and, if necessary, to fight and die for it. Anyone who thinks differently is a traitor.

**Philosopher:** Your sense of tolerance is admirable.

**Patriot:** I know nothing of tolerance or philosophy. I know only that it's necessary to love and honour the country which has given us birth. Man has no greater obligation, as Machiavelli has said, than that which he owes to the country which has given him life.\* For life is a wonderful gift.

**Philosopher:** I admire Machiavelli, but I don't admire the passage to which you refer on patriotism. Birth on one side or the other of a hill or a river or an ocean or of the earth determines nationality; and the only reason men believe that nationality, thus created by chance, is absolute and not relative is because men are fools. Patriotism isn't universally reasonable but is merely a blind feeling which unites national groups of men for aggression and perhaps a little for self defence; it's relative and depends on time and place. Everyone must be patriotic during a war and must consider his country's religion and political ideology, both of which may be the worst in the world, as the best in the world and as the only true religion and political ideology, which it's his duty to go to the wars and be mutilated or killed for. However, after a war it's fashionable to be cynical and disillusioned about everything, including patriotism and war, while no one of good sense ever thought any war was a just war or that war, fought on all sides by men ardently patriotic regarding their several countries, can produce the realisation of glorious ideals, whether religious or political or social. Men are badly deceived by their patriotism in these endless wars they fight.

**Patriot:** I thought so! You're a philosopher! Next you'll be talking reason and good sense. Well, I want none of that!

**Philosopher:** But isn't it possible to be born on some spot of ground on earth—for example, a desert island or a rock in the middle of the ocean, not lying within a national boundary, which we owe nothing to? Should we worship that spot of ground for having been the place where we, by chance, were born?

**Patriot.** In such a case it wouldn't be necessary to love your country since you would have none; but what does that prove?

**Philosopher:** I suppose, however, that, if by chance a band of scoundrels, organised to dominate and cheat men, arrived on this desert island or on this rock a few days before you were born, and organised a government to control its inhabitants and if this government by chance succeeded in existing and by chance the desert island or the rock was named, you would be under the moral obligation to humanity and to providence to reverence the island or the rock as your country and its rulers as the instruments of providence or at least as men worthy of respect and obedience?

**Patriot:** One would be under that obligation; but I don't like the implications and the sarcasms contained in your suppositions. Governments aren't composed of scoundrels—at least the government of my country, composed by my political party, is not—but by able men selected through political competition resulting in the survival of the fittest; and men guide their destiny not by chance, as you would have it, but by intelligence and reason.

**Philosopher:** You couldn't name one government which wasn't well supplied with scoundrels and corrupt officials, unless it were the government you live under, which is, of course, according to the reasonable principles of patriotism, the best of all governments. As far as men's guiding their destiny by intelligence and reason is concerned, no one of good sense ever entertained such an absurdity; for all experience confutes it.

**Patriot:** Absurdity, if you will; but your cold reason and lack of interest in passion and sentiment destroy among men, and especially young men—

**Philosopher (Aside.):** Especially among young men who are fit for military service.

**Patriot:**—the feeling for God, country, and home, and make cynics of men. You reason away our ideals and give us nothing in return.

**Philosopher:** And the ideals you give us are unreasonable, useless to men as a race and in fact destructive to them, and are the products of the effect of governmental force, and often terror, on the minds of easily frightened or venal men who are required to show obedience and love for their country, that is, for the dozen or so men who control it. Patriotic ideals are of use to leaders of government and to military men; and the greatest leaders are the greatest orators on God, country, and home; for these ideals are tools in the operation of political power.

**Patriot:** Patriotic ideals are on the contrary ideals necessary to the fusion of men into a national society. They contribute to the power of the state and therefore to the civil law and to morality and work toward the betterment and ennoblement of men. They are, I'm convinced, inspired by God as a means for welding men together in the social union.

**Philosopher:** God inspired or devil inspired patriotism, as an *esprit de corps*, joins men together in separate social groups so that as partisans of different social groups or nationalities they'll hate each other with undying hatred and attempt to destroy each other; and thus patriotism as a constructor of states is revealed to be a cause of the destruction of men as a race by being the partial cause of continual wars.

