

# The Freethinker

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—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

## The Vatican Under the Southern Cross

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

IN the course of the past few years we have had frequent occasion to draw attention to the manifold and worldwide political activities of the Roman Catholic Church; to-day, beyond any question, the most dangerous enemy of Freethought and all that it stands for, at least on a worldwide scale. We have also had not infrequent occasion to mention that the Vatican, since 1870 the "infallible" dictator of the Church, whilst pursuing what are, in effect, the aims of a clerical-Fascist dictatorship which aims consistently at the acquisition of world power, has, notwithstanding, known how to veil its ulterior aims under all sorts of "progressive" disguises. From

Fascism to Communism, there is hardly a single card in the political pack which Rome has not played at one time or another in the course of its long and chequered history. In the year of grace 1492 the then reigning Pope, Alexander the Sixth, Rodrigo Borgia, a Spaniard of Negro descent, issued the famous Papal Bull which divided the then newly-discovered "New World," discovered the previous year by Christopher Columbus, between Spain and Portugal. It was the Vatican's first bid for world power. When the Protestant Reformation broke out a few years later and disrupted the Catholic world, the Papacy, to employ the language of a later day, "called the New World into being in order to redress the balance of the Old." To-day, except where, as in Mexico, secularist ideas have taken root to the detriment of Rome, the southern, Latin half of the American continent, the former Spanish and Portuguese colonial empires, is divided up amongst clerical-Fascist republics more or less subservient to the Catholic Church.

The Vatican has also "staked its claim" to power in the other "New World," discovered since Columbus, the Australian continent and its adjacent islands. Only here its tactics have to be, and are, in fact, adapted to quite different circumstances. For Australia, unlike America, was discovered and initially colonised by people of Anglo-Saxon and Protestant stock. In Australia, the Church of Rome is, and always has been, a religious minority; some 10 per cent. of the total Australian population. Moreover, the Australian followers of the Vatican represent a racial, as well as a religious, minority. For in Australia the racial and, consequent, political fortunes of Catholicism are very similar to those in Great Britain. In both lands, Roman Catholicism stems, not from pre-Reformation times but, actually, from the Irish emigration in "the hungry forties" of the 19th century, the cause of which lay in the sphere of economics, and not of theology; in the acute shortage of Irish potatoes rather than in the urge to spread the Catholic gospel. Australian Catholicism derives from Irish and, in tropical Queensland, Italian immigration. It is not, primarily, an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon.

The racial origin of Australian Catholicism dictates the political tactics which the Vatican employs under the

Southern Cross. For the peculiar fact has often been commented upon that only in Anglo-Saxon lands has Rome permitted her followers to join Liberal and even self-styled Socialist parties without censure, a very different state of things to its settled policy in Spain or in Latin America. Its origins are to be found in the long struggle for Irish Home Rule which led the Irish to support the Liberal Party that advocated Home Rule against their Tory landlords. When the Liberal parties collapsed, along with the era of Free Trade which begot them, the proletarian Irish, who formed the backbone of both British and Australian Catholicism, transferred their effective support to

the professedly Socialist Labour parties in the Anglo-Saxon world. The above political evolution explains why Roman Catholicism, Fascist in Spain and the Argentine, is "Labour" in Australia and, largely, in Britain. The Church of Rome, like Joseph, has "a coat of many colours": it includes both Fascist "black" and Labour "red"!

The recent and current activities of "Catholic Action," of political Catholicism in the Southern Continent, are lucidly explained in a useful and timely pamphlet which recently reached us from Australia, *Catholic Action and Australian Labour*. This pamphlet represents a symposium written from the point of view of a liberal and democratic outlook opposed to all forms of totalitarian rule and, in particular, to the all-embracing dictatorship of "The Black International" of the Church of Rome. The Protestant Bishop Dr. E. H. Burgmann, a courageous and public-spirited Protestant, who embodies the best democratic principles of the Reformation in a manner which has now become somewhat rare amongst Protestant leaders, writes a preface drawing attention to the insidious and persistent efforts of the Vatican to acquire for the Vatican a new, an Australian empire [cf. *Catholic Action and Australian Labour*; 1s. 6d., edited by A. W. Shepherd for *Morgan's Publications*, Box 4456, G.P.O., Sydney, New South Wales, Australia].

The purpose of our authors is to draw attention, in particular, to the penetration of Rome, by means of its "Fifth Column," "Catholic Action," into the Australian Labour Party. For, in Australia, the Vatican has not yet reached that happy state of things, that *summum bonum* of Catholic sociology, a clerical-Fascist party which operates without disguise under its own name as the spearhead of Catholic counter-revolution. In Australia as, at present, in Britain also, "Catholic Action," in view both of its minority position and of the strength of Anglo-Saxon democratic and Protestant feeling, is forced to proceed more cautiously and to seek to "permeate" the existing political parties; in particular, for the reasons already outlined, the largely Irish Catholic Australian Labour Party. Australian, like English Toryism has a traditionally Protestant outlook, which makes it less

susceptible to control by "Catholic Action." In any case, the political record of Australia in the present century since the Southern Continent first attained "dominion status" at the end of Queen Victoria's reign, indicates Labour as the more hopeful political prospect. Labour governments, often led by Catholic politicians, have been the rule, rather than the exception, in recent years, both in the Australian Federal Government at Canberra, as well as in the local state governments. In which connection, our authors seem to imply that the coming Australian Federal elections at the end of the present year will, once again, return a Labour regime to effective governmental power.

The pamphlet before us outlines the various ways in which "Catholic Action" seeks to permeate and to gain control of "Australian Labour," using for this purpose its mass following of, mainly, Irish and Italian immigrants in both the political Labour Party and in the powerful Australian trade union movement. For which end, it makes use both of organisational and of ideological penetration, both of which are here described in some detail. As a witty raconteur once aptly phrased it, "the Immaculate Conception" is much more popular in Australian Labour circles than is the "materialist conception" of Karl Marx!

