

# The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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THE Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century created a wide gulf in, and throughout the Christian world between the lands mainly in the South of Europe, which adhered to the old medieval church of Rome and the lands chiefly in Northern Europe which followed the Reformers in their revolt against the Papacy. In principle, this major religious division still subsists, though, during the present century in particular the rapid growth of forces definitely antagonistic to Christianity *per se*, has tended to modify the traditional hostility between Rome and the Reformed churches. Nowadays the theological "Iron Curtain" which formerly separated the mutually hostile Catholic and Protestant worlds, tends to yield pride of place to more secular "Iron Curtains", and there seems to be a growing tendency for the Christian churches to unite in face of the common enemy; as so often previously demonstrated in these columns, the worldly-wise Vatican is just at present making excellent use of this current tendency for its own exclusive ends.

### A Protestant Speaks Up

There are however, still Protestants who know where their major enemy and the major enemy of civil and religious liberty is situated; who recall the penetrating judgement of Dean Inge: "Red Internationals come and go; but the Black International remains".

Such a Protestant writer is my valued friend Adrian Pigott, author of *Freedom's Foe, the Vatican*, to whom I am indebted for the perusal of another recent Protestant work. In his *How Peter became Pope*, an American Protestant scholar, Dr. William Dallmann, gives us a brief but heavily documented precis of the ecclesiastical annals of the Papacy and what a sordid tale of political intrigue and ecclesiastical blackguardism it represents! Dr. Dallmann does not pull his punches in recounting the nineteen centuries conspiracy of Rome to subjugate first Europe and then mankind to its "spiritual" despotism, our German-American author is, in this respect, a worthy successor of Martin Luther; and he appropriately concludes his book by citing the words of the intrepid Wittenberg Reformer: "God fill you with hatred of the Pope". That strikes a robust note too seldom heard in Protestant, or perhaps even in Freethinking literature nowadays.

### A Searchlight on the Papacy

It is a very great pity that this hard-hitting and immensely learned summary of the great Vatican institution and of its murky past cannot be made available to English readers; at present it appears only available to American readers, since it is published in Missouri by a local Protestant publisher. It is much to be hoped that this veritable arsenal of damaging facts and inferences will shortly be made available to other sections of the English speaking world where Rome still vigorously presses home its counter attacks. For Dr. Dallmann's work constitutes a veritable

searchlight upon the chequered History of the Papacy. The Church of Rome has often been accused of neglecting the study of the New Testament. But it has indicated by its constant practice how well it has, at least, assimilated one gospel text: the one about people who loved the dark and shunned the daylight "because their deeds were evil".

### A Protestant McCabe

Dr. Dallmann cites Joseph McCabe amongst his numerous authorities and indeed, on the strength of this work may himself be said to qualify for the current role of the Protestant McCabe, a congruous successor to our great Freethinking scholar.

## — VIEWS and OPINIONS —

# A Protestant View of the Papacy

By F. A. RIDLEY

For the 113 pages of *How Peter became Pope*, contain sufficient documentation for a book of ten times that length. It represents a concise summary of the evolution of the Papacy whose successive phases are indicated by appropriate titles. Early Christianity, the church of the dark ages, the Hildebrandine papacy of the Middle Ages; the Avignon Schism, the Jesuit-controlled Papacy: all these successive phases are indicated with concise and appropriate details in the course of Dr. Dallmann's masterly summary. The book ends quite congruously with the Lateran Treaty 1929 between Pope Pius the Eleventh (1922-39) the predecessor of the present Pope, and the Fascist regime of Mussolini, the latest of many such double deals between Rome and secular dictatorships and one for which incidentally, the then Cardinal Pacelli, now His Holiness Pope Pius the Twelfth was largely responsible. (The 1953 Concordat between the present Pope and General Franco represents an appropriate successor to the Vatican-Mussolini agreement). Dr. Dallmann's work thus accompanies the (elective) Papal Dynasty from its legendary origin, lost to view in the dense mist that obscures the origins of Christianity, up to the threshold of our present age. When, as we hope will be soon, Dr. Dallmann's work will be made accessible upon this side of the Atlantic, we hope that the author can see his way to add a postscript bringing the story up to the present year of Christian grace and Roman disgrace — 1957. For the evolution of the Vatican since 1929 when our author concludes his story, and in particular since 1945 when the Papacy shifted its ground unobtrusively — but very effectively! — from support for Fascism to support for Democracy has been not the least interesting or instructive chapter in the intriguing annals of the Papacy.

### A Record of Ecclesiastical Blackguardism

When one reflects upon the incredible villainies so frequently and recurrently to be found in the august dynasty of the Vicars of Christ, one often finds oneself reminded of the saying of the Turkish convert to Rome in the days of the Borgias who astounded his Muslim friends by declaring that only a Divine Institution could have survived such a succession of double-dyed villains! Dr. Dallmann's "Rogues' Gallery" gives us a lavish assortment, apart from conventional Borgia poisoners and heretic burning

Popes of the Counter-Reformation, we are presented with the lesser-known human monsters as even a Catholic historian has described them—who were Christ's earthly representatives during the age of the Harlots, as the official Vatican historian, Cardinal Baronius, actually described it. The self-same age in which Papal concubines sat on the altar and received the drunken homage of the Papal court. Here we seem to have the historical starting point of the legend of Pope Joan, the female pope, in whose historical existence medieval Catholicism—and Luther!—firmly believed; but who our more critical age tends to consign to the limbo of legend.

