

The Freethinker

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Editor: F. A. RIDLEY

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IT was announced in the Press a few days ago that a new Saint is about to be canonised in Rome, and that a special date in May—we seem to remember that it is to be May 29—is to be solemnly set aside for the auspicious occasion. In this there is nothing particularly surprising, since the Church of Rome canonises Saints fairly frequently and, recently, it seems to have become the custom to canonise people who have lived quite recently. There was, indeed, one case, not long ago, where the *mother* of the newly canonised Saint was still alive and actually took part in the solemn proceedings, upon which her daughter, presumably, looked down from heaven!

What is actually remarkable about the new Saint, to be raised to the altars of the Church next May, is the fact that it is a Pope, and a Pope with a particularly reactionary record, who has been chosen for the highest honour that the Catholic Church can bestow upon any human being.

How Saints are Made

It is often supposed by non-Catholics that it is quite a simple matter to become a Saint, and that if one is orthodox and, in certain periods in the history of Christianity, sufficiently superstitious, the honour can be easily gained. This, however, represents a misunderstanding: the process by which one is posthumously raised to the altar is detailed and precise; and many who would seem to be certainties by reason of personal eminence, or of outstanding service to the Church, never secure enrolment amongst the Saints. Actually, the process by which a Saint is, so to speak, certified as fit for sanctity, follows a rigid pattern. In all cases, three preliminary requirements must always be satisfied. These are: (a) The claimant, whilst on earth, must have been orthodox in doctrine; (b) he (or she) must have lived a holy life, as the Catholic Church understands holiness; (c) most difficult test of all, posthumous miracles must have occurred in connection with the cult of the particular claimant to sanctity and at his (or her) intercession. This last test, we understand, nowadays rigorously insisted upon.

"The Devil's Advocate"

Not only are the above tests applied; they are applied in the most rigorous manner and by experts specially trained for this purpose. In particular, a "Devil's Advocate" is always present to, as it were, cross-examine the record, both personal and miraculous, of the deceased claimant to posthumous sanctity. Furthermore, this posthumous cross-examination is very severe. Those ill-informed critics, who seem to think that the Catholic Church has never heard the arguments *against* it, would be astonished to read some of the arguments brought forward by "The Devil's Advocate" at such proceedings! Many of the most famous theologians of Holy Church have failed to pass the posthumous test of their orthodoxy (e.g., Origen, Tertullian, Abelard, Pascal, etc., etc.).

Whilst others, of unimpeachable orthodoxy—Newman is an obvious example—have been "ploughed" on their alleged failure to work posthumous miracles.

Saintly Popes

What must strike every student of the history of the Papacy is how very few of the successors of St. Peter have been enrolled amongst the Saints. This is, actually, not so surprising as it may look at first sight, since the Vatican has usually attracted diplomatists and administrators, rather than theologians or men of special devotion. However, an addition is now about to be made to their ranks.

For the new Saint to be canonised with the traditional rites next May is a former Pope, a recent one, Guiseppe Del Sarto, a native of Venice (born 1835) and Pope from 1903-1914, Pope Pius the 10th.

Rather curiously, the last Pope to be canonised was also named Pius: Pius the 5th, the major claim of whom to sanctity and to the gratitude of the Church lay in the ruthless zeal with which he suppressed heresy as chief Roman Inquisitor, before his election to the Papacy. He boasted that he had never missed a sitting of the Inquisition (1565-72), or, presumably, an execution?

St. Pius the Tenth

The new Papal Saint, Pius the 10th, unlike his 16th century predecessor, never actually had anyone burnt alive at the stake. But this, as his whole record demonstrates, was only because he never had the power to do so. For this Pope was, probably, the most reactionary Pope of modern times, as the present Pope, who formerly served under him and has adopted the same pontifical name of Pius, must know perfectly well. For Pius the 10th, if history will remember him at all, will do so primarily as the "anti-Modernist" Pope. For it was during the pontificate of St. Pius the 10th that the Modernist crisis came to a head in the Church of Rome. It was this Pope who "infallibly" condemned "Modernism" in a whole series of encyclicals and hounded its leaders out of the Church with the traditional condemnations by "bell, book and candle." There can be little doubt that he would, like his saintly predecessor, have burned them at the stake, but, fortunately for the Modernists, the Middle Ages were over and the secular state had intervened. As it was, the only actual damage inflicted by the Papal encyclical on Alfred Loisy, the best-known Modernist leader, was that his pious charwoman gave notice! So low, nowadays, have the Vatican's medieval thunderbolts fallen! However, Pius succeeded at least to this extent, that from the time of his pronouncements down to the present day, "Modernism," that is, Liberal Christianity, has been officially taboo in the Roman Catholic Church. How much the saintly Pope actually knew about the Biblical "Higher Criticism" which he condemned can be gathered from his declaration that the Hebrew patriarchs "were comforted

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

The Saint of the Vatican

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

in their afflictions by the thought of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God”!

A Mistake of the Holy Ghost!

The new St. Pius owed his election to the Papacy and, we must assume, his forthcoming place in the heavenly hierarchy, to a *political* accident. In the Papal conclave which followed the death of the great Leo the 13th (1878-1903), by far the greatest of the modern occupants of the Vatican, Cardinal Rampolla, the then Secretary of State, was actually elected Pope by the requisite two-thirds majority. But at the last moment his election was vetoed by the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, on political grounds, under an old privilege, since abolished, dating from the old Holy Roman Empire. Rampolla withdrew, and the cardinals finally agreed upon a provincial nonentity, the Archbishop of Venice, Cardinal Del Sarto, a Venetian of humble birth and quite undistinguished, who thereupon became Pope Pius the 10th. No one was more surprised than the successful candidate! When his

nomination was first put forward he is supposed to have exclaimed that “The Holy Ghost would never make such a mistake.” A perhaps apocryphal story is told that, when elected, he declared that he could not accept, as he had a return ticket to Venice! However, he never needed that ticket; instead, he got one for Heaven!