However, "down under," as well as nearer home, Rome's prime weapon is "anti-Communism." In the democracy both of the "New Worlds" and of the Old, the oldest and most comprehensive and all-embracing of totalitarian despotisms, the Vatican, comes out unblushingly as the champion of human and individual liberty—forsooth and save the mark!—against the "total" dictatorships of our era: that is, of course, exclusively against the dictatorial regimes of the Left, whether in China, Russia, Hungary or Belgrade. Where the "Right" dictatorships of Hitler and Mussolini, yesterday, or of Peron, Franco and Salazar, to-day, are concerned, we look in vain for any ecclesiastical censure, much less a call for a "crusade"! In Australia, where the recent threat from Japan has reinforced the traditional Australian fear of the yellow races, it is not at all difficult to represent

Chinese Communism as a new incarnation of the "yellow peril." The much more aggressive expansionist policies of Japan, whether Fascist or Democratic, can be quietly ignored. In any case, there is, or was, a Japanese envoy at the Vatican, and there are current rumours that the Japanese Tenno (Emperor) is about to turn Catholic.

To date, the most open manifestation of political activity on the part of Australian "Catholic Action" to be found in the 1951 Referendum endorsed by the present Menzies (anti-Labour Coalition) Government, after the Australian High Court had pronounced its projected "outlawry" of the Communist Party to be illegal. Whilst the appeal to the Australian electorate was initiated by the present Conservative Government, "Catholic Action," the sworn foe of Communism, vigorously supported the "outlawry" drive and, or so our authors charge, persuaded many Labour members and voters to support Menzies on this issue, even against the declared will of their party. The defeat of the Referendum was a blow, not only to Menzies, but, equally, to Rome. In more senses than one, since it confirmed the Protestant Dr. Evatt, as leader of the Labour Party and as Australia's probable Prime Minister after the next General Election. Furthermore, the combination of Labour, Democratic and Protestant forces which defeated the Menzies-Vatican coalition to "outlaw" Communism, was actively supported by far-sighted Churchmen, such as Bishop Burgmann, who went on record then with the historic affirmation that the suppression of Communism would be both a beginning and a precedent: "heretical" minorities would soon feel the heavy hand of "The One True Church." Too true!

"Catholic Action," however, if temporarily balked is still there and is only biding its time. Along with Malaya, South Africa, the Australian intrigues of "Catholic Action" represent, probably, the most dangerous anti-democratic force within the British Commonwealth. We are grateful to Mr. Shepherd and his colleagues for this timely exposure of Vatican intrigue in its newest field of action.

## Geuzenlied (The Beggars' Song)

Flemish Political anti-Catholic Song.

Also called "Van 't Ongediert" ("Of the vermin," "from the vermin").

(Sent in by J. J. BERCKMANS, with historical and explanatory notes.)

(Concluded from page 243)

[The writer of this essay remembers the Beggars' Song imperfectly, being since more than 25 years out of all that, although he is sure of the first two verses, each of eight lines, and, of course, of the famous chorus. But after the two first verses he is not sure of how one set of four lines joins on to the other, which set of four lines comes first, and which set of four lines follows. And there is certainly a part which he cannot remember. But even so, every set of four lines is remembered perfectly.]

FLEMISH "GEUZENLIED" (The Beggars' Song).

Flemish political anti-Catholic song.

Also called "Van 't Ongediert" ("Of the vermin, "From the vermin").

On the left is typed the Flemish original text, meaning to all intents and purposes the Dutch. The English translation, typed on the right, will attempt to be always literal, that is word for word, even if this causes some really bad un-English contortions to the King's English. The second

line attempts to put the translation into better English, but still remaining as much as possible a literal translation.

Zij brullen "Leeuw van Vlaand'ren"

They roar "Lion Flanders."

En huilen tegen ons.

And howl against us.

Zij die den leeuw doen kruipen.

They who the lion do creep. (They who make the lion creep) cause him to creep).

Doen kruipen voor Boerbons.

"Do" creep before Boerbons. (Cause him to creep before Bourbons.)

O Breydel en De Coninek.

O Breydel and Coninek,

Gent, Brugge van weleer

Ghent, Bruges of long ago.

Hebt gij dan geene Klauwaerts.

Have you then no Claw-ards.

Geen trotsche zonen meer.

No proud sons (no more)

Op- Geuzen, dan te  
wapen. vrijheids-vlag in  
De d'hand. Van 't ongediert der  
papen. Verlost ons vaderland.

2nd verse  
Ziet om u heen, o broeders.  
En reist de wereld rond  
Weer rijzen, als paleizen,  
De kloosters uit den grond.

Hooft, Rome smeedt ons  
ketens.  
Voor 't lijf en voor de  
ziel. Dat zwart gespuis zal 't  
menschdom.  
Verpletten met den hiel.

Chorus :

Up, Beggars, then to  
weapon (arm yourselves,  
fetch your weapons).  
The liberty-flag in the  
hand.  
From the vermin of the  
papists.  
Liberate our fatherland.

See around you thither, o  
brothers,  
And travel the world  
around.  
Again rise, as palaces,  
The cloisters out the ground.  
(Cloisters means in Flem-  
ish both nun-convents and  
monk-monasteries.)  
Hark, Rome forges us  
chains.  
For the body and for the  
soul.  
That black rabble shall  
crush (humanity),  
Crush with the heel.

Chorus :

(To weapons—Of the vermin of the papists  
—Liberate our fatherland.)

From here, it is not well remembered which follows  
which, although I believe that the next first verse of  
eight lines is correct, and every set of four lines holds  
together and is remembered perfectly.