Pope Joan is shrouded in the gloom of the Dark Ages, but the misdemeanours of the Vicars of Christ were not confined to the Dark Ages: it was in the high noon of the Italian Renaissance, when the Vatican was the artistic glory of Europe, that Pope Julius II (the pope who commissioned Michelangelo to adorn the Vatican) could not allow pilgrims to kiss his toe because he suffered from the new and dreaded disease known, from its place of origin, as *morbus*

*gallicus* —'French disease'. The favourite reading of his equally cultured successor, Leo X, was a poem which took its title from the name by which the disease is now more generally known, —*Syphilis*! However, the *continuous* intolerance of the Papacy has inflicted more harm on humanity than have its periodic debaucheries: mankind has suffered on the whole more from the saintly Inquisitors than the cultured sybarites of the Vatican. We may perhaps conclude that the religious virtues of the Popes have been more destructive than their secular vices.

It was said of H. G. Wells's *Outline of History* that it formed the best introduction to the subject ever written. One can say much the same of Dr Dallmann's invaluable outline of the history of the Papacy. We hope that he will continue to turn the searchlight of his vast knowledge upon what is still today, as was in Luther's day, the greatest menace to the welfare of the human species and to the freedom of the human intellect.

(*How Peter became Pope* by William Dallmann, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.)

## “Lady Chatterley” in Japan

By COLIN McCALL

THE JAPANESE Supreme Court recently confirmed the conviction on charges of indecency of the translator, Mr. Sei Ito, and the publisher, Mr. Hisajiro Koyama, of a Japanese version of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. And the *Manchester Guardian* (8/5/57) reported that the action had provoked strong criticism in press and literary circles in Japan, it being feared that it represented “a first step towards weakening freedom of speech and expression.”

The case first came before Tokio District Court in 1950, the Procurator's Office alleging that twelve passages in the translation violated the criminal law. In January 1952 the District Court decided that the version could not be classed as obscene literature, and it acquitted Mr. Ito. The publisher, however, was held responsible for “employing improper methods in the sales campaign heralding the appearance of the novel” and was fined £250. The Procurator's Office appealed against the verdict and, in December of the same year, the Tokio High Court judged the translation to be obscene and fined Mr. Ito £100. An appeal to the Supreme Court was sponsored by a “defence council” which included a number of well-known writers, but the High Court verdict was upheld by fourteen votes to one.

Opinions about the merit of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* are likely to vary considerably, and few critics would claim that it is Lawrence's best book. That it has *some* literary merit, must, however be conceded by anybody who is capable of judging. Indeed, the Supreme Court judgement “admits the representations reflect the artistic sense of the author”. But nobody is naive enough to believe that it is literary merit that has made the book a best-seller in Japan. According to the Supreme Court, “The Japanese version of the book, at twelve places, plainly depicts the sex acts between a man and a woman.”

Yet it seems to me that the Supreme Court statement confuses two quite separate issues: (a) whether the sex act of particular people should be conducted in private; and (b) whether it is permissible to describe sex relationships in works of literature. After noting that the work “points out various problems latent in social ideology and the civilisations of the contemporary world”, and that the author “tries to show his philosophy — that sexual satisfaction is the primary one in life”, the statement continues: “There are rules in any society. The privacy of sex acts involving human beings is one of the rules of society.” With this, I

think all rational people will concur. But is “the privacy of sex acts” endangered by the publication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*? Of course not. The sex acts of the Japanese justices remain as private as they were before the book appeared. The knowledge that these are likely broadly to correspond with the sex acts of other men in and outside Japan, is hardly dependent upon the publication of a book by D. H. Lawrence. Perhaps a few Japanese believe the story of the gooseberry bush — or its eastern equivalent — but, if a judge is a father, most adults will know how he became one. Such knowledge is no way violates the privacy of the sex act. The justices' reasoning is faulty.

That logic was not the justices' only deficiency was strongly asserted by Mr. Suekichi Aono, chairman of the Japanese Association of Writers. Their understanding of literature, he said, was below that of senior high school students. And, drawing attention to the wider principles involved, he added: “Modern literature was forever trying to create new social ideas and make man freer. If the social ideas arbitrarily decided by a judge were to be accepted, then not only literary works but freedom of speech and thought would be severely restricted.”

But perhaps the most significant point was made by the translator himself in a statement to a press conference. Mr. Ito said: “I understand Chief Justice Tanaka believes in the Old Testament as a devout Catholic. You know how many indecent representations are implied there. If the court verdict is accepted, the authors of the Old Testament must be tried.” And the publishers, too? That would really cause a stir.

### Visit to Charles Bradlaugh's Grave

ON SUNDAY, May 26th, a party of Freethinkers will visit the grave of Charles Bradlaugh (Founder of the National Secular Society) in Brookwood Cemetery. Readers who wish to join the party are asked to meet at Waterloo Station at 1.30 p.m. by the entrance to the platform for the train leaving at 1.57. This will arrive at Brookwood at 2.45. It is hoped to return at 6.26 (arriving Waterloo at 7.16) and a day return ticket costs 7/-. Sandwiches should be taken; tea may be obtained from the Cemetery Restaurant. The party will be led by Mr. Charles Bradlaugh Bonner.

## Some Honest Doubters—2

by H. CUTNER

IT HAS ALWAYS been difficult to understand how an historian like James Anthony Froude could have been an "honest doubter". In his *More Nineteenth Century Studies* Prof. Willey calls him a "robust feethinking Protestant" which almost sounds like a Christian Atheist.

Froude was a fine writer, but he appears never to have shaken off the influence of his famous brother, Hurrell Froude, and of J. H. Newman whom he greatly admired. He lived through the famous Oxford Movement when Keble, Newman, and Hurrell Froude were doing their best to bring England back not so much to God Almighty as to the Church of England. All these people saw nothing but Hell for the future of England unless the Church was reformed — that is, damnation for everybody.