Sancta Simplicitas

Why, one may ask, has Rome pitched upon such a reactionary nonentity for its next Saint from the Vatican? There are Popes much more suitable for the honour: the great Leo, statesman, wit and classical scholar; both the present Pope, a trained diplomat who speaks half a dozen languages, or his predecessor, Pius the 11th, who *inter alia*, installed the telephone in the Vatican, would surely have made more dignified Saints than the most stupid of modern Popes, as Pius the 10th probably was. However, *Sancta Simplicitas!* Once again, as so often in the annals of the Church, it is demonstrated that stupidity is no bar to sanctity. There is hope for us all!

The Divine Interpretation of Scripture

“The Divine Interpretation of Scripture: A Reply to Cardinal Manning by ‘Saladin.’ Being a Paper read at the Cassadaga Conference, New York, by S. P. Putnam, Secretary, American Liberal League.

WHERE the currents of human thought and destiny are now drifting to, the wisest of us cannot determine with any degree of precision. We search in vain for a precedent in the form and pressure of the present age over all the past annals of the world. It may be that history repeats itself; but we have now reached a juncture of social, political, moral and intellectual forces which we look for in vain back through the dim corridors of time and how history is to repeat itself speculation is overwhelmed in the attempt to decide, and vaticination is dumb.

Never in the tract of the world nominally Christian did aggressive and defiant “Infidelity” close and grapple with the legions of the Cross as she does to-day; and never since the Reformation era did the Scarlet Woman flaunt her skirts so proudly in the great cities of both the Eastern and Western Hemisphere. Protestantism has no geographical area that she did not win by the zealous fanaticism of her first rush. The Protestant countries of the sixteenth century are the Protestant countries of to-day, and no new ones have been added thereto. Nay, and the old ones are rent and riven; and the seeds sown by Luther and Spalatin, by Huss and Calvin, by Wycliffe and Sawtre, by Knox and Melville, has grown up almost choked with Romish weeds and Rationalist tares. The mentation and the aspiration of the fifteenth century were not identical with those that actuate the nineteenth. The floods of human folly have worn other channels, the currents of human tendency have torn their way through other rocks and over other shoals. The old battlefields are deserted, and only through the mists of departed time can we descry them, with their rank grasses, broken and shapeless weapons, half-obliterated trenches, and dull mounds marking more or less dishonoured graves. The battalions have reeled and surged into other fields, and there, with other weapons and other battle cries, the often-changing but never ending tide of human conflict ebbs and flows. Guns are yet planted on the roof, and there is a rattle and a blaze of musketry from the windows of the old half-way house between Rome and Rationalism; but the shot and shell fall wide of the mark. Formerly, the old house was in the centre of operations; now it is on the extreme left flank, and miles away the real conflict rages. The half-way house is tottering to its fall. The emergency to meet which it was built has passed away. Its giants are dead, its heroes are no more; its prestige is

over, and Ichabod is inscribed over its gateway. A shabby despotism, three centuries ago, it modified a terrible despotism, and thereby justified its existence; but now. Why cumbereth it the ground? Hardly taking it into account in military strategy, up on the side of the windy hill the banners wave and the troops are ranking, the forces of Rationalism and Rome, and with them and no other rests the balance between victory and defeat in the Armageddon of these latter ages.

Everywhere now Ecclesiasticism howls against “the spread of Infidelity,” and everywhere Romanism is active, from New York to Birmingham. In the latter town, the other day, a church dedicated to St. Anne was opened by his Eminence, Cardinal Manning, with all the august ceremonial of pontifical High Mass. In his subtle and able dedicatory address, his Eminence is reported to have said: “They believed all that God had revealed, unwritten and written, the old Divine traditions of the Church, from the beginning—every jot, every tittle. But why did they believe this? The ‘Word’ in the text did not mean the Book, and they would draw their Christianity out of the written Scripture had proved for centuries the inefficiency of the rule of faith by the multitudinous contradictions and ever-increasing diversity of the interpretations that had been put upon that Word. Without Divine certainty they could not have Divine faith, and, therefore, the wisest human critic could give him no definite certainty of the meaning of the Holy Scripture; the most learned historian could not fix for him the meaning of the Word of God. No one, however pious or good; no minister of religion or priest of the Church, apart from the Divine authority of the Church itself, could venture to interpret that written word by his own light or his own discernment.”

I am a soldier in the rank of those who would face untold fatigue and peril to flesh their blades in the heart of Rome; but I heartily endorse the utterance of his Eminence in regard to the “wisest human critic” being unable to express any “definite certainty of the meaning of the Holy Scripture.” So far, I, a Rationalist, am in exact accord with a Romish Cardinal. But when the learned Cardinal proceeds to say that, although the esoterics of Holy Writ are too deep for human learning, too mystical for human wisdom, they can be infallibly interpreted by “the Divine authority of the Church itself,” I join issue with him, and

