

# The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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WRITERS of text books on the history of medieval Europe usually describe the Crusades as particular events of mostly the 12th and 13th centuries. Actually the matter is not one of antiquarian or academic interest only: the crusade is a dogma of theology as well as a fact of history. It is still possible to invoke it at the present time. Of this we have

recently been reminded by the present Pope when he warned the adherents of the rival creed of Communism that it still lay within his competence to proclaim a crusade, a "Holy War" against them. Nor was this an idle threat. In this stormy era it could soon become translated into fact.

The Roman Catholic Church claims Infallibility, as laid down in 1870 at the Vatican Council, in ethical as well as in theological questions. The issues of war and peace fall within the ethical domain as defined by Rome. Just as this Church has banned Idealism in the philosophical sphere, in particular that of Bishop Berkeley, so also absolute pacifism is utterly prohibited. It is an "Article of Faith" that war is an institution of divine ordination and that further it is within the jurisdiction of the Church to pronounce some wars as of direct divine inspiration in which every able-bodied Catholic is in conscience bound to participate. Such wars are, officially, "Crusades", and pacifism can have no moral validity in regard to them. Only when the Church has not defined a particular war as a Crusade can the individual Catholic invoke his conscience as an objection to military service.

## Jihad and Crusade

Grant Allen once aptly defined Christian dogma as a mausoleum of dead religions. The same applies to the institutions, as well as to the dogmas, of the Catholic Church. Early Christianity, even when it breathed fire and slaughter against Pagan Rome in the Apocalypse, did not emerge as a military religion. As late as the mid-3rd century the learned Origen could still declare that the Christians fought only on their knees with prayer for the safety of the (Pagan) state. This was perhaps the reason for their unpopularity with the Pagan Caesars, and Celsus ends his *True Word* by urging the Christians to take up arms along with their fellow citizens. After Constantine they did so: none the less it does not seem to have been until well on in the Middle Ages that the Church itself invoked the aid of the secular sword as a normal instrument of conversion, and it did not actually adopt the crusade until menaced by the rise of the great rival religion of Islam (7th century), which, unlike Christianity, was a military religion from the start. The Christian crusaders went to war in a fashion actually borrowed from the enemy! The Christian Holy War followed the example of the Muslim Jihad which was, and is, a fundamental obligation among the Faithful to follow the Green Flag against the infidels.

## Medieval Crusades

It is well known how heavy were the losses inflicted on the Christians by the military attacks of Islam during the Dark

Ages. The Church eventually reacted sharply: the pious Charlemagne (814), the first Holy Roman Emperor, seems to have been the first Christian ruler to wage war against the German Pagans with the blessing of the Church. But the hey-day of the Crusades was in the next few centuries when Rome organised a European army to reconquer the

Holy land and the Holy Sepulchre. This was a fully fledged Holy War launched in the name of God and obligatory on all Christians. It is actually unfortunate that the term Crusades should have become almost exclusively attached to the dramatic but ephemeral ex-

peditions sent from Europe during the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries under the inspiration of the Papacy. Ultimately they proved a costly failure. The *really* important "Crusades" in the Middle Ages were those in Europe itself, which achieved *permanent* results by recovering Spain from the Moors, Prussia from the German Pagans, and forcibly eradicating the formidable Manichean heretics in the crusade against the dualistic Albigenses. As a result of such military expeditions, conducted under the direct inspiration of the Papacy by soldiers wearing the crusading sign of the Cross, the Roman Catholic Church reached its zenith. Even more successful in spreading the Catholic religion were the brutal Spanish crusaders who conquered the aboriginal American races in the name of "The Most Catholic Kings" of Spain and with the blessing and support of the Holy Church. The contemporary crusades waged by Rome against Protestant heretics in Europe were much less successful than the earlier crusade against the Albigenses. But they were animated by the same spirit. The Spanish soldiers of the Armada who sailed against Protestant England in 1588 were just as *bona fide* crusaders in their own estimation — and in that of Rome — as had been the earlier crusaders who went east to fight the Moslem infidels. The Armada went west — in more ways than one!

## Rome and Spain

We know of no record since the "Wars of Religion" in the Reformation era of any official crusades having been promulgated by the Vatican. In recent years the nearest approach to such was perhaps the Spanish Civil War, resulting in the victory of Franco and the Catholic Church. As far as I know Rome never *officially* declared this war to be a crusade, since there were Catholic democrats who opposed Franco and even took up arms against him on behalf of the Liberal Republic. It is, however, certain that the Vatican did everything possible for Franco short of calling a crusade. In 1953-4 the Church received its reward in the shape of the notorious Concordat which has restored it to an almost medieval *status quo* in Spain today.

## A Crusade Against Communism

As I noted above, the Pope can still exercise his "infallibility" in a call to arms as well as in less worldly matters. At present it is by no means certain that he or his successors

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

## Crusaders : Past and Present

By F. A. RIDLEY

will not do so, or that the crusade is a thing of the past. For in the current ideological struggle with "godless Communism" the Vatican makes no pretence of neutrality. In the not improbable event of the present "cold war" "hotting up" it is already quite certain that the Vatican could not remain neutral! Its immense *political* influence would be flung into the anti-Soviet camp in the secular, as well as in the spiritual, sphere. Already Catholics are

officially forbidden to vote for any Communist party; it would be an easy transition to order the faithful to *fight* the enemies of the Church who are so much more dangerous than the Albigenses, and with modern weapons! The 20th Century "heresy" is more dangerous to Rome than that in the 13th. Have we heard the last of the crusades, or of the battle cry raised long ago by Peter the Hermit, "God wills it"?