The really significant thing about it all is that the Tractarians as Pusey, Keble, Newman and the rest were called, were actually very intelligent men yet they were unable to see that the Christian doctrines they were advocating were mostly crude superstitions. Newman, no doubt whatever, saw this but his scepticism was over-ruled by his credulity and religiosity, and no one should be surprised that it led him to grovel before an Italian priest and go over to Rome.

Froude, in his freethinking book, the *Nemesis of Faith*, had no doubt about the Church of England which he called a foolish Church, chattering, parrot-like, old notes, of which it had long forgotten the meaning; a clergy who not only thought not at all, but whose heavy ignorance, from long unreality, hung about them like a garment, and who mistook their fool's cap and bells for a crown of wisdom . . . and much more even worse. Yet he never really shed some belief — or did he shed it all, and turn to writing history, keeping more or less silent about his religious views?

Prof. Saintsbury in his *Short History of English Literature* mentions the *Nemesis of Faith* but says nothing about it being "freethinking", though he admits that the Oxford movement "sent Froude not to Rome but to freethought." But one fails in the interesting account of Froude's "honest doubt" to learn from Prof. Willey whether he had come across the real Freethinkers, the fighting ones, like Bradlaugh and Foote. That he was influenced very strongly by Carlyle (who was also afraid to say outright that he was an unbeliever) may account for part at least of Froude's timidity. And J. M. Robertson's comments are "how little rational thinking underlay Froude's own rhetorical theism".

The fifty pages Prof. Willey devotes to that now forgotten "classic", *Essays and Reviews*, are fully worthwhile because very few people living now have read it, and because "within a year of its publication the orthodox English world was convulsed with indignation and panic". And no wonder — here were six clergymen and a layman doing their best to instil a little common-sense into Christianity — that is, Protestant Christianity. Could it be done?

Prof. Willey quotes some pronouncements in a weekly newspaper of this day which are almost exactly the kind of thing which the writers of *Essays and Reviews* were demanding to be done. For example: —

Religion will not arrive at a right approach until it discards myth and unwarranted assumptions . . . and bases its beliefs on scientific facts and principles.

If Christianity is to survive among thoughtful people . . . it must present, on its own behalf, that which does not rely on the evanescent emotionalism of an evangelist like Billy Graham, or on the authoritarian dogmas of Rome.

But the idea of "discarding myth" or relying on science was something almost entirely foreign to Victorian Protestantism, and "cries of horror, grief and pain rang from the press and the pulpit" at the outrageous criticisms and

proposals in the *Essays*. It is doubtful if even Paine's *Age of Reason* caused such a furor.

Yet the book was about as mild and timid as it could be — God and Jesus were not in the least assailed, all that was asked for was to make Christianity a little more civilised. Prof. Willey's analysis of the book, its authors and its times, makes entertaining reading. And no doubt some future historian, a hundred years hence, will deal in much the same way with the BBC and its determined attempt to re-introduce the most blatant Fundamentalism into the homes of England.

But again I can only wonder — did the authors of *Essays and Reviews* never read Paine or Robert Taylor or Southwell? If they wanted to bring modern thought into their old myths, it seems to me that it was their duty to read our great Freethinkers. What happened was that these were boycotted. And, indeed, even Prof. Willey, while he names Colenso and Renan and Buckle and even Darwin seems to know nothing or very little of the "fighting" Freethinkers of the nineteenth century who were so savagely persecuted under the ludicrous Blasphemy Laws, and who had to go so often to prison for their ideas. He does mention "Tom" Paine but not in connection with religion — only when he deals with John Morley's study of Burke in which it is grudgingly admitted that Paine was more "correct" than Burke on the French Revolution.

Mark Rutherford — that is, William Hale White — is another of our honest doubters. His novels are fine examples of minor masterpieces, described by Prof. Willey as studies of the embodiment "of the Puritan spirit in an Age of Agnosticism." They are very carefully analysed for, of course, they embody so much of Hale White's own life — the pangs and pains he suffered because he was forced to give up quite a lot of his religion. Not all of course. "Faith the belief which saves" he wrote, "is not to be preserved without a struggle." It seems to have been always a struggle with Hale White — as it was with "Mark Rutherford".

It is curious to note that he found in Spinoza "a compensation, intellectual or emotional or both, for the loss of traditional beliefs"; and he translated the *Ethics* — considered to be the first *reliable* translation in English. If there are any readers of this journal who have not read some of the novels of Hale White, they ought to do so, and with Prof. Willey's fine exposition, they will understand why these books have had an increasing popularity. But I still cannot understand why the entry in his Journal, "Not a soul has said a word to me for years about God", should be one of the "saddest" entries, so characterised by Prof. Willey. Hale White, the student of Spinoza, should have been glad.

Finally, there is John Morley — but was he a doubter at all? Is it possible to read his three monographs on Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, without seeing where his sympathies were?

The trouble with Morley was that he never liked what he called the modern "purely negative and purely destructive school of freethinkers". It would not be unfair to say that if it had not been for some of these "freethinkers", even Morley would not have got away easily with spelling "God" with a small "g". But Morley came under the influence of so many "respectable" unbelievers like Mill, Huxley, Spencer, and Tyndall, as well as Comte, George Eliot, and G. H. Lewes, that he no doubt preferred to ignore the others — the more aggressive, plain-speaking ones.