**Patriot:** But don't the words *native land*, *patria*, inspire anything in you? Does it mean nothing to you to think of dying, defending your native land? Many great men from ancient times till now have considered patriotism noble; and, if you with your reason and good sense think differently, what do you count for when so many others have thought differently?

**Philosopher:** I count for nothing, like the rest of men. However, are national boundaries sacred and a sufficient cause for men to destroy themselves?

**Patriot:** Men must have something to amuse themselves with, so why not continual wars inspired by patriotism?

**Philosopher:** It seems reasonable that some more constructive and profitable amusement could be found than wars to end wars, which destroy what men have done to build civilisations.

**Patriot:** I don't want to be unreasonable; and it seems to me from what you say that you are an internationalist and that you believe in tolerance for the different nationalities when it's well known that there's no more consistent or deeper hatred than the hatred of common men for foreigners. You would try to controvert nature itself, I suppose?

\* Dialogo sulla, I.

Philosopher: I'm not an internationalist since I'm not interested in the fooleries of men; and internationalism, whatever it is, would merely be another foolery to start a war over. However, I do believe a little in tolerance for the nationalities and regret that this belief is a controversy of nature and perhaps of the designs of providence which has apparently designed the world so that neither men nor any other species of animals can live in peace.

Patriot: You don't understand the designs of providence as does no other man. If your ideas and reasonings were adopted, there would be no cause for wars and there would be only peace on earth; and, if this happened, patriotism would be outmoded as would be militarism and other forms of savagery; and this won't happen as long as men continue to be men. If nationalistic hatreds were removed from the minds of men, the romance, joy, and adventure of bloody and costly wars would disappear from the earth; and what would men do then to amuse themselves?

Philosopher. If my ideas were adopted, and they never will be, and I'm not afflicted that they won't be, there wouldn't be complete peace; for that couldn't exist in this world; but at least there would be no nationalistic and political manias which enrage millions of men over nothing and plunge nations into international wars.

Patriot: Thank God that your reasonable ideas will never be adopted and that you're confident they won't be! I'll remember you, when we start the next war to end wars, and will have you persecuted as a Communist, Fascist, or Democrat, depending on which country I'm in at the time and on which party I adopt.

Philosopher: I can hope that I won't be in that country. Your patriotism seems to be relative after all and not attached to a particular country.

Patriot. Relative, if you insist; but I'll remember you and your philosophy!

## Correspondence

### THE VATICAN WEALTH

SIR,—Would Mr. Tom Hill give us the fullest authorities which can be investigated to support the details he enumerates as to the wealth of the Vatican?—Yours, etc.,  
J. R. R.

### TWO REPLIES

SIR,—In his first letter Mr. McHattie accused me of being "very misleading in every way" in my criticism of *The Geography of Hunger*. I "only give part of the sentences," and "more gross and glaring misrepresentation" could not be imagined. Following this personal abuse, Mr. McHattie has also discovered that I am a "past-master in twisting and turning," that I "pervert the real meaning of the writers" I deal with, that my "prejudice" outgrows my "reasoning," and that he could have added a lot more if space permitted. God forbid that I should attempt to arrest the flow of such benevolent criticism.

As for Mr. Jim Graham, may I be permitted to say that I am delighted to learn dialectical materialism is a "guide" instead of being, as I mistakenly thought, a newer and better philosophy. I shall read with interest any further similar "revelations."—Yours, etc.,  
H. CUTNER.

### THE BENTLEY CASE

SIR,—E.C.R.'s letter really questions whether the permanent Civil Service runs this country, or its figureheads in the Cabinet. Any experienced person would reply, "The Civil Service."

An instance in question arose at the beginning of the present Government. A private member brought forward a Bill in which it was proposed that private companies should pay Death Duty on their paid-up capital, instead of, as at present, on their break-up value.

As you know, as soon as an Act of Parliament comes up for consideration it is printed and two or three copies are circulated to every Government office for consideration and comment. We heard no more of this Bill, and I have no doubt that an anonymous official at Somerset House pointed out that an estate value

£3,000,000 might easily be owned by a private company with only £1,000 capital, so should pay duty on its break-up value.