Jezwieten zaaiën tweed-  
nacht. Zij blazen haat en twist.  
Wij juichen "Recht en  
Rede." Zij grijnzen laag en list.  
En over Leie en Schelde.  
Hangt nu een somb're  
nacht. Slaap, stad van Artevelde  
De Geuzen houden wacht.

Jesuits sow discord.  
They blow hate and  
quarrel.  
We jubilate "Right and  
Reason."  
They sneer-grimace trea-  
chery and intrigue.  
And over Lys and Scheldt  
Hangs now a sombre  
night.  
Sleep, city of Artevelde  
The Beggars hold watch.

(Ghent being the main shrine of Flamingantism, even of  
honest sportive Flamingantism, the four lines immediately  
preceding are still in reference to the rabid Flamingantism  
of the Catholic rural Flanders at the time when anti-  
clericalism in France was having its high tide, Flamingan-  
ism being directed in that time aggressively against France  
and the French language, which had then an abundance  
of freethinking literature which was scarce in Flanders.)

Here is certainly a piece missing; the next words  
show it:—  
Dat zullen wij, o Geuzen.  
Al kost het goed en bloed  
Wij gaan vooruit als  
giganten.  
Met Vlaamschen leeuwen-  
smed.

That shall we, O Beggars  
(That shall we accom-  
plish).  
Al (though) costs it good  
and blood. ("goed-good"  
means here possessions or  
belongings).  
We go forward as giants.  
With Flemish lion-cour-  
age.

Geen slaven meer aan ketens.  
Geen ziel aan boei of band,  
Maar 't menschdom,  
—Een weeld'rig vaderland.

No slaves more on chains  
No soul on tie or bond,  
But humanity, whole  
humanity.  
One wealthy fatherland.

How Old was the Jesus of the Gospels?

Writing about the year 180 of our present era, the early Church-Father St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, expressed this opinion upon the age of the Jesus of the Four Gospels:—

"The Gnostics (Christian heretics of the second century—Translator) under the pretext that the prophetic phrase, 'The year of the Lord,' justifies their error, claim that the Lord preached for one year only, and then he died in the last month of this self-same year. They ignore what was the most important and honourable period of his life, that of his mature age when his teaching had won for him universal respect. How, indeed, could he have made disciples if he had not first taught them? For, at the period of his baptism, he had not yet attained the age of thirty, being then only in his thirtieth year. But thirty years is still in the period of youth which by general consent, continues right up to the age of forty. It is between the age of forty and that of fifty that the age of ripe maturity begins. It is up to this age that the Saviour went on teaching. The Evangelist himself adds his testimony to this fact, and all the elders who, in Asia, followed John, the Lord's disciple, declared that they accepted this teaching of John, who lived amongst them right up to the reign of the Emperor Trajan (98-117—Translator). Some of whom knew not only John but other apostles as well. They heard them all say the same thing and they all accepted this statement. Furthermore, the same fact emerges very explicitly from the discussion of the Jews with Jesus himself. In fact, when the Saviour told them that their father Abraham, having desired to see his day, saw it, and was glad, the Jews answered him: 'Thou art not fifty years old and yet claim to have seen Abraham.' But such an assertion is absurd unless it is addressed to a man well past forty, who, whilst not yet fifty, is not far short of that age."

(Translated by F. A. R.)

The above passage is taken from *Irenæus Against the Heresies*—Book 2, Chap. 22, Section 5.

This Hour

But once again, while time is thus suspended,  
Kiss me and swell my heart to golden laughter,  
And in this hour let nothing now be ended,  
Nor hold a glimpse of all that must come after.  
Here is the lifting of all dark, and peace  
Floods like a silent wave upon the battered line  
Hiding the storm's revenges. Here is release,  
The pilgrim come from bondage to the shrine.

Here is a jewel snatched by splendid thieves  
From life's reluctant bosom. Here is attainment  
Of all the things for which the lost heart grieves.  
Hold me within this glowing hour's amendment.  
Kiss me and wake my heart to golden laughter,  
Nor think a thought of all that must come after.

JOHN O'HARE.

## This Believing World

We wonder what the Lord's Day Observance Society, which has, we believe, protested against the Duke of Edinburgh playing polo on Sunday, has to say about his recent fall from his pony while playing? Had God a hand in it? If not, why not?

The Dean of Bocking appears to be very worried about finding, not so much young men for the ministry, as the right kind of Bishops for the Church. It is the Prime Minister who in general appoints them, and very often he is hotly criticised. But a scarcity of priests means that the difficulty of choosing Bishops is intensified, though this is not all. The Church no longer attracts our best scholars, and without a good supply of learned men, it has to be content with mediocrities. And of what earthly use are mediocrities—in any profession?

Our eminent American contemporary, *Progressive World*, has got a little confused on the problem of the "Immaculate Conception." This does not mean the Virgin Birth but that Mary was born sinless. The Virgin Births of the other numerous Gods in the World Pantheon are not "Immaculate Conceptions" but "Virgin Births." We trust this will be remembered by all who are also apt to confuse the two terms.

No people are more deadly serious than Spiritualists, but we must give them credit sometimes for allowing a sly bit of fun to invade their solemn propaganda. In *Psychic Realm* recently appeared a letter imploring the discouragement of certain exhibitions performed by "ignorant mediums." The writer described how a medium he saw giving a transfiguration seance, "opened his mouth noisily as if he were "swallowing the spirit"; and when the spirit departed, "an equal amount of breath was as noisily returned to the atmosphere." No doubt, complains the writer, "this was a phenomenon of expelling the entity."

We think that Lord Dowding, Shaw Desmond, Hannen Swaffer, and all the believing members of the Society for Psychical Research should come together and settle the fate of these "ignorant" mediums; and also have a word to say about the "fantastic credulity of those who employ them," to quote the letter writer again. And while they are about it—what should be said of their own "fantastic credulity"?