## REVIEW

*Sound and Sense*

By LESLIE HULL

THERE ARE MANY BOOKS on poetry and the makers of poetry — the poets. The first, and largest, class are collections of poems, which are left to speak for themselves, as, say, a gramophone gives us a sonata or a song. The second largest class — and, certainly, with a large body of readers — are biographies of poets, in which often, alas, the author mixes a good deal of his imagination of what his subject was like. Much entertainment can be obtained from such psychological studies, and, with much "chatter about Harriet," one can learn how *Adonais* was received when that masterpiece was given to the world.

A third, and comparatively little-read, book is made up of criticisms of the products of schools of poets of this or that country, and also the technique of the art of poetry. This technique is sometimes called prosody, and, in older books, treated as a department of grammar. As grammar, like mathematics, is, to say the least of it, not a favourite subject for study by the ordinary reader, it follows that readers of such books cannot be numerous.

A book which will now be introduced to the reader of these lines is one falling into this third class of books on poetry. Before passing it by, let me at least introduce to you its name, author and publisher. If that is sufficiently interesting for you to follow me further, I will tell you before you depart, like Milton's uncouth swain to fresh woods and pastures new, of a point of view of the author which I think should interest readers of THE FREETHINKER.

To poetry-lovers and students the title is attractive enough: *Modern English and American Poetry*. The author is a learned lady, Margaret Schlauch; the publishers, Watts of Drury Lane, London, W.C.2; and the price, 21s. net. The author is the present occupant of the chair of English Philology at the University of Warsaw, presumably the capital of the Polish Republic. Whether the Professor is of German, English, or American nationality is not indicated, but the name is, of course, German. In the writer's preface she explains that the purpose of her book is twofold. In the first place an attempt is made to show how the general reader of contemporary English verse may surmount the chief apparent difficulties that modern poetry so often offers to the non-expert general reader. How to read, analyse, and master the expression of contemporary verse is explained in the first part of this book. A golden thread is provided to enable the reader to penetrate this labyrinth, but not unnaturally many will query whether in this case an expenditure of effort is sufficiently rewarding. Each must answer this query for themselves. As much of modern verse uses symbols, some such guide as this would seem to be a *sine qua non* for those who, as Hamlet might have said, would pluck out the heart of the modern poet's mystery. This occupies over half of this book, and a still more technical section, about one-third of the book, is devoted (in Part II) to the sounds of poetry today. There are also appendices, including glossary of terms, bibliography, and index — most useful for students.

The professor leaves this part to be taken or not, as the reader likes, but recommends that he take it. The present writer's only comment on this is that the study of philology is for the serious student. It has its rewards, doubtless, but, speaking as a working poet, I do not believe that such study did, or ever will, do much to make a poet. He need not apologise for reflecting on a well-known Latin tag, *poeta nascitur, non fit*, the poet is born, not made. He needs some study, of course, but he must have his own "native wood-notes wild." The equipment of wild native notes caused, as Milton pointed out, the triumph of Shakespeare, with his "little Latin and less Greek," over the erudition of Ben Jonson. For my part I feel there is much sense in the punning parody that if the poet "takes care of the sense the sounds will take care of themselves."

I hope I have not been unfair to Professor Schlauch's painstaking researches and erudite book. Can I make some amends to her and her publishers by praising what to me, and I imagine most readers of this journal (with its care for social activities and welfare) is the light the Professor throws on the essential connection between the poet and his environment, that is, with nature and his neighbours. Cut off from these, he is almost maimed.

May I close this review with a paraphrase of Madame Schlauch's own words. Speaking of the decline in the ideological content of modern English and American poetry, a decline which she thinks is to be condemned because of unworthy or degrading substance, the Professor points the way back, or forward (if you like) to sanity and salvation. "The healthier poets are those who struggle against the injustices of that [dollar-ridden] society." She is "sure, as the new society, struggling to be born," is successful, the present under-valued position of the poet in the modern world will pass, and the poets who further that change will "reconquer their former positions of honour in the community." (In other words, one might fairly say that the author has little use for the ivory tower, and prefers the soap-box in the market-square.)

To lovers of poetry, makers and readers alike, these are words of encouragement, coming, as they do, from one so highly-equipped and so well-placed to observe the struggle between West and East for the mastery of the world by one or other of two community-systems, both now crushing, in their different ways, that freedom of thought and expression so necessary to all literary artists.

## RELIGIOUS REVIVAL?

"I AM FILLED with anxiety for the future of certain important churches. But in each case the money can be found. What is lacking is the will to use them."

—Mr. Bulmer-Thomas.  
(opening an appeal for funds).

What an admission! We can get the money but people won't come!

# The House of Thespis

By C. G. L. DU CANN

"IT IS WRITTEN", said Jesus Christ with that quite pathetic faith in the efficacy of the written word which he so frequently displayed, "that my House shall be called the House of prayer. But ye have made it a den of thieves". He was talking, you remember, of the tradesmen in the Temple, who were changing money and selling doves, and though his description was severe, it was probably justified; for we all know what traders are, though it is the fashion to laud and glorify trade today. If Christ returned, which in spite of Jehovah's Witnesses can hardly be regarded as very likely, and he entered an Anglican Church he might find the "House of God" turned into a Temple of Thespis . . .

For that is what I found. Passing an ugly-looking brick building, one wintry Sunday, I thought I would look in. For just as I wisely take my holidays when the many do not, so I prefer to go to Church alone. The hour was four in the afternoon. At that time I fully expected to have the Church to myself, to semi-darkness, and to solitude—I know worse companions than we three.