(concluded on next page)

## This Believing World

It is not often a Bishop of the Church of England has the courage to attack the Church of Rome, so it is worth while putting on record what the Bishop of Chester thinks of Roman Catholicism. According to *News Chronicle*, he considers that "the spiritual totalitarianism of the Roman Catholic Church is an aggressive attack on the Church of England which is mounting in intensity." Of course. And it will go on mounting until something is done about it within the Church of England. The Bishop complains that Anglicans have "to expend so much effort in defending their Church against the attacks of those who should be our brothers in Christ."

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But why always be on the defensive? During the nineteenth century, Protestants were not afraid of Catholics, and they produced some slashing attacks on Rome which should never have been allowed to go out of print. We can recollect few contemporary criticisms equal in vigour or in collecting facts against Rome's "totalitarianism", spiritual or otherwise. Moreover, it is not altogether a question of "conversions" as the Bishop appears also to think. Both sides are making converts and both are losing to Free-thought. But if the Church of England wants to beat the Church of Rome, it will have to do much better than trotting out the milk-and-water-stuff we get even from its bishops.

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It is extraordinary how often, according to *Psychic News* our wonderful mediums discover where poor murdered people, who had been missing for days or weeks, can be found. The latest example is that of the unfortunate Cranford widow — a Mrs. Garland knew exactly where she was "hours before the police uncovered the body." Yet the murderer — at the time of writing — is still at large in spite of the most intensive search by the police. Is it not rather strange that mediums can always say where the body can be found — after it is found of course — and yet never tell the police where the murderer is hiding? No medium has so far been of any use whatever to the police in spite of the impudent claims made in Spiritualist papers.

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Another inanity is the belief that "Katie King" has returned again. Katie is the "materialised" spook who bamboozled Sir William Crookes—that is, the medium, Florence Cook, did the bamboozling. She was exposed as an unmitigated fraud later, but Crookes had perfect faith in her. He also believed that her father, another famous spook called John King, had been when he was alive the old pirate Henry Morgan. Nothing is too silly for these people. A German, Dr. Hans Gerloff, "a philologist", lectured on the father and daughter spooks at the College of Psychic Science recently, and he even believes more than poor Crookes. Thus is nonsense perpetuated.

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For the sum of 32 shillings our readers can buy a book entitled *The Clothes of God* — a title most intriguing to such blatant unbelievers as ourselves. For we have often wondered, if there be a God, how he would be dressed? A Harris tweed coat and dark slacks do not seem quite the correct clothes in Heaven — and even a late Victorian frock coat with silk hat to match would make the Almighty rather a figure of fun these days. We are sorry, therefore, to add that this book is not like Carlyle's famous *Sartor Resartus*, a dissertation on clothes, divine or otherwise, but mostly about dreams and against the "superficiality" of Materialism; with hints on how to get to know God, and other kinds of spiritual enlightenment. And so very cocksure!

In his exposition the other Sunday of true Christianity, the Rev. S. Phipps of ITV dispensed with the usual engineers, foremen, confectionary cooks, etc., all of whom almost fall over themselves in their hurry to tell us how Christ Jesus came into their lives, and indulged in a straight talk about God and Christianity mingling completely in our daily work. God, he told us, was deeply interested even in such things as Cup Finals quite as much as in everything else. Mr. Phipps even told us that God "made" the world and explained how the Lord did it by moving his (Mr. Phipps's) hands round an imaginary ball. It was all so thrilling with Christ as the *piece de resistance*. Infidels — Good God, are there such people!

## A Link for Christ

WE RECENTLY SAW a folding leaflet from the "Post Office Christian Association" specially printed for mailing to Sub-Postmasters and hoping the recipient "will form another link in this service for Christ". One paragraph in the leaflet seems particularly significant. "The Work Overseas" — it reads — "has assumed strategic importance in the great task of world evangelism. In countries where Missionary work is hindered, the Postal system is often wide open and becomes a channel for the distribution of Gospel literature which gives personal contact with enquiring souls in the great Post Office service. By this means the Gospel message can be sent over wide areas." We wonder what would happen if the N.S.S. addressed advertising leaflets of this kind to every Sub-Postmaster in the country suggesting they should use the Postal system as a "channel" for the distribution of Secular literature. The "great Post Office service" would probably be up in arms.

## SOME HONEST DOUBTERS

(concluded from page 163)

Yet he had read *Supernatural Religion* and allowed its author to reply to Canon Lightfoot's very poor criticisms in his journal, the *Fortnightly Review*. It seems a pity that, as J. M. Robertson noted, Morley's "freethinking books are flawed with self contradiction . . . (his) distinction was one of literary style rather than of logical mastery".

That great defender of Theism, Prof. Flint, in his *Anti-theistic Theories*, has some words on two of Morley's contemporaries which Prof. Willey might well consider — they are about Bradlaugh and Holyoake who were, if I may be allowed to say so, far above honest doubt. He says,

There is an impression in some quarters that atheism is advocated in a weak and unskilful manner by the chiefs of secularism. It is an impression which I do not share. Most of the writers who are trying to diffuse atheism in literary circles are not to be compared in intellectual strength with either Mr. Holyoake or Mr. Bradlaugh.

And J. M. Robertson claims that Bradlaugh was, as compared with Morley, the more expert and consistent logician, and the better trained philosopher of the two.

Prof. Willey's book makes all the same, fascinating reading, especially to those who have read — as I have — most of the books he deals with. I strongly recommend it to our readers and hope that they will buy or borrow it from their library.

—NEXT WEEK—

A REPLY TO ANDRE LORULOT

by PAUL BRAUN

# THE FREETHINKER

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All Articles and Correspondence should be addressed to THE EDITOR at the above address and not to individuals.

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or 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.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

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.