oppose him foot to foot and hilt to hilt. I positively and emphatically deny that the Church has, in the past, shown that it could interpret Scripture more successfully than the mere "human critic" could. Nay, my Lord Cardinal, I will refer you to only one example—e.g., of how your Church interpreted a certain Scripture passage; but the example I will give is such a striking, picturesque, and conclusive one as should be able to explode forever your Church's monstrous pretensions to divinely-inspired hermeneutics. It is unfortunate, your Eminence, for you and yours that our more modern times have laid the intellectual wealth of the world's yesterday at the feet of men who have neither post nor pension from your Church. It is unfortunate for you and yours that there are men of my type, who will read and study for many years in obscurity, anxious only to find out what is true, and never once asking what is profitable; studying for no profession, hoping for no preferment; poor, but aspiring to no gain, no crozier, no cardinal's hat; but freely giving learning and time and life to the most thankless of all causes—to a cause that for independence gives you poverty, for celebrity gives you infamy. What a pity you have not still your *Index Expurgatorius* to prevent such as I from misusing the best years of their life in toiling over volumes the perusal of which can only be inimical to your hierarchy! How lamentable that you cannot now arrest pens like mine by giving those who wield them a twinge of the thumb-screw, or make the blazing faggots at the stake reduce the hand of the writer to ashes! Like its God, your Church is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Among the calcined bones of the mighty you would honour me by mingling those of this humble Scottish heretic and rebel, but that Protestantism held you at bay till the party that I in some imperfect way represent grew strong; and now an enemy infinitely more terrible than Protestantism confronts you.

Your Church, my Lord Cardinal, has alone the true interpretation of Holy Scripture, has it? We shall see. You should have ceased to make such assertions when it became possible for men like me to unearth and decipher the works of such writers as Glaber, Abbot of Fleury, Gennadius, and Corodi. You will, no doubt, my Lord Cardinal, have heard of the Millenarian insanity of the tenth century, although you would undoubtedly rather as such as I had never heard of it. How excellently the "Divine authority of the Church" interpreted Revelations xx, 2-3! The binding of Satan for a thousand years your Church alleged began at the birth of Christ; so, of course, at the expiry of a thousand years from that date, Satan was to be let loose, and unutterable calamity, if not absolute annihilation, be visited upon the world. In the tenth century your Church was in full swing, with its interpretations and all the rest of its monstrous jugglery; and not even one solitary bark of a heretic dog resounded through the caverns of your ecclesiastical Avernus. You had, your annalists belie you, a perfect plethora of dirt and piety and plague and pestilence. Like rotten sheep, your ignorant and filthy dubs died off in tens of thousands; while the half-naked, vermin-eaten, and nasty—but ignorant and holy—survivors crowded into your abbeys and churches and implored God to have mercy upon them; but he would not. You showed them relics, and they wanted a bath; you treated them to the Mass, and they wanted soap; you incited them to godliness, and they wanted cleanliness. So much attention was given to the dying and to seeking the kingdom of God that the wheat and corn and barley remained unsown, or were allowed to be destroyed by blight and mildew; and the survivors of the plague, for wild roots, had to burrow in the ground like pigs, eat rats and other vermin, and regale themselves upon diseased human flesh from the corpses of their plague-stricken dead. (To be continued)

God's Opportunity

By LESLIE HANGER

"I couldn't care less," said God.

It pained Jesus to hear his father use such coarse colloquialisms, for he realised that God only said such things in order to show that, though an old man, he was quite up to date.

"But we must do something," Jesus protested. They had just received a delegation from the International Association of Christian Pacifists, seeking divine intervention in the interests of world peace. "the atom bomb is bad enough, but if the hydrogen bomb. . . why . . ."

"Quite the contrary," replied God. "The more dangerous the situation becomes, the wiser it will be to do nothing. If we were to take action now we would run a grave risk of demonstrating our own incapability. And if the human race were to discover how little control we have over events, where should we be?"

"But we made great promises to those people," Jesus reminded his father, "and all of them are churchgoers."

"So much the better. It is the people who do not go to church that we have to worry about."

"If only the Holy Ghost was here to advise us; but he is never where he is wanted."

"The Holy Ghost!" God's tone was scornful. "The very epitome of inaction, a nebulous, vacillating creature, and never—as you have observed—where he is wanted. The success he has made of his career emphasises my point: inaction is our strong suit. What have we to fear of the future if it holds the destruction of contemporary civilisation? It was the collapse of another civilisation that gave me the opportunity to extend my power and domination far and wide. But for that human catastrophe, I might still be nothing but an obscure deity of a Semitic tribe, while you, my son, would probably be completely forgotten. In the days when the works of men were broken and they laboured in the dark, how reverently we were treated and in what honour we were held. When the wisdom of the Greeks and Romans were rediscovered, they regained their confidence and found courage of themselves. When they crossed the Atlantic and found a new world we followed, and our success there was greater than we had hoped. To-morrow, or the day after, they may voyage to the moon. Shall we still be able to follow? Far better if their aspirations are wrecked by their own ingenuity, their labour wasted by their own inability to live in harmony, and their own strength dissipated in their own quarrels, for then their aspirations will be only to worship us, their labour to serve us, and their strength at our command. Let us hope, then, that their worse fears are realised, for in their weakness lies our own strength."

"But if . . ." Jesus began.

"You worry too much," his father told him. "Trust me—I have been in the world longer than you. We still have some good cards to play. If you are 'the Prince of Peace,' I am 'the Lord God of Hosts,' so what matter if it is peace or war? Let us rest and wait."

NOW READY

ROBERT TAYLOR

THE DEVIL'S CHAPLAIN
(1784-1844)

By H. CUTNER

A detailed account of a remarkable Freethinker
and his work

Price 1s. 6d.

Postage 2d.

This Believing World

All interested in space-travel will be entranced to learn that, according to an American medium, Richard Zenor, there are "countless" inhabited planets all of which in addition, either have an "astral plane" like our own earth, or a system of "concentric spheres." A traveller "in spirit" will find in the other worlds animals and plant life galore—and even "bacterial life." And for "lost souls," there are regions of "abyssmal darkness" and "purgatories of phobia complexes." This rivals that distinguished Catholic author, Father Furniss, whose picture of Hell, especially for unbaptised babies, so far has lovingly held the field for fiery effectiveness.

