

The Freethinker

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DURING RECENT weeks one of the principal controversial issues in the French Republic has been the State visit of the official Head of the French State to the Vatican, where President Coty was received by Pope Pius the Twelfth. No doubt the former Cardinal Pacelli who was a career-diplomat before his elevation to the Papacy, fully recognised the importance of the occasion and recalled to his distinguished visitor the long historical connection between France, "the eldest son of the Church."

Both the Roman Catholic Church, and opposite numbers in France evidently realised it too. For the French Freethinking and Secularist press devoted much attention to President Coty's visit. Our contemporary *La Raison*, the official organ of the French Freethought movement, carried a stirring appeal by my distinguished colleague on the Executive Committee of the *World Union of Freethinkers*, M. Jean Cotereau, reminding the President of the essentially secular character of the present French Republic. Whilst *L'Action Laïque* the organ of the French Association for Secular Education, besides adding its own energetic protest, recalled that when in the now distant year 1904, Monsieur Coty's then predecessor, Monsieur Loubet, paid a State visit to the then King of Italy, the further project of a visit to the Vatican had to be abandoned as a result of the furious protests of the French anti-clerical movement, then at the height of its activity and influence. Even the "most Christian" kings of France, points out *L'Action Laïque*, made a point of never visiting Rome, in order to demonstrate the independence of the Temporal Power from papal suzerainty. Whilst, as may be recalled, Napoleon first invited the Pope to Paris to crown him and then at the crucial moment took the crown from the hands of the Pope and placed it upon his own head!

The Catholic Church and the Fourth Republic

President Coty however, unlike his predecessor in 1904, disregarded the protests of the French anti-clericals and was duly received by His Holiness at the Vatican. We do not know whether President Coty is actually a practicing Catholic. But he is a wealthy *bourgeois* and a conservative politician, thus belonging to a class and party which has often supported clerical claims in recent years. For the contemporary menace of communism, strongly entrenched in the French working class, has driven into the clerical camp many elements in the propertied classes which, say a half century ago in the period when President Loubet paid his visit to Rome, would probably have ranked as anti-clerical. For the present Fourth Republic, founded after the withdrawal of the Germans in 1945, occupies the paradoxical position of a still officially secularist State in which notwithstanding the Catholic Church is not only extremely active, but in which it increasingly receives semi-official recognition from the authorities of a self-styled "laic" (secularist) State. The French anti-clerical press has frequently found occasion to protest against the semi-official

status given to the Church authorities at professedly official functions. In which respect, the recent left-wing government of Monsieur Mollet seems to have been no improvement on its right wing predecessors, despite the professedly anti-clerical attitude of the French Left in the past. It must be emphasised that the Fourth Republic — 1945 — like its predecessor, the ill-fated Third Republic — 1870-1940 — which owed both its beginning and its end to German invasion does *not* officially recognise *any relationship* between Church and State: in the eyes of the present French law, Roman Catholicism is merely the largest of a number of religions which possess adherents amongst the citizens of the Republic; Catholics, like Jews, Mus-

lims and Protestants have absolutely *no* official status in the eyes of the French civil code. Here however, contemporary France does not appear to display that logic for which she is traditionally famous. For current *practice* does not appear to march in step with legal theory. In practice, Catholicism appears to be steadily encroaching on the functions of the State. In particular the question of religious versus secular education and its financial corollary, the subvention of church schools by the funds of the French State, represents a source of perennial controversy. In France, as in America, the "public" (that is, State controlled) schools and educational establishments, are invariably secular, and are forbidden to include speculative religious dogmas in their current curriculum.

Two French Traditions

Actually, the visit of President Coty to Rome, as well as the present embittered controversy over secular versus confessional education, represents merely contemporary manifestations of the virtually continuous ideological civil war between the Catholic Church and the secular Republic, which has now been proceeding continuously since the French Revolution — 1789-94 — effectively ended the French monarchy and its millennial political and spiritual partnership with the Catholic Church. This now ancient conflict which has raged virtually uninterruptedly for nearly two centuries, is, or should be, of the greatest interest to Freethinkers not only in France but everywhere else since it is historically indisputable that European Freethought on a mass scale first originated in, and as a result of the French Revolution and it is in France, the cradle of the Revolution, that the ideological, as well as the political problems first posed by the great French Revolution, have since appeared in their sharpest and their most logical forms. Ever since 1789 two traditions have contended for mastery over the French State and Nation. That eminent historian, the late H. A. L. Fisher, has described the conflict of these two rival traditions in modern French history in a masterly passage which we cannot do better than reproduce. In his book *The Republican Traditions in Europe*, Dr. Fisher tells us: — "So we are led to consider the ultimate anti-nomy which divides society in the Latin States of Europe