Another writer in the same journal wants to know how a lady who claims to have seen Jesus, knew it was Jesus? After all, even if this particular God ever lived, nobody living now could know if it was Jesus or some other God or Saint. We have an idea that not even the Pope himself or any of his distinguished converts would be able to point out "our Lord" on an identity parade if the other people were all taken from Eastern monks or hermits.

We hope it is not too irreverent or even blasphemous to suggest that Jesus, dressed up in modern English clothes and wearing a bowler hat, properly shaved, and his hair cut, would be most unlikely to secure the devotion of any Churchman—Roman, Anglo, or Nonconformist. And we even dare to add that if "our Lord" attempted to speak in Hyde Park, he would have to get some tips from Dr. Soper how to deal with hecklers. Miracles would be useless in Hyde Park.

It is the same thing with the Bible. No modern version, that is, a version written in the English of our modern

popular novels, could possibly be read in a "parsonic" voice—the kind of voice which its owner fondly imagines is more acceptable to the Lord than that of a B.B.C. announcer. Modern English is no vehicle whatever for holiness. Any attempt to supersede the Authorised Version with something more modern must inevitably lead to infidelity. True Christianity will never succeed unless everything modern is completely forgotten and a return to the happy days of the Apostles is firmly resolved upon. Is not that fervently wished for by the Pope?

## Theatre

Henry V at the Westminster Theatre is an attempt to stage the play as Shakespeare wrote it over 350 years ago, and many parts are filled by one player—a measure less displeasing than the skeletal setting of pillars and stairs. With hardly any cuts the play loses something of its modern heroic accent, resulting in a workmanlike show without outstanding brilliance. The English nobles and soldiers seem mostly too elderly to have vanquished so easily the youthful French, braggarts though they were.

The Moon is Blue, by F. Hugh Herbert at the Duke of York's Theatre is outstanding for the excellent characterisation by a young American actress—Diana Lynn—in the comedy part of a girl, who through innocence and simplicity speaks with the frankness of a freethinker on virginity and the intimacies of what one regards as private life. In fact she has a freedom of thought which is all her own and which creates the humorous and embarrassing situations of the play. She is, in fact, downright honest and outspoken about life and living.

There are two excellently acted and well-cast male parts played by Biff McGuire and Robert Flemyng.

The writing is skilful and the light entertainment value high.

RAYMOND DOUGLAS

## YOUTH AND FREETHOUGHT

SIR,—Here is my opinion on Freethought's future, from a Youth angle. Age, or at any rate, Maturity, must continue to predominate in the movement, because Youth, as a general rule, simply isn't a period for intensive philosophical speculation. In youth, the heart rules the head, and life is a thrilling adventure to be plunged into and enjoyed from every angle. It is only age and experience which bring wisdom (sometimes!) and appreciation of the profounder, more austere pleasures of the intellect. This fact must be accepted as the natural order of things.

Unfortunately, it also happens that many adults never attain to this higher intellectual state, but remain mental adolescents. These are, I fear, hopeless cases. In a sense, they are Freethinkers, because they do not believe in God or religion—but neither do they believe in anything else, because the finer points of abstract reasoning are beyond their capacity. They neither have, nor want any belief—in fact, they simply couldn't care one way or the other, since the aims and ideals of philosophy are to them merely incomprehensible balderdash. How far can Freethought get with this hard core of indifference? The problem here is not how to convert the orthodox to Freethought, but how to arouse the least spark of philosophical interest in the seemingly intellectually inert.

Another type which presents a problem for Freethought is the well-educated intellectual who, well-read and intelligent, nevertheless clings to the "consolations" of religion and whom no argument, however well-reasoned, will convert. In any other branch of human thought, except religion, he may be logical, lucid and open-minded; obviously, then, his belief is rather than intellectual, for intellectual it cannot be! Emotions are so complex, subtle and unpredictable that they frequently overpower the blunter weapons of reason. We must all have experienced these moments in connection with religion or something else when the rational is helplessly stifled by the emotionally irrational. But the feeling should not rule one's life.

As I see it, then, the future of Freethought depends mainly upon the vital need for intellect, as follows: Intellect aroused, intellect improved, and intellect freed from subjection to emotion. It's brains we're after!—Yours, etc.,

FREDA PECKMAN

# THE FREETHINKER

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## To Correspondents

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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

Clayton's Engagements.—Friday, August 7, 7-30 p.m., Trawdon; Saturday, August 8, 6 p.m., Huncoat; Sunday, August 9, 2-45 p.m., Quaker Bridge, Brierfield; Sunday, August 9, 7 p.m., Accrington, The Boulevard.

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

Kingslon Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Sunday, August 9, 8 p.m.: Messrs. BARKER and MILLS.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Bomb Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK and BARNES. Every Sunday, 3 p.m., at Platt Fields, a Lecture.

North London Branch (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, August 9, noon: L. EBURY.

Stamford Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Saturday, August 8, 7 p.m.: Messrs. T. M. 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.

## Substitutes for Religion

By C. G. L. DU CANN

WHEN earnest people ask, as they often do upon the proposed abolition of religion "But what would you put in its place?" surely the answer should be: "Nothing—except what is already there." But a philosophy of one kind or another will serve.

For religion itself is only one of many philosophies of life, after all. And most people have their individual philosophies, religious or otherwise, by which they (more or less) steer a course in this tricky business of being alive. Even the humblest and least educated has his doubtless unformulated, but no less personally used, rules by which he thinks, speaks and acts.