But really one need not be a "spirit" medium to describe inhabited space. A sheaf of American "comics," supplemented by space-travel fiction, will keep anyone occupied for years swallowing the marvels of inter-planetary "life." Spirit mediums appear particularly gifted at disgorging what they have read—in fiction—and impressing this kind of "scientific" balderdash on their naive dupes. Mr. Zenor can churn it up as well as most mediums—and he is very, very funny.

As the book describing Mr. Zenor is addressed to "sceptics and believers alike," readers may want to know that it is entitled *Telephone Between Worlds*, by James Crenshaw, and is published by De Vorss and Company, Los Angeles, California.

According to Mr. Shaw Desmond, the Christian Churches have departed from the teachings of Jesus, the Buddhists from those of Buddha but, thank God, "Spiritualism is advancing." In Ireland, there was "a life and death" struggle between the Roman Church and Spiritualism: and, in spite of racial problems, more and more people in Asia and Africa were believing in—we nearly said Spiritualism, but the proper word is "spooks." After all, as Mr. Desmond knows, nearly all coloured races believe in spooks quite apart from Spiritualism. The Heaven of Islam is packed with lady spooks—at least four for each male—while that of Red Indians is packed with happy hunters shooting spook bisons all day with bows and arrows.

The truth is that religion has very little to offer in this vale of tears, but makes up by promising the goods in Heaven. Spiritualism brings Heaven a little nearer to earth: you can even talk to your family spooks, and what heavenly comfort that is! There appears one snag only—it is that, try as hard as we can, we never seem able to visualise clearly what really happens when we pass on. Either the spooks don't know, or they cannot describe what it is they are living in. When they try, they invariably contradict one another.

Fr. P. Stanley, of Darlington, wants to know which it is that our youth, and particularly Catholic youth, is going to choose—"the apings and meanderings of Hollywood, or the ways of Christ?" Well, our youth, whatever his religion, can generally be found well up in Sunday queues for the cinema, and never in queues for church. That is the ghastly truth. Gregory Peck and Zsa Zsa Gabor appear to attract them more than Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene (or, for that matter, all the Marys in a bunch) even though, as the good Father says, there is no other name by which we can be saved but that of Jesus. It proves how the Devil has captured the cinema—just as Christ Jesus has captured the radio and TV.

But Fr. Stanley and his like should take heart. The cinema manages to get a good quota of Catholic priests shown as God-like saints, and every now and then we get pictures depicting Jesus, and early Christians gladly going to terrible deaths for Christ's sake, all believing in Gods, Miracles, Saints, Heaven, Hell, Angels and Devils—and surely that ought to satisfy any Catholic priest. Why, even the spivs and gangsters are depicted, when caught, as bellowing for a priest, proving to the whole world what good Catholics even they are!

Theatre

Twelfth Night is the latest addition to the plays of Shakespeare at the Old Vic Theatre, and a very worthy production it is.

It is perhaps in this piece that Shakespeare has written some of his finest passages, but the idea of his plot—which was borrowed from an Italian—plays heavily with chance and coincidence. For instance, we may accept it as a fact that brother and sister twins may resemble each other so closely as to cause confusion, but we cannot easily accept identical clothes and colours being worn when brother and sister have not met for several months or years. However, Shakespeare's works are crowded with such anomalies and we have come to like them for what they are.

The spirit of the play is given to it by the humorous characters, led by Richard Burton as Sir Toby Belch and Williams Squire as Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Mr. Burton gives a youthful prankishness to his part, and Mr. Squire has given Sir Andrew a more rational interpretation than is customary, which gives the character more plausibility. I doubt that I have seen a clearer Malvolio than Michael Hordern's or a more romping Maria than Barbara Clegg's. Claire Bloom as Viola gave the part considerable charm and grace, though insufficient masculinity. There was something of Peter Pan in her appearance.

James Bailey's décor and costumes are pleasing in their combined colour effect, but the massiveness of the scenery is rather overbearing.

Moon Music is a peculiar experiment that has been tried out at Bolton's Theatre.

Freethinkers should ever be out for new ideas, but it is difficult to find anything stimulating in this combination of music and colour. Jone Parry is an excellent pianist who plays into a microphone connected with an electronic computer, which in turn projects colours on to a screen and a number of weird objects suspended in the air. Presumably the authors believe this is the beginning of a new art, but if they aspire to introduce it in the form of a play they should at least make use of an experienced author rather than spoil their chances by writing bad dialogue. As for the invention, all things must have a beginning, and I can only say that apart from being enlightened I failed to receive an impression. Maybe Walt Disney's film *Fantasia* is still fresh in my memory.

RAYMOND DOUGLAS.

A Commentary on a "Best-Seller"

We are continually being assured by the Churches, not to mention that pious auxiliary of Christianity, the B.B.C., that the Holy Bible is the "best-seller" amongst all "best-sellers." However, not all that glitters is bona-fide gold. If the Bible sells, so also do critical commentaries upon the Holy Book! Foremost amongst such, we think that we may relevantly comment, is our *Bible Handbook*, the tenth edition of which was recently issued, and which has now been circulating steadily since 1888. We are happy to be able to state that the new edition is selling as well as its predecessors.

THE FREETHINKER

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To Correspondents

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. 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 should reach the Secretary of the N.S.S. at this Office by Friday morning. Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only and to make their letters as brief as possible.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.: FRANK ROTHWELL.
Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Bomb Site).—Every week-day, 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, noon: L. EBURY.
Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Every Thursday, 1-15 p.m.: T. M. MOSELEY.

INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, January 31, 6-45 p.m.: E. V. TEMPEST, "Deceiving the People—Methods Old and New."
Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Satis Café, 40, Cannon St.).—Sunday, January 31, 7 p.m.: P. VICTOR MORRIS, General Secretary, N.S.S., "Secular Sources of Happiness."
Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1).—Tuesday, February 2, 7 p.m.: MARCUS SIMS, "The Philosophy of Satire."
Leicester Secular Society (Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, January 31, 6-30 p.m.: F. A. WATSON, "The 'Light' of the World."
Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, January 31, 2-30 p.m.: EMILE BURNS, "What is Marxism?"
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1).—Sunday, January 31, 11 a.m.: HECTOR HAWTON, "Sex and Superstition."
West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road).—Sunday, January 31, 7-15 p.m.: BERT WILLIS, "Entertainment and Religion."

NOTES AND NEWS

Salute to Thomas Paine! Salute to one of the greatest Englishmen of his or, indeed, perhaps, of any age. The day which sees the publication of this issue of *The Freethinker*, January 29, is the anniversary of the birth of this major figure in the annals of both politics and religion, of two continents, and of three revolutions. For Thomas Paine was born in Thetford, Essex, January 29, 1737 (according to our present calendar). He died in America on June 6, 1809.

The career of this great man may be assumed, we suppose, to be familiar to most Freethinkers, many of whom will, no doubt, have read the definitive biography of Paine by Dr. Moncure D. Conway. In more recent years a number of studies of the great English Iconoclast have appeared in this country; the best or, at least, most readable is that, perhaps, of Mr. Hesketh Pearson. The practical achievements of "Tom" Paine are to be found written in the record of the American and French Revolutions. Students of the English History of the period will recall how, for two generations, from the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 down to the collapse of Chartism in 1848, the name and writings of "Tom" Paine stood in the eyes of the then ruling oligarchy in Great Britain for "red ruin and the breaking up of laws," for religious and political heresy in both Church and State. For "Tom"—as the

Tory ruling-class described the great Radical with posthumous incivility—was a "double-first"; he was simultaneously, the leading exponent of critical Deism in Religion, and the leading political Radical in an era of oligarchy and reaction; he was the author, *inter alia*, of both *The Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*.

It is by these great pioneer works of political and religious heterodoxy that "Tom" Paine is still chiefly remembered to-day. But he, also, wrote many "lesser" works which, by themselves, would have made the reputation of any lesser man. We are forcibly reminded of this fact by the recent appearance in America of a beautifully produced volume, *Inspiration and Wisdom from the Writings of Thomas Paine*, edited by the distinguished American scholar, Dr. Joseph Lewis, the Editor of *The Age of Reason*, and the author of many books on topics of interest to Freethinkers. In this splendid volume, the wit and wisdom of Thomas Paine stand fully revealed in a rich banquet of eloquence, wit, and acute commentary. We hope that a cheaper edition will eventually be accessible here. In the meantime, Dr. Lewis has added to the debt which Paine's innumerable admirers already owe him [*Inspiration and Wisdom of Thomas Paine*, \$5. Freethought Press Association, 370 West 35th St., New York 1, N.Y.]

Whilst upon the subject of birthday anniversaries, we must note also that of W. Somerset Maugham, the eminent author. Mr. Maugham, who reached the age of 80 on Monday, January 25, is not only, perhaps, the most eminent exponent of English letters now alive, but may be described as a potent influence, making for a sceptical outlook in world literature. As our distinguished contributor, Mr. Du Cann noted in these columns some little time back, Somerset Maugham has repeatedly challenged conventional ideas, often ideas of religious origin, in his novels and plays. The fact that he has done so consistently for half a century, and has yet retained his vast public, surely indicates that the hold of Christian orthodoxy is not so sure as is sometimes imagined? We wish this distinguished author "Many Happy Returns."

The President and members of the "International Executive of the World Union of Freethinkers" learned recently with much regret of the death of Dr. Hermann Graul, a leading German Freethinker and the German representative on the International Committee. Dr. Graul took part in the deliberations of the Executive in Brussels in September. We offer our sincere regrets to our German comrades.

The West London Branch, N.S.S., is now fairly under way with the second half of its winter syllabus of lectures. Perhaps its highlight up to date has been the amusing talk on "God in the Naval-Air Service" by Major C. Draper. Major Draper's daring flight under the London bridges, and his subsequent appearance before a, no doubt, startled magistrate, are still recent news. We are not in a position to correct the rumour that the gallant Major is shortly about to publish his autobiography under the familiar title of "Underneath the Arches"! Next Sunday that entertaining raconteur, Mr. Bert Willis, well known to London audiences on Tower Hill and elsewhere will give what we hope will be a numerous audience the benefit of his views on "Religion in Entertainment" which, as related by this talented lecturer, will, we are sure, be very entertaining. Sterner subjects are to follow with Mr. Tom Moseley, who needs no introduction to readers of *The Freethinker*. Mr. Moseley's subject is "The Ancient Christ and the Modern Jesus." It will be news to us if Mr. Moseley has "found" either!

Dialectical Materialism

By JIM GRAHAM

MOST of the points raised by Mr. H. Cutner have already been answered, but in repeating his mistakes he adds a few more. He seems to have learned little from these errors, for in his latest effort blunder follows blunder with monotonous regularity.

He states: "If other readers wish to butt in they might take the trouble to find out what my criticism of Mr. Graham was meant to be." Well, what was he trying to do? Speak in parables? Could he not have said what he meant? Here a little knowledge of dialectics would have done him a world of good. It would have shown him the unity of the opposites—his saying and his meaning. It could have shown him the interpenetration of the opposites becoming the identity of opposites, and therefore the identity of his saying and meaning. In other words, he would have said what he meant, and meant what he said. Surely it is wrong to write something and then invite readers to find out what is meant.