Judge of my surprise when I found the chancel full of light and Angels. Very white Angels with enormous disproportionate wings as though they had been aeroplanes. These snow-white Angels might have been washed in Persil, Omo, Tide or the Blood of The Lamb, or some other detergent, material or mystical, so much whiter were they than the snow outside. As I gazed, they burst into a rendering of: "Hark, the herald-angels sing."

Well, I did hark. And they did sing. At first, a little raggedly, but warming to their work, with hearty good will, and even a little too loudly for my taste. Yet who am I after all to find fault with the song of Angels—even suburban church-angels.

One must not expect too much of amateur theatricals either. There was a very small audience of about twelve immortal souls, six of them children under ten years of age, and Me, the stranger in a very strange land. But if there was a small audience in two senses there was a very large cast of 25 or so actors and actresses. In addition a clergyman in a side-pulpit read aloud a running accompaniment to the play, which like the playlet within the play of *Hamlet* was mostly in dumb-show, except when the choir of angels erupted into chorus.

Very nice chorus-girls there were. And a nice change from flashy legs and frilly knickers, so I decided to stay.

Comfortably ensconced in a pew—well, fairly comfortably for the seat was deuced hard—with my legs up, I reclined at ease—well, such ease as I could get in a church-pew—to watch the play. It was superior to most plays since there was no entertainment-tax, nothing to pay to get in, and I could sit where I pleased in the nave, and there was no smoking—as there soon will be at the rate the Holy Church is modernising itself.

The theme was the Nativity. Very soon the shepherds (my old childhood-friends) were lying about in picturesque attitudes, and watching their (non-existent) flocks by night (it was really late afternoon). The Angels appeared again and sang like television-advertisements about "Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards Men"; not a single one of them excepted Suez or Hungary which proves (if it needs proving) that angels do not read the newspapers, which is just as well for their manners and morals as we may see by the manners and morals of those who do.

I was greatly edified by all this. I might have gone on

being edified, but most unfortunately, the Stage-Manager (or rather Manageress) suddenly rushed upon the stage—to my great discomfiture. She was a buxom body with bulging calves, a still more bulging behind, and an equally bulging before. She was dressed in drab ordinary garb that would have been better for a visit to the Angels' laundry. The Bulge pulled one young Angel forward, and pushed another Angel back. She trod on one Angel's toes, and re-arranged another Angel's left-wing.

The Angels looked terrified as well they might, like a flock of white doves scared by an invading cat, they all moved back. But none flew away as I should have done had I been an angel. As I am no angel, I swore softly to myself forgetting for a second that I was in Church; but the Lord, I feel sure, will forgive my annoyance over these criminal assaults upon the Angels of the Lord, who after all, were doing an unpaid job.

Then the Virgin Mary, in a pink skirt, a blue robe and a white veil escorted by a black-bearded and most lover-like Joseph came along. The clergyman proclaimed that there was no room in the Inn, and from his subsequent remarks I gathered, to my embarrassment, that a Nativity was imminent. Alarmed as a mere man for my modesty, I almost fled. However to my relief the Angels clustered around the Holy Pair with their big white wings as screens. Then, when they removed themselves,—there was the Holy Babe, with everyone worshipping as hard as they could.

And what a good baby! Not a cry from it. Unlike all the babies I have had the misfortune to be acquainted with in the course of my well-spent life, this one was as dumb as Zacharias the High Priest.

The children in the audience were led forward and made to kneel down before the Babe in a moment's homage. The Bulge superintended that part admirably. She pressed each child down by the head, and they crumpled like communists under the heavy hand of the Kremlin.

When the infants had returned to their seats, the Angels, led by a tall Archangel, (Gabriel, I expect) with double-size wings, broke suddenly into a triumphant pæan: "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" to a magnificent crescendo from the organ. For a second the illusion was complete. As too rarely happens in a theatre, I was transported from time and place and myself, carried beyond space and the spectacle, on wings or winds of an exalted and exultant emotion of reality and truth, escaping from the terrestrial to the celestial.

It lasted but a second—as such Wordsworthian intimations of immortality commonly do. But that fugitive second made the whole performance worth while.

After that the Visit of the Three Wise Men, and the posturing of King Herod was an anti-climax. So, too, were Simeon and Anna and the singing of the *Nunc Dimittis*. But the Virgin, smiling and whispering, with Joseph's arm encircling her (a trifle unnecessarily, I thought, but if it had been my arm I should have taken a different view) came past my pew down the aisle. She was a slender little brunette with an oval face and mischievous eyes. She laughed at me as she passed, and although shocked at a laughing Virgin Mary—and in Church too, of all places—I could not help smiling back.

And then the performers, like school-children at holiday time, broke up with noise and chatter. I hastily left, lest I should behold Angels discarding their wings and turning

(Concluded on next page)

## This Believing World

We are delighted to give publicity to one more sect of true Christianity to add to the other 493 already known and practising. Its leaders are called "Go Preachers," and they are already so much on the go that Archdeacon Hammond of the New South Wales Council of Churches has uttered a very solemn and pious warning against them; for competition in this way is the last thing he wants. The sect was founded by a William Irvine of Scotland, and an Irishman called Edward Clooney, and they and their followers call themselves "the Jesus Way," "Cooney-ites" and even "the Testimony of Jesus," though, alas, the Archdeacon mourns the fact that already their true Christian teaching has "led to unhappy divisions in families." But why he wants to discourage Messrs. Irvine and Clooney is not quite clear. After all, it was "our Lord" himself who prophesied these divisions when he said, "Suppose ye that I am come to send peace on earth? I tell you nay; but rather division; for from henceforth there shall be one house divided . . ."