Undoubtedly, however, many worthy folk, when they give up Christianity or some other faith, feel "an aching void and the world can never fill." They need a creed of some kind. Conscious of their inability to hammer one out of their knowledge of themselves, their observation of the world and their fellow-men, and their experience of life, they eagerly "look for another," like the disciples of John asking of Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

And, chiefly, they expect their religion-substitute to be found in a book or books, a bastard-literary education having accustomed them to the guidance of a book. It is only the strongest and most original minds that stand erect by themselves and do not long to be kept erect by others. It is only the few, indeed, who can make from themselves an individual creed, suited to themselves alone and not for proselytism.

For those, the many who need the help of another's mind in formulating a religion-substitute, one may commend that little book, discursive and fragmentary and repetitive though it be, the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. It has been said to be inferior to Epictetus, but I think not; I find it calmer, graver and less argumentative and disputatious, and more to my taste. It deserves its fame and length of survival over the centuries.

The greatest merit of the book is that it contains a noble philosophy which could sustain thoughtful men and women through the changes and chances of life. No doubt the great Roman Emperor was something of a prig. But he was a most admirable prig; Aurelianism is a gospel superior to Christianity, as so many other systems are which proclaim virtue as its own and only reward.

Less admirable than the Stoic philosophy of Aurelius is the hedonistic gospel of Epicurus. In one or two classic passages Walter Pater admirably expressed it, but the novel *Marius the Epicurean*, in which he essayed to paint the philosophy in a life story, is certainly "caviare to the general" and not even caviare to the judicious or the Epicureans.

These individualistic philosophies at opposite ends of the scale are typical. But they are uncharacteristic of the present age. This being an age of herd-worship, gregariousness, hunger-fears, State-subservience, controlled radio-ism and television and journalism, naturally the religion-substitutes are no longer individualistic. So we have such *ersatz* religions and philosophies as Communism and Fascism.

These, however, in their modern manifestations, are temporary aberrations of mankind. In so far, of course, as they represent slave-revolt and Caesarism, they are, in some adulterated form or another, eternal phases in the government of the many by the few—the only practicable form of government at all. But as religion-substitutes they are no more than "husks that the swine do eat," and in the end they may well give way to some compromise in liberalistic democracy, in form if not in reality.

People, at bottom, however, are not interested in their fellows. Vitally they are only interested in themselves. Communists and Fascists, in spite of their popular reputation for devotion and self-abnegation, are no exception to this general human tendency. These *ersatz* substitutes for religion have to be supplemented, and generally are, by a personal philosophy of self-aggrandisement.

The truth, perhaps, is that the average human spirit quails before the stark prospect of "Nothing to hope and nothing to fear." The mind abhors a vacuum and clings to its fears no less than to its hopes. For the alternative is boredom and vacuity for most minds—the most intolerable of states.

It takes a strong original mind indeed to be utterly self-sufficient, to have no need of either a religion or a substitute. To regard life as an end in itself and merely live to the best advantage according to the dictates of one's reason and emotions, is much more than most people are capable of. The majority always were, are, and must be, work-slaves, convention-slaves, State-slaves, being incapable of anything but the servility inherent in their natures.

Yet one of the most widely-held falsities of our day is that you can take a human rabbit or a human sheep and, by education, make a magnificent tiger or intelligent dog out of either. Not even the Ministry of Education ought to believe such idiocy as that, on which the taxpayers spend so many millions every year.

# Robert Taylor

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

(Continued from page 248)

THE story-telling proclivities of some men and women in all ages urged many in those early days of human civilisation to invent all sorts of queer fictions. Many of them dealt with the supposed adventures of the Sun, the Giver of everything on Earth, and his struggles with the powers of darkness—such as the story of Day struggling with Night, or Winter fighting Summer, or Good battling against Evil, and so on. It is impossible to understand mythology or folklore without recognising the inventive powers of man in poetry, fable, and myth.

It was C. F. Dupuis, in the last decade of the eighteenth century in France, who published his fundamental and exhaustive work on the subject, entitled *The Origin of All Worship*. Here, gathered from hundreds of ancient and later writers, will be found convincing proof of the way in which the old pagan stories, their fables and myths and poetry, have been used in dozens of ways to perpetuate religion, not merely the old religions, but also the only "true" one, Christianity. Dupuis refused to see in Christianity anything different from Paganism—and, what is more, he proved it as far as it was possible to do so in his day. We know now that other customs and habits and ideas may have had something more to do with the formation of Christianity than just the sun-myth; but as far as Dupuis went, he made out an almost unanswerable case.

It is the great work of Dupuis which is at the base of Robert Taylor's *Devil's Pulpit*—though he put into many of the details his own original research, his own discoveries, and his own knowledge of the subject at large. In lecture after lecture he strove to show that the Biblical legends had an astronomical base, that we were not dealing with real people, and real events, but with fanciful fictions of the planets and stars clothed in human garb, and acting as human beings.

To prove this, Taylor brought in all the resources of scholarship and language at his command. Indeed, on the question of "word-play," and similarity of sounds and ideas in various languages, he has quite a deal to say which at first sight may look hopeless and absurd. Any reader who is inclined to think so after carefully reading some of the lectures in the *Devil's Pulpit* should make a point of getting the pamphlets and lectures by Mr. Theodore Gaster, B.A., and Mr. J. W. Jack, M.A., D.D., on the Ras Shamra Tablets discovered in Syria in 1929, one of the most important discoveries in excavation for its bearing on the Old Testament, and the light thrown on the ancient inhabitants of that country, ever made. In these works will be found page after page of "word-play" of the kind for which Taylor has been ignored by "superior" people. He was, it is true, often groping in the dark, striving desperately hard to find some solution of the problems at hand, and, of course, some of his results may not now hold. But why should this be expected from a pioneer? On the other hand, it can be shown that time after time he hit upon the right solution—a solution which, working from other standpoints, has been reached by modern workers in the same field.