Mr. Crouch gives Mr. Cutner the credit of pretending not to understand the statement of Marx standing Hegel on his feet. I have no idea what he was pretending, or what his criticism was meant to be; but I do know what it was. I deal with what he writes! From reading that, and the repetition of his errors, I can only conclude he does not know the difference between a materialist and an idealist. If I can find space later in this article, I shall deal with it for the benefit of those who—unlike Mr. Cutner—may not have read a dozen books on the subject. They at least will then know the difference—and it is fundamental—between idealism and materialism.

Regarding the Dean of Canterbury and the Stalin peace prize, Mr. Cutner is quite wrong in assuming Stalin would not give this prize to an idealist. Only a short time ago he awarded a prize to a priest in Italy for the latter's work for peace. That does not make the priest a dialectic materialist. His philosophy is based on theology, not materialism.

If Mr. Cutner knew what dialectical materialism was about he would not require to ask me to account for Prof. MacMurray. I can only repeat: Christianity and materialism do not mix, no matter what company their exponents mix in.

Now we hear of Mr. E. F. Carritt and vitalism. I should like to point out here that vitalism has nothing to do with dialectical materialism. But why quote Mr. Carritt to me? I asked Mr. Cutner to find something wrong with my article—not Mr. Carritt's work. Why does he not quote from the known authorities on the subject—Marx, Engels or Lenin? Is none of their works among the dozen books he has read on the subject? The introduction of vitalism rules out automatically anyone responsible for this error as a dialectical materialist.

Therefore Mr. Cutner blunders again when he speaks of "Vitalistic nonsense propagated by Messrs. Graham and Crouch." Will he also note that in my article I did not "exultantly attack mechanists"?

It is difficult to pass without a smile Mr. Cutner's quotation from Hegel. Comedians and cartoonists can always make fun of celebrities whom they do not understand. He has not yet qualified in dialectics to enable him to bring judgment on Hegel.

Just as the student of mathematics must start with units and multiples, and be familiar with these before he can advance to a study of integral calculus or complex variables; and the musical student is taught notes, intervals and scales before he tackles harmony, counterpoint and the Beethoven Symphony; so must Mr. Cutner learn the

rudiments of dialectics before he is qualified to pass opinions on the dialectic symphony composed from the wealth of Hegel's learning. To the untrained in music, Beethoven's greatest works may well sound like a jumble of noises. The untaught are not qualified to judge, however.

An example of the static method of thinking is shown in Mr. Cutner's treatment of Mr. Crouch for his statement that it was not true that I did not give a definition of dialectical materialism. Because Crouch states something is not white, Cutner accuses him of saying it is black. He should have known there is an infinity of shades between the white truth and the black lie. His judgment here is very faulty; Hegel help him! "The more the ordinary mind takes the opposition between true and false to be fixed, the more it is accustomed to expect either agreement or contradiction with a given philosophical system, and only to see the one or the other in any explanation about such a system. It does not conceive the diversity of philosophical systems as the progressive evolution of truth; rather it sees only contradiction in that variety." (Preface, *Phenomenology of Spirit*.)

If Mr. Cutner learned to apply this formula to his outlook it would prevent many of his mistakes. If anyone wants examples of how to apply the above law, I would be pleased to give them.

I have little space left to deal with the difference, philosophically, between idealism and materialism. Historically man's idealism is reflected in his fear of the unknown. He tends to worship what he fears. Primitive man tried to appease his spirits and gods that lay hid in forests, appeared in the lightning, and spoke in the thunder.

When men explored the forests and found nothing mysterious, they were told to look beyond the seas. No one had been there and come back. In the great navigations, however, men circumnavigated the world and said, "There is only land and seas there as well." The theologians promptly replied by immediately shifting the spirits to the sky. That was a bit away, and people would find difficulty in studying them there. This ingenious move met with no better success, as the astronomers analysed carefully what they found, measuring with interferometer and calliper and carefully calculating. They left no room for superstition. The latest moves are to find something behind and beyond a mathematical formula. (See Chapman Cohen's answer to Jeans and Eddington.)

All these attempts to find something beyond and behind Nature mean idealism. They think there is something which directs the universe, but neither the crude fetishes of early man, nor the elusive god hidden in the square root of minus one, is necessary.

These people who regard Nature in that way are idealists, and they regard the idea as being primary, with some kind of consciousness animating the world.

The universe is self-motivated and was in existence millions of years before man appeared. It was therefore in existence millions of years before mind. Mind is a function of matter at the highest stage of the development of matter. Matter arranged and organised in certain ways must think.

Ideas exist just as much for the dialectical materialist as for the idealist, and in the same way the idealist accepts the material. The real question is: which is primary and which derivative? That is the analysis on which any outlook is based philosophically.

[Mr. Cutner writes: "There is no need for any reply from me for this article."]

Catholicism, Concupiscence and Continence

By P. C. KING

CHRISTIANITY was born out of a Roman Empire in decadence. When came the final collapse of her Western half, the Catholic Church picked up the abandoned authority and carried on. The disintegrated society gathered round the Roman villa, turned burg or castle, and the feudal epoch began. This feudal society rested basically on the family unit and it was natural, therefore, that the new authority should seek by every means to reinforce the sanctity of the family and the sacramental nature of the marriage vow. It was by reason of this development that the Catholic Church set its face so inflexibly against divorce and disruption of the family ties. In ancient Roman society divorce had been a commonplace. Cicero, for instance, divorced his wife just to marry someone richer; the lady, in no way damaged by this contretemps, went through the process three more times before departing this life, leaving five ex-husbands to pay respect to her memory. Though the Church has often shown a commendable adaptability to many of the facts of life, she has held rigidly to the concept of the indissoluble marriage, on the foundations of which her power had so largely been built up.