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### OUTDOOR

- Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Satis Cafe, 40 Cannon Street).—Sunday, May 26, 7 p.m.: L. EBURY "Atheism".
- Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Messrs. DAY, NEWTON, and SHEPPARD.
- Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Every Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MURRAY and SLEMEN.
- Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street, Kingston, Surrey).—Every Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and E. MILLS.
- 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: A. ARTHUR.
- Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square) — Thursday, 1 p.m.: R. POWE. Friday, 1 p.m.: R. POWE.
- Wales and Western Branch N.S.S., Bristol (The Downs)—Sunday, May 26th, 7 p.m.: —DAVE SHIPPER.
- West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday, at the Marble Arch, from 4 p.m.: A. ARTHUR.

### INDOOR

- South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1). — Sunday, May 26th, 11 a.m.: HECTOR HAWTON, "Science and Morals".

## Notes and News

THE 1957 Conference of the National Secular Society promises to be interesting and well attended, and we should like to draw your attention to the details given in the advertisement alongside. Those who wish to book hotel accommodation should write to the Secretary N.S.S., 41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1 immediately.

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VATICAN RADIO'S ASSAULT on the international listening public will be increased on medium and short wave frequencies at Santa Maria di Galeria (near Rome). For the past few years Vatican broadcasts have been steadily increasing and during 1956 12,000 14-minute talks (in 28 languages) were broadcast.

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MEXICO CITY daily newspapers reported that a "Te Deum" would be sung in R.C. churches to celebrate the centenary of the 1857 constitution. This was the Constitution which led to the R.C. Church prerogatives being curtailed! Bishop Orozco immediately issued an outraged denial.

## The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged £223 6s. 10d.; A. Hancock, 1s.; R. J. Hale, 2s. 10d.; A. Ineson, 2s. 6d.; N. Cluett, 2s. 6d.; Wm. Mackee, £1 3s. 9d. Total to Date, May 17th 1957, £224 19s. 5d.

IT IS ANNOUNCED from the Vatican that Catholics will be allowed a relaxation of fasting rules before Holy Communion. A meal may now be eaten up to three hours before Communion at any Mass (previously this applied only to evening Mass) and a non-alcoholic drink may be consumed up to an hour before. The undernourished proletariat of several Catholic countries will continue their involuntary fasting in spite of this legal amelioration.

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A WRITER in the Filipino newspaper, *Manila Sentinel* gives a graphic description of the flight of thousands of refugees from the North to South Viet-Nam. He tells of the ragged and tattered refugees, the weeping children, etc., and then asserts: "What impressed me the most was the Papal flag and the crucifix which the leaders of each group bore in front of their people." Interviewed, they gave the following reasons for fleeing South of the 17th Parallel: "Because Communism is Godless;—Because Communism destroys the family;—Because Communism denies the fundamental human right to life and happiness;—Because Communism is evil;—Because Communism is against any religion and, therefore, against the Roman Catholic Church." The R.C. Church now claims to be "helping in the rehabilitation and education of the Vietnamese Catholics in particular and the whole Vietnamese nation in general."

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MR. KANAYAMA Japanese Consul-General in Hawaii, a devout Catholic, explained some of the difficulties under which missionaries work in Japan to members of the St. Francis Xavier club in Hong Kong. Apparently the Japs lack interest in "absolute truth" and many householders display two altars, one for Buddhism, one for Shintoism. Under these conditions it is, naturally, difficult to preach the "absolute truth" of Catholicism. However, Mr. Kanayama states reassuringly that Catholicism is making steady progress in *influence and prestige*.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE LEICESTER . WHITSUN 1957

### RECEPTION AND SOCIAL

The N.S.S. Executive Committee cordially invites delegates and friends to the above at the

SECULAR HALL, 75 HUMBERSTONE GATE

at 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8TH

### THE CONFERENCE

will be held at the

SECULAR HALL on SUNDAY, JUNE 9TH  
at 10.30 — 12.30; 2.30 — 4.30. Lunch at 1 p.m.

### OUTDOOR DEMONSTRATION

SUNDAY EVENING, 6.15 p.m. MARKET PLACE,  
LEICESTER

(If wet, in the Secular Hall, Leicester)

### AN OUTING

will be arranged for WHIT MONDAY

# The Revelations of Ras-Shamra

by C. T. SALISBURY

DURING the middle of the second millennium b.c. the city of Ugarit was one of the most important fortress towns of North Syria. It stood somewhat near to the rather flexible frontiers of the two great empires of the period, those of Egypt and the Hittites and consequently its name was mentioned frequently in the annals of the Pharaohs such as those found at Tel-el-Amarna, the site of the sun city of Akhetaton on the Nile. But until comparatively recently the ruins of this great metropolis were still undiscovered. Then in 1928 a peasant ploughing his land at Ras-Shamra uncovered a burial vault and so heralded one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the present century, for he had stumbled on the site of Ugarit. During the course of the excavations the ruins of streets, palaces and monuments were laid bare but what was of particular importance was the discovery of a vast library of clay tablets incised with the cuneiform script, the contents of which threw a rather curious light on biblical origins. It was found that religious ideas, poetry, stories and various concepts which were supposed to have been the work of Jehovah, Moses and his successors were in common currency some five or six hundred years before the supposed time of the Exodus. In a way, the discoveries at Ras-Shamra were quite as important as the more recent finds at the Dead Sea as we shall see.