Let us take, for example, how Taylor dealt with the story of the Virgin Mary. He saw quite clearly—and very few writers before him saw it quite so clearly—that her whole story was just as mythical as that of her "son." And he pertinently asks:—

Who was the Virgin Mary? i.e., Who was she when she was at home? Where was she born? How did she live? Where did she die? Where did she come from? Where did

she go to? Why was she a virgin? Why was her name Mary? What does the name Mary mean? What is she to us? What are we to her? Why was it that we are so expressly and emphatically told (Luke i, 26) that it was in the sixth month that she received the visit of the Angel Gabriel; the sixth month reckoning March; the first being, as we all know, the month of August? Why was this Virgin Mary espoused to a man? Why was this man's name Joseph? Why was he of the house of David? . . . Why did she say that all generations should call her blessed? Why is it that no historical record whatever—i.e., in all the world—not one recognises the existence of this most wonderful personage which the world ever had in it? . . . Why is it that among all the boasted treatises on the evidences of Christianity, not one has ever attempted to prove the existence of the mother of Christ? And why is it that in proportion as the attempt is made to give an historical basis to Christianity, all reference to his mother is carefully avoided?

These questions are to the point, and if Christianity be true, should have been easily answered; it need hardly be said that they have always been ignored by the majority of Christian defenders. The curious reader might search Strauss and Renan and see how these world-famed writers dealt with Mary; he would find that the points raised by Taylor are also very "carefully avoided." They looked upon Jesus as a genuinely historical personage whose life had been overloaded by the Church with myth, legend, and allegory, and it was not necessary to discuss his mother. If Jesus anyway had a mother, and Mary was as good for the job as any other. Indeed, when Mary is introduced for the first time by Strauss he says that while the appearance of an angel to her might well be unhistorical still there is nothing incredible in holding that "Mary should have indulged" in the hope that she might become the mother of the future Messiah. He does not trouble to ask himself the questions which Taylor rightly asked, and which deserved an answer.

Mary was, of course, merely the Christian representation of the whole pagan conception of a goddess, a Mother of Heaven, or a Heavenly Mother, the goddess of fertility, or fruitfulness, with corn or wheat as a symbol of her "blessedness." And in pictorial representations of the sign of Virgo, the figure drawn round this constellation shows her extended arm holding an ear of corn. But why, asks Taylor, was her name Mary?

It is precisely the same as the name Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, and literally signifies Myrrh, of the sea, or Lady or Mistress of the sea. It is precisely the same as Smyrna, the name of the sixth of the seven churches which are in Asia, addressed by Christ in the Revelation, and which I have demonstrated to be none other than the seven Golden Candlesticks—that is, the Seven Constellations, the Ram, the Bull, the Twins, the Crab, the Lion, the Virgin, and the Balance respectively, of March, April, May, June, July, August, September, in the midst of which the Sun walks in his annual course through the summer months, or reign of the kingdom of heaven.

It is none other than the very name of Myrrha, the mother of the beautiful Adonis in the Pagan Mythology . . . the story of Myrrha in the 10th book of Ovid, introducing the character of the old woman, Anna, the prophetess of Luke's Gospel, the mother of the Virgin of the Catholic, the Nurse of the Virgin of the Pagan Mythology, aiding and abetting the allegorical incest by which the Virgin of the Zodiac alternately represented as the Daughter, the Wife, and the Mother of the Sun. . . .

The word *Mary* is, as everyone knows, the same as the Latin word *Mare*, the Sea; and in its plural form *Maria*, pronounced *María*, signifies the Seas, as the adjective, *Marina*, of, or pertaining to the Sea, read without the letter *n*, after the ancient manner of writing, is the same word, and was from the days of an infinitely remote antiquity, one of the names of the Goddess Venus. The Marine Venus, as she

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# The Cult and Reaction

By MALCOLM J. A. STUBBS

PERHAPS, as Pope Leo XIII in 1891 prepared the encyclical "Rerum Novarum," he had thoughts of the fifteen-year-old girl, Thérèse Martin, who because she was too young to enter the Lisieux Carmelite convent, had petitioned him for a special dispensation to allow her to enter the conventual life. When she died in 1897 at the age of twenty-five, her reputation for sanctity had already been established, and it was not so long before a cult of the "Little Flower," or St. Thérèse of Lisieux as she became known, had gained official support. Only a year after Thérèse Martin's death, the Bayeux Church Authorities had put out 2,000 copies of her Autobiography—"L'Histoire d'une âme"—and by 1925 the "miracles" attributed to Thérèse prayers (such as healings and returns to the Faith and so on and necessary for the Canonisation process) had been procured. Since then, Thérésian Congresses, Thérésian Days of Study, and in 1946-7, a Thérésian Year, with the more humble pieties of the faithful, have all tended to ensure the success of the devotion to this French nun.

Helped by such a cult, and one that would hold the imagination of the proletariat, the Church strives to cement the solidarity of the Catholic workers, thus securing their continued obedience to the Catholic leadership. The Thérésian cult had just that cementing effect, emphasising as it does humility in the "Little Way of Spiritual Childhood" and stressing the transitory nature of this world's wealth. Those very things, in fact, which the workers were likely to profess, though probably not through their own choosing.

It was during the life of St. Thérèse that Leo XIII's much lauded "Workers' Charter" made its appearance, and if its motif that "to suffer and endure is the lot of humanity" implying that goodness is the real wealth of life made little appeal to the "have nots," a popular cult would be to more effect in allaying any discontent amongst that section of the Church's followers. In lieu of some incentive from the Church the workers might very well turn to Socialism or Communism (of the brand condemned by the "Workers' Charter") in the hope of improving their economic lot. A popular cult, suitably gilded with indulgences and so on, would sublimate the workers' discontent into credit on the side of the hereafter. For it should be remembered that in the cult the Roman Church has one of her most powerful weapons with which to sustain a reactionary programme. Conservative as she is in the official declarations of doctrine, her members have always felt the need of a colourful, local, expression of those doctrines to bolster up their faith.