Every Christian sect has the truth, so happily are Christians united. They have the churches, the BBC, the TV, and the ITV, and practically all the newspapers in the country; and they can boycott all opposition, for no bookshop dare sell Freethought literature. And they are still imploring people to come to Jesus as if we had never heard of him. What a game!

One of the reasons why the Lord's Day Observance Society flourishes is because it manages to get free publicity in our national and provincial press with the greatest of ease. Its latest attempt to enforce God's will on keeping the day devoted to Sun worship holy is to prevent everybody playing chess on Sunday. This makes a "story" for the average reporter who, in general, doesn't care two hoots; but as the L.D.O.S. attacked the Chess Congress in Hastings, it got all the publicity it wanted. The way to secure a more or less early demise of the Society is to ignore it on every possible occasion. Nothing would kill it quicker than amused contempt.

If Borley Rectory has at last been unfortunately debunked, we are pleased to report that hauntings have been heard—and probably seen—at White House in Washington. And the Spirit responsible?—why, of course, who but Abraham Lincoln? it would be *infra dig* or *lèse majesté* for the spirit to be an under-footman and a coloured one at that. Ex-President Truman himself has heard "rappings"—the infallible way with which all Spirits announce themselves through spirit hands. He has even got up in the middle of the night to investigate, but he never found anybody—how could he see a Spirit? Even Queen Wilhelmina of Holland has heard the rappings, but they caused her to faint. So what better proof have we of the existence of a Spirit World, packed with Spirits, who now and then get an evening's leave to visit old haunts than such irrefutable evidence?

And talking about "rappings" again we note, not without surprise, in *Two Worlds*, that a lady therein, Miss Enid Smith, refers to an article by Charles Dickens in *All the Year Round* adding that he "was a firm believer in the so-called supernatural." We do not expect Spiritualist readers will look up the article—as we did. Suffice it to say that it and a later one on D. D. Home contains some of the most scathing attacks we have ever read on the fraud of Spiritualism. Dickens let himself go even more than on the iniquities of workhouses in *Oliver Twist*. He picked out

a dozen incidents from Home's autobiography, and begs "pardon of our readers for sullyng our paper with this nauseous matter" — this, be it remembered was about D. D. Home, the "Immaculate Medium", the Medium who was never caught at fraud! The only "so-called" supernatural Dickens believed in was — more or less — Christianity, but he loathed Spiritualism.

Congratulations to our contemporary, the *Sunday Pictorial*, for having, at long last, discovered somebody who wants to live like Christ. Although every religious speaker on the B.B.C., T.V. and I.T.V. almost shriekingly implores everybody else to take Christ Jesus as their only example, to live entirely like Christ, to take Christ into their lives, nobody appears to have ever done so until Mr. James Ireland came along. He, thank God, gave away all he had at the outset; but unfortunately, no Martha and Mary waded in to minister to his needs, nor did a dozen disciples show their noses to work for and keep him in the comfort he deserved.

The poor Christ-like Mr. Ireland soon found he had to work for his living which was totally unlike anything Jesus ever did, and he was not even shown the kindness he expected "from those who profess to call themselves Christians". In fact, he would have had nowhere to lay down his head if he hadn't taken on the job of "house-man"—a job no doubt Christ would have indignantly refused. It is enough to make "our Lord" in Heaven get angry at his "professed" followers as it has poor Mr. Ireland. Despairingly he moans, "Too many people are suspicious!"

### The House of Thespis (concluded from previous page)

into dull suburban folk again; and walking home, I meditated on Houses of God turned into Houses of Thespis.

Why? Is it not because congregations and clergy are bored stiff, and want more "kick" than they can get out of doing their duty to God and their Neighbour in the traditional fashion? It is hard and unrewarding work to live up to the exacting and unreasonable demands of a Jesus Christ—perpetual prayer, fasting, self-sacrifice, no money, no forethought, unflagging service to others, entire dependence upon what God may send. The most earnest and sincere Western Christians whether clerical or lay, feel they cannot go as far as Jesus — they must compromise and water down the Gospel. There is fun to be had in rites and ceremonies and "services" and theatricals and organising and all the rest — and none in being a literal Jesus. No credit either for such eccentricity!

Play-acting in Church is, like many other Christian activities, an escape from Jesus and his exigent demands. Yet I must concede that this particular play, like a great secular play such as *Hamlet*, for one second justified itself. For that all its sins ought to be forgiven as Bernard Shaw said Lord Alfred Douglas's sins ought to be forgiven him because of his *Sonnets*, and as Jesus said of the Woman of Samaria should have hers forgiven because of her faith.

Herewith, therefore, I forgive them all. (After all, there was no collection.) And having forgiven them their trespasses, including that of the Bulge (which was most grievous), I hope that they will forgive mine, including this article.

—NEXT WEEK—

THE BOTTOMLEY MYTH

By H. CUTNER

# THE FREETHINKER

41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.  
Telephone: Holborn 2601.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 10s. (in U.S.A., \$4.25); half-year, 15s.; three months, 7s. 6d.

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Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1. Members and visitors are always welcome at the Office.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

Correspondents may like to note that when their letters are not printed or when they are abbreviated the material in them may still be of use to "This Believing World," or to our spoken propaganda.