Before detailing some of the more significant, however, it would be as well to say that Ugarit was cited by Mr. Werner Keller as an example of one of the wicked vice ridden cities of Canaan, the pious Israelites supposedly coming into contact with its inhabitants after the Exodus, although according to the excavators of Ras-Shamra the city was razed to the ground roughly one hundred years prior to the date of that event as given by Mr. Keller. Needless to say not a shred of evidence was produced to support this claim and the present writer gives below the facts as gleaned from the standard authorities which should prove of interest to those Freethinkers whose concern is biblical origins.

In the first place, the dating of the level which indicated the period when the city was at its most prosperous has been agreed as the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries b.c., various objects emanating from eighteenth and nineteenth dynasty Egypt having been unearthed.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Ugarit must have met its end about 1300 b.c.

When the clay tablets were discovered, some scholars were of the opinion that they may be written in an archaic form of Hebrew in cuneiform and several years of research did in fact confirm this. Moreover, there was every indication that this Hebrew was, even at this early date, in an advanced stage. As Prof. Schaeffer says: "The Ras-Shamra alphabet is already so advanced that it implies the existence of a still earlier alphabet yet to be found<sup>2</sup>." This was indeed a remarkable discovery, for it meant in effect that the original inhabitants of Canaan were using the Hebrew language long before the Israelites had entered Canaan and seemed to imply that the latter must have usurped the language when they conquered the land. But what the early Canaanites wrote down was even more startling. For in complete contradiction to the Bible, far from being wicked and defiled as stated in the Book of Leviticus and other scriptures, the texts revealed a people of high moral order combined with a sense of law and justice. Their literature was of a quality never dreamed of by Biblical commentators; to cite Professor Schaeffer: "By means of these documents we now see that the early

Israelites differed in no way from the Canaanites<sup>3</sup>." The texts tell us that the people of Ugarit had many gods, but the supreme deity was El<sup>4</sup>. Canaan is sometimes referred to as "The Whole Land of El" and the supremacy of this god known by the same name in the Bible as the Lord of the Israelites is obviously "a clear indication of a monotheistic tendency in the Canaanite religion"<sup>5</sup>. Nor is this all, for the name Yahu (Yahwe or Jehovah) is also found at Ras-Shamra.

The mythological ideas found in literature very often use the same wording as the mythological motives in the Scriptures. For example, Leviathan is "a crooked serpent" (Isaiah 27: 1) with several heads (Psalms 74: 14). The poems of Ugarit tell us of Lotan, a swift and crooked serpent with seven heads. In another of the poems, an expression is put into the mouth of El which tells of the great feat of tearing the sea of Jam-Suf asunder. Also the verb, "to tear asunder" as used in the Ras-Shamra writings, is the same as that used in the Psalms (136: 13). The conclusion reached was that long before the supposed Exodus across the Red Sea or Sea of Reeds (Jam-Suf), the Canaanites had a similar myth<sup>6</sup>. In fact the language of the Ras Shamra in etymology and syntax is very similar to that of the Scriptures<sup>7</sup>. Also: ". . . even the language of some of our Ras-Shamra texts is entirely Biblical"<sup>8</sup>. And this: "The style resembles most of the poetic books of the Old Testament and especially the Book of Isaiah"<sup>9</sup>. As in the case of the Dead Sea Scrolls then, here was irrefutable evidence of things written and said long, long before the birth of the supposed authors. In the case of the former many of the sayings of Jesus have been found, although written about a century before the supposed birth of "Our Lord", whilst in the case of the latter, poetry, sayings, law and so forth were in existence some three hundred years before Moses was supposed to have started his writing and some eight hundred years before the time of Isaiah. Schaeffer sums it up thus: "The traditions, culture and religion of the Israelites are bound up inextricably with the early Canaanites. The compilers of the Old Testament were fully aware of this, hence their obsession to break with such a past and to conceal their indebtedness to it"<sup>10</sup>.

There can be little doubt that the inhabitants of Ugarit had been influenced by Egyptian religious thought, for, so far as we know, it was in Egypt that the first monotheistic concepts arose. Let us briefly review the period. About 1550 b.c. the princes of Thebes, Upper Egypt, after having expelled the Hyksos overlords, established themselves as kings of all Egypt and so founded the glorious eighteenth dynasty. About one hundred years later the great warrior Pharaoh, Tuthmosis III, in a series of brilliantly conducted campaigns, had established the world's first empire and for several hundred years the tribute of the known world poured into the Pharaoh's coffers at Thebes. Contrary to popular belief, the kings of Egypt appear to have treated prisoners surprisingly well, for we read from the papyri and tablets that cities were not razed to the ground nor were their inhabitants needlessly slain. In fact, the sons of vassal kings and princes were sent to Thebes to be educated in the ways of the Nile dwellers and we are not surprised to read of the princes of Codes, Carchemish, Kadesh and Ugarit, etc., being greatly influenced by the superior culture of the Egyptians. During the earlier part of the dynasty, the state god of the empire had been Amun-Re but during the Reign of Amunhotep III a strange new religious cult arose. This was the worship of the Aton or sun's disc as the

visible manifestation of the Supreme Deity and it was indeed curious in god-ridden Egypt. All this was happening in the fifteenth century b.c., in other words contemporary with the rise of the montheistic worship of El at Ugarit. When Amunhotep IV, or Akhenaton, came to the throne the Aton cult really came into its own and it was made the state religion remaining so for some years during which the literature of Egypt acquired a new beauty hitherto unknown. As in the case of Ugarit, much of it appears to have been biblical in style; we have for example a hymn to the Aton, found at Tel-el-Amarna, which is almost identical to Psalm 104<sup>11</sup>, yet written some four hundred years before the supposed time of David.