If the bitter pill of the "have nots" had to be coated might just as well be sugared with the bourgeois mysticism of the Lisieux Carmel, with its emphasis on the paucity of this world's goods. The example of a fifteen-year-old girl leaving a life of middle-class leisure for the bleakness of Carmel, voluntarily seeking poverty, would be an important propaganda for the Church's social teachings as set out in the "Workers' Charter" and later encyclicals. By having nothing, the Church in effect says to the workers, you are but following the example of this Saint, who because she gave up all on earth, has merited such rich rewards hereafter!

Of course, Leo XIII did express some concern about the exploited conditions of the proletariat, and he urged that their living standards should be improved. In return for such solicitude the proletariat were not to preach or agitate the class war. In much the same manner, he

reminded the rich of their Christian obligation of almsgiving, but that was as far as he was prepared to go.

But what connection is there between the "Workers' Charter" and the Thérésian Cult? Isn't the answer the motif of suffering, and the unhappy lot that is man's portion here? Page after page of St. Thérèse's writings treat of that theme, and a cult founded on that motif, cannot but appeal to those whose present estate, as Leo XIII puts it, is "to suffer." The Catholic worker with one disconsented eye on his meagre earthly existence, and the other on the beatitude—"Blessed are the poor . . ." (a beatitude propped up by an hierarchy claiming the monopoly of the Keys)—is seldom likely to fly in the face of such Authority if he is a good Catholic, even for the sake of improving his immediate material welfare.

Indeed, he is all the more likely to accept his subservient status, both in the human Society and the Divine Society, of which he is a member, if he is confronted by the example of a fellow-member of the Mystical Body, who having embraced volutarily the state of poverty has received now the highest approbation of the Church. The Catholic proletariat will not question openly such Authority. They will accept the fact that "unequal fortune is a necessary result of unequal condition," and "such inequality is far from being disadvantageous either to individuals or to the Community," as a not too comfortable ordering of Society on the part of the Maker, but one that is inevitable and that will only be understood fully in the next life.

It has been said by her own members that the Church is a wise psychologist: we may be inclined to accept that as an under-statement. It is perhaps with motives other than the edification of the faithful, that she promotes the popular cult with all its corollaries thereby enhancing her mission as an infallible teacher of men?

## Robert Taylor (Continued from page 254)

was called by the Romans; the *Venus Anaduomene* of the Greeks—that is, *Venus rising out of the Sea*—that is precisely the character of Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron at the moment of their leading up the children of Israel out of the Red Sea. . . . And this victory of the Lord over Pharaoh is expressly declared to have been achieved with a *stretched-out arm*. And look ye here, Sirs; by heaven, it here is not the *stretched-out arm*, the peculiar characteristic of the Virgin of the Zodiac, the hand-maid of the Lord! . . . The name Mary signifying *Mistress of the Sea*, so distinctly characterising the Marine Venus, is further identified by the vulgar versions of it into Poll or Polly, which are common epithets of the Sea; the Greek word *Pollus*, for *many*, referring to the many waves of the sea. . . .

That Taylor considered the subject important is shown by the fact that he dealt with it in two lectures, one on Mary and one on Miriam. In the latter he says further:—

What signifies the name *Miriam*? It is in the singular, *Mare*, the sea. It is in the plural, *Maria*, by false quantity pronounced *Maria*, the sea . . . And *Maia* the mother of Mercury; and *Myrrha* the mother of Adonis. Its symbol or cypher from the earliest formation of the letters, M, Y—an *m*, with the down-stroke of a jod or y affixed to it—M for *Mare*, and Y, or J, for *Yes* or *Jesus*—Mary being the mother of Jesus. And none other than that very hieroglyph (as the shapes of all our letters were originally hieroglyphical) constitutes, as you see, the monogram of the Celestial Virgin of the Zodiac who, like all other constellations, is sprung out of the sea. . . .

(To be continued)

## Correspondence

### THE CHURCH AND THE RATES

SIR.—With your permission I would like to make a short rejoinder to Mr. Paul Varney's letter re the Churches and the Rates. When Mr. Varney says "Any believer in any form of civilised society must admit that rates and taxes are a social necessity" he is in error. Plenty of civilised people do not admit that rates and taxes are a social necessity. In an age of power production rates and taxes are as much an anachronism as are prayers for rain. That is why I suggested in the first place that it is not sound policy for Freethinkers to demand that churches pay rates.

The subject is rather more complex than Mr. Varney seems to think, and I fear he will get no enlightenment on it from the Sunday Press, not even by reading between the lines.—Yours, etc.,  
W. E. NICHOLSON.

### ANSWER TO PRAYER

SIR.—One of our recent proof-of-prayer stories from America. A lady from the "sticks" hit the big town, and while rubbernecking among the crowds and the tall buildings she lost her purse or holdall to some city "dip." She was penniless and alone in a strange city now, shocked but not quite hopeless. There was God. So this dame goes to work and prays like all get-out, walking along. And the answer comes right off—you guessed it! As from heaven itself a large-denomination bill comes floating down from above and she grabs onto the same with a heartfelt "Thank God!" All true. Very good—for Mamie. But what of the poor Joe who had just lost that bill out of his open window?

This was gravely cited as Christian evidence. They count all their hits, never one of their misses. Wishful thinkers never allow for coincidence. God made Mamie lose her purse, then he presents her with a bill to make up. Infantilism, pure and simple. There's no reasoning with people of this stripe.—Yours, etc.,  
JAMES F. KIRKHAM.