Mr. Graham Greene, a professing Catholic, has brought on to the stage in his latest play, *The Living Room*, the problem of love out of wedlock and its repercussions on a family of strong Catholic outlook. A young girl, having lost both her parents, is brought by her father's executor to the home of her nearest surviving relatives, two pious Catholic aunts and an uncle who is a priest. A telephone message from the executor's wife gives away the fact that her middle-aged Protestant husband and the young girl are lovers and spent the previous night together in an hotel. The problem that Mr. Greene sets himself is to portray the reaction of this most Catholic family to the situation, and it takes the form of a triangle drama between the kindly, well-meaning priest, the hard, narrow-minded aunt, and the passionate young girl. The rest of the cast—the other, feeble-minded, aunt, the weak, vacillating lover, the impossibly neurotic wife—are but foils, background against which the drama is played out.

The strong-minded aunt uses ruthless methods. She turns the lover out of the house and, when the girl expresses her intention of following him, uses her almost hypnotic power over her feeble-minded sister to cause her to collapse and take to her bed, thereby obligating the niece to stay on and help look after her. She has no hesitation in doing evil to achieve the good end. Just as the policeman said to the burglar, "If I kill you, it'll be in the execution of duty but if you kill me, by God, it's murder!" Auntie blandly responds that there are lies and lies, but hers are of the approved brand! And though the girl slips out every afternoon to go and sleep with her lover, Auntie counts it for good that she is still living in her Catholic home and not in permanent residence with her paramour. For she can still attend mass regularly or drop in to confession any time she feels that way. On the principle that if a thing is made uncomfortable enough, people will tire of it and soon give it up, she considers this state of affairs the lesser of two evils and likeliest to produce desired results in the shortest time.

This Christianity by *force majeure* does not have the approval of the priest uncle. He prefers to use reason; but all his reasoning having failed to persuade his niece to give up her lover, he does not feel that he can offer more active opposition to her packing her traps and going to him. The determined aunt, however, thinks otherwise and proceeds to play a trump; she gets the neurotic wife

of the lover on the scene. The priest uncle beats a hasty retreat at her appearance, ignominiously leaving his niece to deal with the problem alone. This, together with the vacillations of her lover who, while wanting to keep on his liaison with the girl, is always dithering about what his wife will do without him, is too much for the inexperienced girl. Feeling unable to cope with the situation, she takes the usual barbiturate and ends her life.

I think Mr. Greene fails to make out his case. While he has no difficulty in holding up the domineering aunt as a poor example of her faith—as, in fact, setting it on its head—he fails, to my mind, in giving definition to the views of the more discerning uncle. After listening to his quips and moralisings through four scenes and two acts I was still unable to comprehend what his philosophy really amounted to in practical application. I consider the young communicant was poorly served by her priest uncle and that she was justified in the reproaches she levelled at him.

Surely the attitude of a Catholic priest in such circumstances would be something on these lines: I do not have to tell you, my daughter, what your duty in the matter is; your Catholic instruction will have made that clear to you. But you must make your decisions of your own free will. He would then have advised her to go away, take a job or what not (she was well provided for under her father's will). Thus, free from her aunt's duress on the one side and of her lover's propinquity on the other, she would be in an uninhibited state to exercise the free will which the Church claims to be the psychological basis of selectivity. Naturally this would have had the fatal defect, from the dramatist's point of view, of dispersing his characters instead of keeping them together in the "living room," but I submit this should not have been an insuperable objection to a writer of Mr. Greene's ability and experience. Furthermore, I felt that the girl's suicide was out of character, as was also the morbid, almost pathological, fear of death shown by the two aunts. (Their fear of hell, apparently, was greater than their hope of heaven!) For the satisfaction of readers of this journal, perhaps I should add that the girl, towards the end, abjured her faith; under the circumstances, the pious hope, expressed by her uncle, that she may have repented at the last moment, seems unduly optimistic. On the whole, a good play and good entertainment, worth seeing, though hardly, I should have thought, good advertisement for the Catholic Church.

Correspondence (continued from page 40)

THE MYTH OF JESUS

SIR,—“One day some erudite professor will explode the myth of Jesus.” (What has J. W. Roberts done, or not done, to deserve this?)

Your anonymous unbeliever might like to have a look at, say, F. C. Conybeare or A. D. Howell Smith to see what there is to be said about the myth of the myth of Jesus by serious students of the subject. Should he be unable to reply to their arguments, he can always say, “Pooh! Reverent Rationalists!”—Yours, etc.,

ROBERT H. CORRICK.

P.s.—Of course, *Golden Bough* might help, but it's rather long.

ETHICS AND MATERIALISM

SIR,—New reader D. V. Morgan can understand that the senses, by causing alteration of cell structure, make recordings on the brain in giving internal awareness of the external. Said cells inter-communicate, giving Thought. Questions are solved if sufficient data is present; insufficiency gives no answer, a faulty one, or clash of two or more ditto. Care in this questing is “logic.” Ethics are human rules of conduct obtained by this method. Absolute materialism may appear doubtful, but other viewings much more so.—Yours, etc.,

H. FIDDIAN.

[An appeal is now being made for funds for Westminster Abbey]

Christian Logic

(From *The Freethinker*, July 13, 1930)

God's elements attacked St. Paul's,
 God's rain did beat upon its walls,
 God's winds upon its dome did blow,
 God's earth subsided down below;
 Till it was plain to Christian men
 That God would wreck the work of Wren.
 So forty-thousand people sent
 Their cash to foil the Lord's intent;
 Whilst architects and engineers
 And labourers, for seventeen years,
 Staked human energy and skill
 To war with God Almighty's will.
 At last the arduous task was done;
 The news went round, "God's lost! Man's won!"
 Whereat the general joy was great,
 And someone said, "Let's celebrate!"
 A fine procession then was formed;
 By crowds the City's streets were swarmed.
 The King and Queen were there, of course,
 And Labour Ministers in force,
 And Mayors and Aldermen galore,
 And parsons, ever to the fore,
 And people who subscribed the money,
 And (looking out-of-place and funny,
 According to the Fleet Street hacks)
 The workmen in their Sunday blacks.
 So on, towards St. Paul's, they hied,
 But their behaviour, once inside,
 To say the least was rather odd—
 Believe me, they gave thanks to God!