W.H. (Mrs.).—Scores of people were fined or imprisoned for selling Paine's works. Searches were made for the forbidden books, and after one search in Bolton it was declared by the searching official that "neither *The Age of Reason* nor *Common Sense* were to be found anywhere."

E. MORLEY.—You say "Spirit, like matter, must also be indestructible." But is it not a matter of common observation that functions do cease?

E. N. PORTER, F. BUTLER and A. E. SYMES.—Comments much appreciated. But we have neither the space nor the inclination to print all appreciations received.

W. MAY.—Mr. (now Sir). Arnold Lunn wrote 20 years ago: "Our Lady wants Spaniards under Franco to have as many rifles as possible and to shoot as straight as possible. . . . In that case. . . the rifle is a holy weapon, very properly consecrated to our Lady." (Report of an address by Lunn in Dublin, in *The English Churchman*, May 27th, 1937, page 263.)

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Every Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MURRAY and SLEMEN.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, SMITH, CORSAIR and FINKEL. Sundays, 7.15 p.m.: Messrs. MILLS, WOODCOCK, and SMITH.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings most evenings of the week (often afternoons): Messrs. THOMPSON, SALISBURY, HOGAN, PARRY, HENRY and others.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square) — Thursday, 1 p.m.: R. POWE. Friday, 1 p.m.: R. POWE and R. MORRELL.

West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday, at the Marble Arch, from 4 p.m.: Messrs. ARTHUR and EBURY.

### INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, February 10th, 6.45 p.m.: A Lecture.

Central London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, off Edgware Road).—Sunday, February 10th, 7.15 p.m.: THOMAS ADAMS (U.S. Embassy Information Office), "Personal Freedom in the U.S.A."

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, February 12th, 7.15 p.m.: COMDR. T. FOX-PITT, "Slavery in 1957"

Head Office N.S.S. (41 Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1).—Friday, February 8th, 7.15 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, "The History of Christianity" (last of six Study Classes). Subject this week: "Christianity and Society." Admission 1/-.

Leicester Secular Society (Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, February 10th, 6.30 p.m.: COMDR. T. FOX-PITT, "Slavery in 1957."

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Hall, Parliament Street).—Sunday, February 10th 2.30 p.m. B. McQUILLAN, "Are Kings and Queens worth while?"

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, February 10th, 11 a.m.: PROF. ALEX. HADDOW, "Science and Affairs".

## The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £178 7s. 0d.; A. Hancock, 1s.; H. & R. Clark, 10s.; W. E. Huxley, 10s.; J. Quinn, 10s.; H. Strange, 5s.; C. Blee, 10s.; S. Rosenthal (U.S.A.), 2s.; R. H. Scott (U.S.A.), £4 2s. 6d.; Anon. (Bradford), £1; D. A. Ferriday, 5s.—Total to date, February 1st 1957, £186 2s. 6d.

## Notes and News

MR. A. EZE, a Nigerian student at Queen Mary College, University of London and a member of the National Secular Society saw the reward of hard work in organisation when the College Humanist Society held a most successful meeting in the Sterne Hall on Thursday 24th January. Mrs. Knight was the speaker and the hall was full to overflowing. One cannot say that a good time was had by all because some Christians present were distinctly resentful when their cherished faith could not stand up to Mrs. Knight's logical criticism. Apparently Roman Catholic students boycotted the meeting altogether but the remark of another Christian student was encouraging (to us, if not to him). "It is strange," he said, "but the anti-religious meetings are better attended than the religious ones".

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It was encouraging, too, to read the *South London Press* on Friday, January 25th. "Wanderer's Notes and Comments" reported the case of a lady who died and revived. When asked what happened when she was dead, she answered "Nothing". "This might seem self-evident", writes Wanderer, ". . . but the supernatural religions create pictures of heaven, happy hunting grounds, a Valhalla of perpetual feasting — anything but an ending." "Yet we read a book or see a play in order to reach the end, and we should lose interest if we knew it didn't end." "Life everlasting, as Shaw said, is really an intolerable prospect", concludes Wanderer, "I much prefer to live each day as if it's my last. It might be at that."

★

MR. TOM MOSLEY, of Nottingham, may justly claim to be the Methuselah of the movement. We read in the *Nottingham Evening Post* (10/1/57) that he is "probably the oldest and most experienced speaker" on the Nottingham Old Market Square. We would concur; but we must beg leave to doubt the subsequent assertion that "He has been talking about Rationalism almost every Friday for 404 years." Still, 40 years is a splendid record and we hope that Mr. Mosley's present absence, while awaiting admission to hospital for an operation, will be only temporary. Mr. Mosley has resigned as Hon. Secretary of the Nottingham Branch N.S.S. in favour of a younger man, Mr. Roy Powe. Mr. Powe has developed under Mr. Mosley's aegis and we wish him every success.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY 51st ANNUAL DINNER

followed by a Dance

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# Metaphysics and Business

By A. LAFORGE

AMERICA is today having a boom in church-building. Prisons are also increasing proportionately.

Churches are shooting up almost everywhere, even in the countryside; and carpenters, chauffeurs and the like become preachers and revivalists, in the hope of attracting enough adherents to fill their pockets. Religion is Big Business. Recently I have had some encounters with these soul-savers, who seemed much upset by their inability to reply. Their ignorance is truly colossal. They all reject evolution, admit they know nothing about science and refuse to discuss it. Jesus belongs to their family circle and guides them every inch of the way. It is really painful to listen to their absurdities, which obviously spring from some deficiency in their mentality. Their petty conventicles are miniature madhouses.