### A QUAIN PROBLEM!

SIR.—If there had been no capital punishment in the Roman-governed province of Judea in A.D. 33, so that Christ could not have been executed, would Christianity have ever been heard of? If not, is that an argument for or against capital punishment?—Yours, etc.,  
C. H. NORMAN.

### "WHITHER FREETHOUGHT?"

SIR.—The hostile comments in your journal on Mrs. Allpress's recent articles under the above title call for some response.

Mr. W. E. Huxley anticipates the bankruptcy of freethought should Mrs. Allpress's views be generally supported, while Mr. H. Cutner gloomily expresses strong disapproval of her idea of freethought.

May I point out that however clever and courageous were the tactics of men like Bradlaugh and Ingersoll in the latter part of the last century, circumstances have changed. Different methods are nowadays demanded. The cause of Freethought is now championed by men who have freed themselves from the thralldom of the creeds, especially by men of science. The whole field of toleration and liberalism is far wider than when the flag of intellectual freedom was first unfurled. Science itself is active on a wider front. Most of the Churches have yielded vital credal ground. The study of human psychology has only started on its pioneer pathway. The rather cheap gibes and vituperative outbursts of the old freethought stalwarts must give place to a more philosophical approach.

I am certain that the poverty and weakness of organised British Freethought can be traced to the lack of understanding by secularists of the British character and ideals. Thoughtful people who are liberated from needless narrowness can now realise that all the gods, with their promises of happiness hereafter, are the same concept, though differing from age to age according to the various races which gave them birth.—Yours, etc.,  
F. VICTOR FISHER.

### RELIGION IN GUERNSEY

SIR.—I have been resident in this island now for four years and have some idea of the religious position here. Methodism and the Salvation Army seem to be the dominant sects, largely due, I think, to a lack of social amenities such as the theatre, which is almost down to nil; nothing much to speak of in the way of music; no political or other propaganda groups; youth clubs are in good supply, but all seem to be under the control of the Churches and Chapels. I have encountered a small amount of verbal opposition to Christianity but not in an organised form, rather in the nature of a personal grudge and cannot really be regarded as articulate. One or two very old people claim to remember when an atheist speaker came to the island (Charles Bradlaugh?) many years ago and met with a very bad reception.

Old parish boundaries are still used for social purposes and Guernsey States affairs.

There is a general inability of folk to discuss at any length social problems in other parts of the world and, indeed, in the island itself; a reluctance to accept ideas from outside with perhaps the exception of things like television, which are grabbed at without much thinking as to their reliability.

Family relationships are on such a footing as to make one smile and sometimes ponder, comparing them with some Confucian ideas.

Island rivalry even extends to a little place like Sark: no Sarkie is equal to a true son of Guernsey. Everybody is his own weather prophet, eked out with superstitions about the storm-bringing French fishermen and sailors, and, of course, the inland habits of seagulls.

All the above, I suggest, is the outcome of a few thousand years of religious belief; nothing like a belief in a patriarchal deity for keeping alive an intense belief, likewise in local superiority coupled with an attitude of intolerance to all strangers. Quite a deal of research work has been done, too, on the relationship between magic and religion, although sometimes this has not been extended specifically to Christianity.

Of course, too much probing into scientific subjects is not at all healthy where the churches are concerned, and sacred is much better than secular music; a glee-club, perhaps, but nothing stronger.

"The young" have always been the Churches' special regard and care and in this island they are well provided, for is not the Dean of Guernsey chairman of the Education Committee?—Yours, etc.,  
BERT SMITH.

### MONARCHY

SIR.—If Basil J. Edgecombe's attitude to monarchy is correct then why attack religion? Is not monarchy the figurehead of the Church, with its savage superstition, and can we get rid of superstition and leave the figurehead intact?

His concluding sentence is rather cryptic, for he says that "monarchy is better than the 'fear of a midnight knock on the door.'" Does he mean America or Russia? Evidently he means America, for no man declaring himself a Freethinker is allowed to enter America.

Knocks on the door at midnight are not determined by republics or monarchies as such, but are determined by the internal political conditions in any country. In America, the knock on the door at midnight is determined by the terrible fear by the government of communism. And in Russia the knock on the door at midnight is determined by the terrible fear by the government of the western governments insistant demand for the restoration of Czardom and the power of the Greek Catholic Church. In both these countries the use of the muzzle has become essential for their particular systems of law and order.

In Britain, however, no muzzle is used as yet, for the authorities do not consider it necessary to muzzle sheep. Nevertheless, were it not for the tremendous power now wielded by Trades Unionism, who have succeeded in demanding two million pounds per annum more in wages than the nation is earning, the muzzle would have been brought into use long ago.

The paying out of two million pounds per day more than the nation is earning acts as an insurance against unrest, but the premium is so high that soon, we fear, financial collapse will result, bringing in its wake a drastic drop in the standard of wages, and consequently in the standard of living. The masses are unfortunately, the majority of capitalists, who are quite ignorant of the iron laws governing economic science and finance, will surely become so noisy and perturbed that the powers that be at the time will have no alternative but to muzzle the sheep, for even sheep become unruly at times. Then knocks on the door at midnight in Britain may become rather frequent and many people will mysteriously disappear.

The greatest philosopher that Britain has ever produced once said: "The masses never act as they think. They act as they feel."

At the moment, with plenty of bread, beer and circuses, they are feeling quite good. Let us hope that by borrowing and printing pound notes they will remain docile. But I fear that continuation of paying out two million pounds per day more than the nation is earning will lead to great perturbation and knocking on the door of many a discontented man's household at midnight.—Yours, etc.,  
PAUL VARNEY.

## Incidental Intelligence

Federal Judge William Bondy, now 82, came into his courtroom where the calendar had been a crowded one. He expected to find the room crowded with lawyers, but was surprised to find it empty. "Just like heaven," said the venerable jurist, "Nobody here."  
LEONARD LYONS, "New York Post."