P. V. M.

Correspondence

MCCARTHY VERSUS PAINE

SIR,—In his outspoken article on the antics of Senator McCarthy, W. H. Wood refers to McCarthy's banning of the works of the great Anglo-American humanist, Thomas Paine. If I am not mistaken, this ban was on a book of *Selections* from Paine's works edited by Howard Fast, who is one of the brave men who refuse to submit to "legalised" witch-hunting and for which he was imprisoned; he is therefore an obstruction to McCarthy's ambitions.

It is part of the technique of these suppressors of freethought to make it impossible for their victims to get a living at their jobs in life, which is why some of their prey—such as musicians, artists and writers—have come to Europe. But even here the long arm of the witch-hunters stretches out, and these unfortunate men and women have to work under assumed names, thereby reducing their earning capacity; and even this field of activity is being denied to some of them, as in the case of European film production, for American distributors are insisting that the personnel of all films which they handle shall be screened.

And what is the result? Another weapon for the anti-Americans. Regrettable as this may be, for anti-nationalism is as dangerous to the peace of the world as nationalism, we must still join in the outcry against what we regard as uncivilised and, in the best and truest sense, un-American. All such protests strengthen the hands of decent Americans who, although temporarily cowed, may be encouraged to stop the trend towards fascism in the U.S. and war in the world.—Yours, etc.,

ADRIAN BRUNEL.

WAGES

SIR,—I agree with Mr. C. H. Norman when he says that "If there was not a surplus derived from the labour of the working classes, there would be nothing for the other classes to live upon," but this only applies when the industrial system is working in a normal way.

This normality has been ruined in consequence of two useless world wars which we declared upon the German nation.

Wars do not create wealth, they destroy it. The last two wars destroyed all the wealth accumulated in Britain, since the Govern-

ment of Oliver Cromwell beheaded King Charles and Archbishop Laud of Canterbury.

Mr. Norman quotes the wages paid in 1881, which were very low, and says that the workers today are getting out of the total product 2 per cent. less than then.

I agree here again, but what Mr. Norman forgets is this fact. In 1881, the British Empire was intact and powerful, with a small national debt of 800 millions.

After the 1914-18 war, this internal war debt became 8,000 millions, then after the last war, it had grown to 26,000 millions, upon which we are paying to the war bond owners of this country the huge sum of 535 millions per year in interest.

If Mr. Norman will make further inquiries he will find that the nation is paying out in profits, salaries and wages even more than two millions per day more than our income. Only one colony is showing a profit, and that is Malaya.

If Mr. Norman believes that there is no day of reckoning to come, then I hope he is right, but I have grave doubts, and we will wait a little while.

Many of course (especially our high paid economists) believe that by paying out two millions per day in excess of what we earn is an insurance against internal revolt, but they may soon find out that it will finally bring about the very thing which they are trying to avoid, and that is Socialism, or as Herbert Spencer described it "The Servile State."

Whether this inevitable state will be better than the present state is controversial, but every Freethinker knows that all civilisations of the past were destroyed from within and not from without, for attacks upon them were only made when the internal conditions, through corruption, wars, vice and immorality, had prepared the way over a long period for their final doom.

The taking of profit, salaries and wages above what is created, as I pointed out some time ago to Lord Teviot in a discussion in the *Daily Telegraph*, is the factor that will at last destroy the system which he helps to sustain.

For being blind to economic truths and becoming used to big profits, salaries and wages, the Government resorts to printing what they call fiduciary money or, in other words, money that has no gold backing, or money of faith. The great rabble of the industrial classes and the people believe that this substitute for the real thing is quite as good. But there is much in what Shakespeare says:

"A substitute shines brightly as a King,
 Until a King Be By."

The death knell of paper money was tolled some years ago, but the politicians made such a big noise that very few heard it.—Yours, etc.,

PAUL VARNEY.

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

SIR,—I was very interested to read your article in last week's edition of *The Freethinker* upon the question of a universal language. I myself have had a comparatively large contact with all types of people from other countries. Esperanto has usually been the means of the interchange of our ideas.

I have found that men and women who are sufficiently intelligent to be bilingual are also without the prejudice shown by those with a narrow-minded bigotry of the insular towards free expression.

Most of our contacts were Freethinkers, and this is peculiar, as we had no pre-knowledge of their religious outlook.

We have also found that Esperanto itself has been a simple and eloquent means of communicating our different opinions.—Yours, etc.,

D. E. ORTON.

A Successful Social

The four Rationalist, Ethical and Secular Societies in Britain have recently agreed to combine for the exchange of views and opinions in the newly-formed "Humanist Council." Last Friday, January 22, a successful social evening was held at Conway Hall, London, W.C., under the auspices of the Humanist Council. Mr. H. Lloyd presided, and short speeches emphasising the contributions of their respective organisations were made by Mr. Robert Pollard for the Ethical Union, Mr. J. Reeves, M.P., for the Rationalist Press Association, by Mr. Hector Hawton for the South Place Ethical Society, and by Mr. F. A. Ridley for the National Secular Society.

After light refreshments had been served at an informal conversation, our hosts, the South Place Ethical Society, put on some admirable items of music and singing, and to the familiar strains of Gilbert and Sullivan, the fairly numerous audience took its leave, we hope, the better Humanists for a most enjoyable evening.

F.A.R.