I know, of course, that outside these commercial concerns there are intelligent people in cultured circles who believe in the existence of the soul. But if one grasps the meaning of evolution then the soul must be ruled out as impossible. Believers themselves deny that their god has endowed all animals with a soul. Does the devouring worm also have one? A preposterous supposition!

It is not clear why this deity should not have endowed unicellular organisms with a soul, or even implanted one in the primeval slime. One cannot discern why he should have chosen a single living species out of some forty millions for this fantastic experiment of introducing a soul into infants at birth and withdrawing it at death. In the immense chain of evolution mankind has no greater significance than any other species. Who can say at what precise point or link in the chain this animal acquired a peculiar status and deserved to become immortal? If the first cell had included a soul it is quite probable that it would have transmitted this feature down to our own days, since all species have ancestral links which connect them with each other. Evolution establishes a kind of unity in the chain of living creatures. All beings come from an identical origin and contain identical elements. Many substances are common to both animals and plants; natural laws are common to all living creatures. Hence, if man has a soul there must be forty million other sorts. If you insist on a monopoly of soul for our own species, the assumption may gratify your vanity but be revolting to the intellect.

The religious cliques I have mentioned believe firmly in Paradise and in Hell, but there are better educated churchmen who had given up Hell and limit themselves to tracing the road to Paradise and to assuring their congregations that they will have their wishes satisfied in a land where all is perfect. If I ask them for a rational explanation of the soul's anatomy and a description of its exact nature they admit there is no scientific proof of the instrument of immortality but do put forward "proofs" which they profess to find in the Bible, but which cannot be regarded as of serious value.

It is perhaps opportune to ask these gentlemen to acquire some knowledge of the most recent discoveries in physics. It is now known, for example, that a neutron can penetrate a thick sheet of lead for quite a number of light-years without ever colliding with a proton, so tiny are its dimensions. It could pass right through the sun unscathed without undergoing any appreciable change. Actually the sub-atomic particles are indestructable by heat or by anything else, so what is the danger of Hell? And why look forward to Paradise? If we believe it is situated somewhere between the stars — which means somewhere in general

and nowhere in particular — the temperature must be something like zero, the point at which all movement ceases. Since the soul is "spiritual" by definition, if it exists it must by definition be composed of particles even more tenuous than neutrons. Accordingly it cannot feel either the most intense heat or the most intense cold.

Like other natural phenomena, the appearance of life cannot be other than a chemical reaction under the influence of radiations of light, electricity and cosmic rays. The sun's rays form oceans of electricity which radiate in all directions. The chemistry of an organism also owes its existence to them. Animal energy is ultimately from the same source as all natural energy. So long as it lasts, you endure. You walk. When it is exhausted they carry you to the cemetery. *Kaput.*

Stars are born and die, just as we do. When the sun has emitted its last ray where (or what) will be its soul — or yours? Since Christians and other champions of immortality set so much store by survival, why don't they reflect on the fact that since the electron is eternal so is life itself. The elements which now compose you will go on for ever and will feel neither heat nor cold. Nor will they feel boredom for they will no longer constitute a brain.

[Translated by F.A.R. from an article in *Defense de l'homme*, the French Anarchist journal.]

## From Russia

THE SCIENTIFIC ACADEMY OF THE U.S.S.R. has replied to an inquiry from our correspondent, Mr. D. Shipper.

Issued from the "Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism", Leningrad, Kazan Square (formerly the Kazan Cathedral) and translated for us by Mrs. V. C. Manoussou and Mr. Bayard Simmons, the reply runs as follows:

Dear Mr. Shipper,

The Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism of the Scientific Academy of the U.S.S.R. was founded in 1932 and is a scientific research institution.

In the Museum are gathered exhibits, documents and other noteworthy objects which illustrate the role of religion and atheism in the history of society. The collection of the Museum covers more than 300,000 pieces, which are housed there (ikons, pictures, engravings, sculpture, etc.). Part of this collection is shown in special departments of the Museum used for public exhibition. The Museum has the following departments: religion in Ancient Egypt; religion and atheism in ancient Greece; the origins of Christianity; the history of the Papacy and Inquisition; the history of Orthodoxy and of Russian Atheism; Natural History and Religion. In 1957 will be opened a Department of Religions of the Far East.

The Museum is carrying on a work of enlightenment, excursions, lectures, evenings of questions and answers, and so on.

The Museum is publishing scientific works, books of reference, and others.

The propaganda of scientific-enlightenment in the U.S.S.R. is realized by our Museum, as well as the All-Union Society for Spreading Scientific and Political Knowledge and by its affiliated branches.

With respect,

Professor S. KOVALEV,

Doctor of the History of Science.

Director of the Museum, etc.

## The Scott Petition

AS EXPECTED, the F.C.C. rejected the petition of Robert H. Scott for non-renewal of the broadcasting license of the radio station which, contrary to the terms of the 1946 Scott Decision, permitted a foul attack on the character of atheists by an evangelist and refused the chance of reply.

We reported the case in our issue of January 4th. In America Mr. Scott had the support of one of the largest and most influential journals, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, which, in the course of a most favourable editorial, said:

"If stations allow attacks by one religion on another, or on no religion, they should also permit a fair reply. That is radio's obligation to free speech."

Most American papers were silent about the Petition. Senator McCarthy may be politically dead but McCarthyism marches on.