Assuming that we call my permanent official Mr. X. I can tell you the following story told me by one of the late Lord Stamfordham's staff who was in attendance on King George V when the then Home Secretary brought in a reprieve case for consideration. The King said, "When you bring me a reprieve case I like to see Mr. X's minute on top of the papers; after all, Mr. X has been dealing with these cases for years and knows more about them than you and I and the whole of the Cabinet put together."

Mr. X soon after received a knighthood, and I wrote him congratulating him on this honour.

All I can add is that England is run that way, and Cabinet Ministers come and go and make little difference.

The question of overriding a jury's recommendation did not arise.—Yours, etc.,  
R. G. ARBOTT.

### THE MONARCHY

SIR,—I wish to commend you for your editorial article, "From Elizabeth to Elizabeth," in your May 15 issue. It is and always has been astonishing to me that any thinker worth his salt can, in this twentieth century, find anything in the crude, anachronistic institution of Monarchy that is in accord with reason and elevated sentiments.

I am glad indeed that *The Freethinker* has lived up to its redoubtable reputation for clear, candid and courageous criticism on as on so many other matters.—Yours, etc.,  
G. I. BENNETT.

### ENGLISH EDUCATION

SIR,—Mr. C. H. Norman, in his excellent article, "Royal Ramp," draws much-needed attention to our poor educational system. The truth is that English education has never been much good and to-day as big a wash-out as ever it was.

The reason is not far to seek. True education (as understood by the radical freethinkers of the past) consists of science, knowledge and learning generally, all based upon literacy. The systems of France and pre-Fascist Italy afford excellent examples of this. The reactionary influences that have always dominated English education have successfully maintained low standards of the specious plea that knowledge (which they fear) is not the result of schooling. A Fascist-type educational system has resulted with a leadership cult, uniforms, canings, "character" training (so-called), games worship, and all the other "public" school twaddle which has influenced most of our schools and inhibited the sound instruction of our youth.

The tragedy is that progressive-minded teachers have always been so complacent to all this—they never seem to have attacked. Indeed, the tendency, since the war, away from books and towards three R's towards yet more frills and fancy subjects has actually been encouraged by modern educators who, in the name of "progress," have murdered the examination system and taken up the old reactionary cry that knowledge is not all.

The present figures for illiteracy speak for themselves. Unless we remember the basic truth that progress means science, knowledge and literacy, and reaction implies ignorance and superstition, we shall retrogress. How absurd and embarrassing to hear reactionary diehards speaking out in favour of more reading and writing in our schools! A pretty comment on the state to which our "progressive" educators have brought us!—Yours, etc.,  
J. COLLIER.

### A FRENCH OMISSION

SIR,—The French postal authorities have for some time now issued fine sets of stamps of famous intellectuals. Among them, Victor Hugo and Anatole France whose words on another occasion, "I am him at one moment" was set the conscience of mankind," are now almost world famous. This other was no less than Emile Zola and I am almost studied omission to keep him from being thus distinguished and honoured. I wrote some weeks ago on this matter to the French Minister of Posts, etc., and received the following reply which to me is quite unsatisfactory:—

20, Avenue de Ségur, Paris, January 3, 1933.  
SIR,—You have kindly called my attention to the interest which the issue of a postage stamp bearing the effigy of Emile Zola would arouse on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his death. I have the honour to inform you, as I published in a *Pro* communiqué last September, that the issues have been, until now, very often affected, in my opinion, by public demand or by charitable anniversaries and that gave them an occasional (lop-sided) character and took away from the scheme the necessary unity. Also, I have decided to modify the conditions governing the choice of subjects of postage stamps which will now be issued in homogeneous series. The issue asked for not coming under the scheme which I have drawn up, I have, not been able to arrange for a set such as you suggest. I beg you to believe, Sir, in the assurance of my distinguished consideration.—ROGER DUCKET.—Yours, etc.,  
WILLIAM SPENCER.