Although the empire suffered a slight decline under Akhenaton, Tutankhamun and later kings of the eighteenth dynasty, it was mostly restored by Seti I and Rameses II and did not come to an end until the invasion of the "Sea Peoples" in 1194 b.c. All in all then, Syria, especially Palestine, had been under Egypt's domination and superior influence for approximately 350 years.

As the present writer pointed out in a previous article ("The Historical Aspects of the Exodus") nobody knows the actual time of the entry of the Israelites into Canaan, various dates ranging from 1750 b.c. to 1250 b.c. having been advanced. The latter date will not stand the slightest investigation but there is a certain amount of evidence which suggests the possibility of the former. It is generally agreed that at this early date the Hebrews would have been little more than barbarians and would naturally have been influenced by any form of superior culture. This

then would be the reason why we find so many proto Old Testaments dating from this period, but not of Jewish origin, and as the evidence of the archaic Hebrew suggests seems to clearly imply that the myths and legends of old Canaan and Egypt, together with the monotheistic concepts of the latter which compromised the state religion of the empire for a time, were absorbed by these wandering newcomers. It was of course, quite a natural thing.

The Papyrus Ipuwer, dating from the Middle Kingdom (circa 2000 b.c.) contains numerous passages which are repeated word for word in the Book of Exodus, whilst the Papyrus D'Orbiney contains the Story of the Two Brothers, on which the tale of Joseph and his brethren was obviously based. These evidences together with the more recent finds at Ras-Shamra throw an interesting if somewhat heretical light on biblical origins and surely show the absurdity of those, like Mr. Keller, who endeavour to show how "archaeology proves the Bible was right."

1. C. Schaeffer — Ia Deuxieme Campagne, pp10-11  
Note: Professor Schaeffer was the person in charge of the excavations and is the standard authority on the subject.
2. C. Schaeffer — Cuneiform Texts, p.35.
3. Ibid p.59.
4. R. Dussaud — Les Decouvertes de Ras Shamra (Ugarit) et l'Ancien Testament p.59
5. Schaeffer — Cuneiform Texts, p.60.
6. Dussaud — Les Decouvertes etc., p.61.
7. Jack — The Ras-Shamra Tablets, p.10.
8. Schaeffer — Cuneiform Texts, p.58.
9. Jack — The Ras-Shamra Tablets, p.7.
10. Schaeffer — Cuneiform Texts, p.59.
11. J. H. Breasted — A History of Egypt.

## Are Jews Really Necessary?

By OTTO WOLFGANG

BEFORE we can try to deal with this question — which the present writer, though of Jewish descent himself, is going to answer in the negative — we have to define what a Jew is.

This is what the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has to say about Jews :

"The name came to mean the followers of Judaism, including in-born and proselytes, the racial signification diminishing as the religious increased . . ."

"The racial composition of the Jews has given rise to considerable controversy . . . There is a resemblance between Jews and Armenians, and though the Armenoid type predominates there are other features in the composition. Weissenberg suggests that there was within historic times a mixture, not in Palestine but the Caucasus, between the Armenoid and a blonde type, and that there are two types of Jews — the Semitic, dark with a fine nose, and Armenoid, with a coarser nose and an appearance of blondes".

If they are Caucasians and if among them there are even blondes — as, particularly in Eastern Europe, there frequently are — then the Jews are members of the white (Caucasian) "race", and with this the clamour for their segregation and against inter-marriage falls to the ground.

Yet are they a race apart? The term 'race' has been used very loosely. There is only one human species (with certain divisions and sub-divisions), such as there is only one species of Dog, although dogs may vary a great deal in their external appearance. Jews and non-Jews have exactly the same blood groups between them; what goes as the typical Jewish characteristics is a result of segregation and in-breeding throughout the centuries. The English or German Jew, having imbibed Western culture, has very little in common with the Jew from Abyssinia or the Yemen. Their religion only is the common denominator; they are followers of "Judaism" which is and always has been a petrified priest-made code and which it is not easy to harmonize with modern life in Europe. This mental

mummification has to be fought in the interest of general progress.

But even where the Code is no longer allowed to stifle modern ideas in the Jewish community, there are still historical residues which have to be opposed. They are the result of centuries of persecution and discrimination, leading, as they must, to a generic inferiority complex which, in turn breeds arrogance. He who is humiliated or despised finds consolation in the thought of mental (or moral) superiority over his oppressor, the "goi" (which is equivalent to the Greek "Barbarian"). With intermarriage being scorned and segregation maintained the Jews of today are, literally, a Caste — a term the Portuguese in India used for denominating in-breeding within a social entity.

Until the times of Enlightenment only one outlet was left to them: to amass wealth and live on usury, since the medieval Catholic Church did not allow borrowing on interest. Hence the Jews have developed a flair for commercial activities, later they inundated the "free professions" for they were still not allowed to acquire land. In Eastern Europe (particularly Poland) they also became small artisans and worker members of a doubly downtrodden proletariat, and consequently the avant-garde of Communism. On the other hand, the wealthy Jews with their highly developed sense of conservatism, became bankers, trust magnates and reactionary politicians. These two sections face each other 'over the barricades', as it were; in no way do they differ from the two sections of the gentile community, therefore there is no need for them to proclaim their being Jews as well.

Is there any need for division in the cultural field? Heinrich Heine was great not as a Jew, but as the greatest representative of German romanticism; Mendelssohn, the

Jew, composed lieder that are reflecting German sentiment at its truest, so that even the Nazis were unable to ban his work. Spinoza is so much the philosopher *par excellence* that Hegel said "To be a philosopher, it is necessary first of all to have been a Spinozist".