The reply given to Mr. Scott was that the license would be renewed—quite without any requirements for the future conduct in keeping with the 1946 Decision. This, it said was "in the public interest." Mr. Scott is going to take the case to the U.S. Senate. Meanwhile, he has this to say in a letter to *The Freethinker*:

When, as it does, the Commission renews the license as "being in the public interest," it is saying in effect that the American public domain of radio and television may be used for direct attacks upon atheism or against atheists but need not be made available for answers to or rebuttals of such attacks! This, of course, is in violation of the basic democratic principle of equal freedom of speech, and it runs directly counter to the Commission's own Scott Decision of 1946.

The Commission is a Congress-created watchdog of the American airways which has turned into a sheep. It has surrendered completely to organized religion and its supporters in and out of Government and will not implement any of the regulatory dicta of the Scott Decision, not even in cases of direct attack on atheism or against atheists. I shall soon put the case into the U.S. Senate, which appoints the several members of the F.C.C., reminding them that under a certain provision of the Communications Act the Senate is responsible for the character and conduct of the Commissioners it appoints. I shall ask the Senate to institute a hearing requiring the several F.C.C. members to show cause why they should not be removed from their positions because of their deliberate failure to implement the Scott Decision which the F.C.C. handed down unanimously in 1946.

Since that document was issued in 1946 the personnel of the F.C.C. has drastically changed. It now has at least two Roman Catholic members, one of them, I believe, the Chairman of the Commission, and two of them supporters or cronies of Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin, whose anti-democratic voice and truly threatening activities were silenced and stopped, more or less, by the rebuke he received by the U.S. Senate."

The peculiar notion that "Freedom of Religion" means protection for religion is not confined, in U.S.A., to the popular press. In a book published by the University of Minnesota Press the writer pleads "re-establishing religious faith among intellectuals" and says in what, coming from such a quarter, is an astounding passage:

"Some compuses (universities) have individuals who are rather supercilious in respect to religion and provide an actual indoctrination against religious convictions. This is an insidious intrusion of doctrine, a violation of the funda-

mental principle of religious liberty and an abuse of academic freedom." (James Baren, "A Protestant Point of View" in Williamson, *Trends in Student Personnel Work*, pp. 327-32). We trust this is a mere isolated relic of the mentality which deprived men of their Chairs in some of the European universities of 150 to 200 years ago.

Meanwhile we shall look for the energetic championship of Scott's case by all fair minded American newspapers.

## Facts for Freethinkers — 17

### CHRISTIANISING THE BANTU

THE ALLIANCE between Church and State is clearly exposed in the published report of the ten-man Commission on the Social and Economic Development of the Bantu areas, commonly known as the Tomlinson Report (State Information Office, Pretoria, South Africa).

The Report finds that "the Christian religion is indeed a *miraculous power*" which has affected the Bantu in such a way "that no natural scientific explanation" is apparent "for the transformation" in their lives (i.e. from freedom to virtual slavery in three centuries). Therefore, the Commission propose "an attempt at the conversion of the whole Bantu people to Christianity," because "Good mission policy is good government policy in South Africa, and forms the basis of a sound racial policy."

To aid this necessary work, there are, at the moment, 3,325 ordained persons and 32,810 lay workers "labouring" among the Bantu. This is for the benefit of the "1.7 million members and more than four million souls" who belong to Christian churches.

Because South Africa presents ideal opportunities for missionary work, the last 100 years has seen a positive avalanche of overseas visitors, by the end of 1951 no less than 78 recognised churches and societies being active in purveying their own particular brand of the One and Only Truth. Possibly bemused by the vast variety of denominations, the Bantu joined wholeheartedly in the game of starting deviationist sects and in 1951 the Department of Native Affairs had 1,286 applications for State recognition on their waiting list.

As usual the Christians have made a particularly strong attack on the intellects of those too young to think and too ill to resist. In 1949 they owned 75 hospitals with 3,986 beds, and in 1951, out of the 5,870 Bantu schools in the Union controlled 84%. The most powerful Church is the Wederduits Gereformeerde Kerk with 1½ million members (14.09% of the total population); next the Methodists (11.22%), the Anglicans (9.77%), Bantu Separatists (6.66%), Roman Catholics (4.84%), Lutherans (4.07%), Presbyterians (2.30%), Apostolic Faith Mission (2.25%), Congregationalists (1.97%) and the Nederduits Hervormde Kerk (1.26%).

As the Protestants constitute 58.46% of the total population and the R.C.s only 4.84%, there seems little likelihood of South Africa becoming a Catholic country.

"Heathens" (mostly Bantu) numbering 32.5%, other non-Christians forming only 4.3%, "the real mission field for Christianity still lies among the Bantu."

Although the Bantu have 1,246 European missionaries and 2,079 ordained Bantu ministers to attend to their spiritual welfare, this is, clearly, quite insufficient, a further 8,000 "workers" being needed!

There is a Church educational institution for every 1,700 Bantu schools. Teacher training institutions, agricultural

and domestic science and technical schools figure in this 4,410 total, while other Church institutions include 66 mission hospitals, 38 libraries, 12 community centres, 92 film projection units, eight printing presses and 233 mission clinics.

In 1951 the Bantu contributed the puny sum of £420,000 for Church purposes, the philanthropic Europeans giving £822,000, a useful donation towards the 7,287 Church buildings. During the year studied £1,670,000 was spent on missions and auxiliary services "in the interests of the Bantu." (Such self-denial!) The question may be put to the Churches: "Would Western civilisation and Christianity continue to exist in Africa if the Europeans were to abandon Africa?"

The European Christians who "stand on a higher level" believe it their "duty" to safeguard "the interests of underdeveloped peoples."

As "Christian guardianship rests on Biblical grounds" the Churches and the State must accept it and "all the three parties, viz., the Churches, the State and the Bantu will have to meet in this matter."

The Report provides the antidote to lying religious propaganda that humanitarian individuals like Scott or Huddleston are representative of the Churches as a whole. For here, the connection between the economic slavery of the State and the intellectual slavery of the Church is apparent for all to see.

DAVID SHIPPER.

## Religion in the Philippines

SINCE 1936 the number of Philippine bishops and Sees has more than doubled.

Twenty years ago, there were 14 ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the Philippines, two archdioceses, 10 dioceses, and two prefectures apostolic. Today there are six archdioceses, 15 dioceses, seven prelatures nullius, three vicariates apostolic, and prefecture apostolic — 32 ecclesiastical jurisdictions in all.

Of the 37 members of the Philippine Hierarchy, 23 are Filipinos and 14 are foreigners. The foreign Bishops are all members of religious communities.

—*The Standard* (Dublin), 11/1/56.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE N.S.S. AND POLITICS

I notice that the N.S.S. took sides in a political issue which in no way concerns Secularism. I think this is most regrettable. I am referring to the Suez affair. Is it not realised that a man might be a convinced Secularist and yet support Britain's action? By pushing its own political views the Executive of the N.S.S. is debarring many staunch Secularists from membership.

Recognising that *THE FREETHINKER* is now really trying to interest the younger generation, I had all but made up my mind to seek membership of the N.S.S. I cannot do so now, of course, for I am a freethinker who refuses to be tied to any political party or policy. I can do my own thinking and I can write to my M.P. when I wish.

If all others would leave their fellows free to follow their own opinions in matters not affecting Secularism, atheism or religion the movement would be much stronger.

Surely supernaturalism is a big enough enemy for our organisation to fight, without taking on the world at large. W. E. HUXLEY.

[*THE GENERAL SECRETARY, NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY*, writes:—In protesting to the Prime Minister over Suez, the N.S.S. was pursuing its declared practical objects:—

"The promotion of peace between nations, the substitution of arbitration for war in the settlement of international disputes, and the countering of militaristic propaganda, leading to the recognition that modern war is futile and can only bring about the ultimate destruction of civilization."

It was not tying itself to any political party; it *was* taking sides—the side of peace against war.—Ed.]

### HUNGARY

Mr. McCall made an excellent reply to Mr. Varney. It is distressing to see how some people will "lean over backward" to justify invasion, repression and murder, when committed by a régime whose political creed they support. One wonders (to put it mildly) how, according to Mr. Varney, "it is obvious to any impartial person that the riots in Hungary were engendered by Protestant Britain" in conjunction with the Roman Catholics — unless he merely means that both these oppose Communism, in which case he is not telling us very much.

G. W. CLARK.

### FREEDOM'S FOE

I was very pleased to see the sensible letter from W. Morris in your issue of January 11th, as I also was amazed at the suggestion from the American Mr. Ehalt that the Monarchy is a bulwark against Catholicism.

The reason for the increased proportion of Catholics among the population is very simple: large families are now quite unusual except among Catholics and mentally deficient folk. Our best plan at present is to lend around the booklet *Freedom's Foe — the Vatican*. This may have some effect.

OCTOGENARIAN.

### PUBLIC PROFESSION

Mr. Burgess's letter came as a shock to me when he said the average Atheist is loth to admit his unbelief publicly. May I inform him that

1. I make a point of acquainting at least one person every day of my unbelief.
2. I pass on my *two* FREETHINKERS to possible new members every week.
3. Until recently I sold 12 copies of *THE FREETHINKER* in a large car factory in the Midlands every week.
4. My librarian knows of my unbelief and of my desire for free-thinking literature.
5. My newsagent knows of my unbelief and is called upon to supply one of my weekly copies of *THE FREETHINKER*.
6. My friends know that if they invite my family and myself to a wedding or a funeral, we shall accompany them to the pavement outside the church and then wait there till they come out.
7. My 14-year-old daughter has been constantly admonished during Scripture lessons for asking pointed questions, culminating in the headmaster taking over the class, apparently in an effort to enforce this evil doctrine on an unresponsive class.

I don't claim any medals or praise for my conduct and I know that many people are doing much more without recognition, and that this must be so if our society is to progress. W. A. MILLARD.

### PUBLIC PROFESSION

In a footnote to my previous letter you remark that the Christian burial of a Secularist reflects the wishes of those responsible for the funeral, not the wishes of the Secularist himself. I therefore suggest all our members should include in their wills definite instructions about a secular burial. Such can then be enforced.

Another way of disclaiming the profession of Christianity is to cross out the expression "Christian Name" on documents and substitute "Forename." The registered forename is the only legal one, even though your parents had you "Christianed" without your consent. In such ways one can declare and publicise one's pride in being a Secularist.

FRANK BURGESS.

### LECTURE REPORT

*SPEAKING* at the Secular Hall, Leicester, on January 20th, Mr. J. M. Alexander stated that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls throws a new light on the roots of Christianity, and that Christian history must be re-written.

He said that practices and beliefs which have long been regarded by Christians as their own private property are here shown to have been in current use by an obscure sect of Essenes a hundred years before the supposed birth of Jesus. Of course, Freethinkers have known this for many years through the writings of J. M. Robertson and others, all of which have been ignored by orthodoxy; however, the scrolls were a windfall for Freethought which none can deny.

Mr. Alexander drew a somewhat larger crowd than usual, due perhaps to the topicality of his subject, which seems to have caught the public fancy.

C.H.H.

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