Freud, Marx, Einstein made their contributions to culture without bothering whether or not they were Jews; Epstein, Menuhin, Oistrakh and the host of other executing artists and actors such as Danny Kaye or Charlie Chaplin etc. — have become known the world over without their being concerned with Judaism, which has contributed nothing to their greatness.

Hence it is not only unnecessary, nay it is detrimental to human civilization to maintain a barrier for a religious class apart: a caste system.

We are repelled by what is alien to our standards of life and behaviour; yet the Jewish religion and code derive from superstitious beliefs of bronze-age man. The Jewish "kosher" rites based on the belief that dangerous "life spirits" dwell in the blood bent of vengeance for the food taboos have nothing in common with modern knowledge of hygienics, but are as primitive a superstition as the slaughter of the animal whose flesh is prepared for food; *mesusah* and *tephillim* are means of exorcism, as crude as any found in Central Africa (where similar genital symbols are used to ward off evil forces.) Never in history were the *B'ne Israel* as such held in Egypt as slaves and they shared the utter ban on any Sabbath work with other semi-barbarians of the ancient Orient who dreaded to do anything on the day of Saturn, the "ill star".

However, by clinging to these — and other — dated and now ridiculous superstitions one helps to maintain an unnecessary partition in our communal body; foster misunderstanding, hatred and "Apartheid", to create artificially a "Jewish problem" and to ossify bronze-age notions in the midst of modern society.

There is a social necessity in having a Queen set apart from the workers in the communities of bees or ants: there is nothing that makes it necessary to maintain the survival of a Jewish caste, in contradistinction to the goal of general betterment in the human community.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### N.S.S. AND POLITICS

Mr. N. Field's comments in the April 26th issue of THE FREETHINKER notwithstanding, Bradlaugh's attitude toward British intervention in Egypt in 1882 is hardly "gloriously irrelevant" to our own day. (a) Bradlaugh protested not merely as a politician — which no one denies he was — but as President of the N.S.S. Indeed, he contrasted what he considered the superior morality of Atheists on this issue with the equivocal attitude of the Churches. (b) Without wishing to defend either Nasser's dictatorial government or the particular means he used to nationalise the Suez Canal, I would observe that it has yet to be proved that there was an actual menace to shipping in the Canal last autumn before Anglo-French intervention, any more than there was in 1882. JUSTIN.

To ignore the present unprecedented world crisis and to confine ourselves to religion and ethics is like Nero fiddling while Rome is burning. Besides, war and peace ought to be of paramount interest to present-day Secularists. War as a means of finally settling international disputes is just as much an "untrue belief" (Ref.: N.S.S. Objects) as faith in creeds and superstitious practices. Wars sometimes have, indeed, served the cause of progress in days gone by but, in our atomic age they are obviously the limit of suicidal madness.

We should not waste too much time apportioning the blame for a particular outbreak of a localised war but seek to change those conditions leading to it. ERIC A. McDONALD (S. Africa).

### JOHN M. ROBERTSON

My recollection on the subject of Robertson's editorial connection with *The New Age* is quite correct. Robertson took over when J. Clayton became too ill to do the editorial work, and he con-

tinued as editor till Drape and Jackson came in. I do not think there was any suspension of the paper between these two events. I recall well two articles I wrote that John M. Robertson was particularly pleased with: one on Joseph Chamberlain, and the second on the hangings and executions at Denshawai, concerning which horror I organised later a petition at the request of Bernard Shaw and Wilfred Seaven Blunt. Whether Robertson was actually appointed editor by anyone I cannot say: my source of information was Robertson himself. Mr. Cutner's authorities are valueless on this subject.

I never questioned Robertson's ability, but his wisdom on many subjects. Some of the strongest Pro-Boers were the most rabid Jingoists in 1914, namely Lloyd George and Mackinnon Worth. C. H. NORMAN

### THE DOLLAR AND THE VATICAN

Re Avro Manhattan's book, *The Dollar and the Vatican*, I should have had this book a month ago as I've tried numerous bookshops in Glasgow, without result, and some of the salesmen in these bookshops were barely civil, as though one were asking for something immodest — all of which proves Mr. Manhattan's statement that there is a *heavy* ban on his book, in Glasgow at least. THOS. GILLESPIE

### ROYALTY AND MILITARISM

I have been much interested in the various letters about Royalty and am surprised that Pacifists and other who loathe Militarism do not unite in demanding that all the vile parades of soldiers that are so much in evidence in connection with the Queen's movements should cease. All the childish dressing up of soldiers — especially the ridiculous "busbies" of Grenadiers — and the wearing of medals and other "decorations", should cease. Cannot Pacifists and even non-Pacifists join in demanding that soldiers be kept unobtrusively in the background?

OCTOGENARIAN

### MALTHUS

Really, Mr. Dickinson is nothing if not very naive. When I asked him for the "other works" in which we were so confidently told Malthus had given up his Malthusianism, I wanted chapter and verse — not mere titles. I knew these quite well. And when I asked to give me *one* work which refutes Malthus I must confess I did not expect him to go to a chapter in poor old Henry George who wrote his *Progress and Poverty* in 1879! I think it would be a safe bet to make that Mr. Dickinson has not read this work; but if he has, would he tell us exactly how George refuted Malthus on one point? This is in a famous passage on London — which in his day was a city, not a county. He tells us that "London may grow to a population of a hundred millions, or five hundred millions, or a thousand millions, for she draws for subsistence upon the whole globe and the limit which subsistence sets to her growth of population is the hunt of the globe to furnish food for its inhabitants." If Mr. Dickinson knows anything sillier than this even in the whole of Malthusian literature, would he tell us? London City with a thousand millions to feed...! A. NEO-MALTHUSIAN

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