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

France and the Vatican

— By F. A. RIDLEY —

On the one hand there is the Republican Tradition dominant and established in France evident though overmastered in Spain, partially transfused into the institutions of the national monarchy in Italy. [This was written in 1911]. On the other hand there is the Catholic Church, the ally of the Bourbon who reigns in Spain [sic] and of the Bourbons who can never rule in France and the enemy and the victim of the French Revolution. The gulf is clear, the incompatibility absolute, the war, truceless. The old school of Gallicus, the later school of liberal Catholics, has died out. A French child must either be brought up a Roman Catholic or he must be brought up a Republican. There is no real alternative. In the first case he will learn that the civil marriage is a sin, that monarchy is the best form of Government, that liberty is an alias for wanton pride and that with the exception of brief interludes, the whole history of France since 1789 has been one of ghastly aberration from the path of godly duty, and in the second case he will learn just the opposite of all this, that the Church in all ages has been the enemy of human freedom and progress, that the Civil Code is the charter of human emancipation and that the French Revolution was the discovery of social justice upon earth. The Republic has captured the schools, dissolved the congregations and disestablished the Church, but it still rules over a divided nation."

Clerical Manoeuvres

This remarkable summary is still basically true, though of

course much water has flowed under the bridges both of the Tiber and the Seine since it was written in 1911. Since then, the Republic and its secular tradition were entirely abolished and a clerical regime was installed during the war. The Papacy and its French representatives have, superficially at any rate, modified their open alliance with royalism and fascism and allied themselves with democracy against Communism. In France, this subtle clerical strategy has led to such recent movements as the Christian Democrats and the short lived experiment of the "worker-priests", which the French hierarchy wished to continue until they were overruled by the Pope. Nowadays the Church even flirts with Socialism and talks about "a civilisation based on labour, not money". Despite, or because of these clerical "turning movements", the Catholic Church has steadily increased in influence since the end of the last century, when Pope Leo XIII first officially recognised the French Republic. It seems now to be within measurable distance of again becoming the State Church. In which connection, the recent visit of President Coty to the Vatican constitutes a red-letter day for French Catholicism—and a black day in French history.

France, the classic land of the Great Revolution, and of Voltaire, Renan, and Victor Hugo, is the eldest son of modern Rationalism, as formerly of the medieval Church. She is the classic land of Reason. We wish our French comrades every success in this decisive phase of their struggle, which is that of mankind.

Christian Forum

By G. H. TAYLOR

THERE IS A TV PROGRAMME called *Christian Forum* (BBC) in which Christians take questions from other Christians. Like the other Christian propaganda programme, *Meeting Point*, they invariably contrive to avoid meeting Atheists. The Church Militant deals out sledgehammer blows calculated to lay the Atheist low for all time — if only he were present to receive the blows. These are sometimes greeted by a polite round of applause, signalling a victory over a non-existent opponent.

Sometimes this sort of propaganda backfires; occasionally an awkward question crops up, even from selected audiences. A case in point was the programme of May 19th, when boys of a college in Gloucestershire put questions to three Christian apologists: the Abbot of Downside, Canon Raven and Hugh Shortt. The latter's contributions were negligible and can be ignored; one merely asks, in passing, Who put him in and why? The replies of the Abbot and the Canon were so lengthy that there was only time for four questions. What these replies lacked in brevity, however, they made up for in irrelevance.

Only one of the questions was applauded by the boys and it was the only really purposeful question put. The boy asked:

"Can you give me one convincing reason why I should worship the God you believe in?"

This rather put the cat among the pigeons. The Abbot, who had been comfortable, self-possessed and witty hitherto, now floundered for words, until we were beginning to think that he too, like Hugh Shortt, would pass the buck. The Canon, of course, is never lost for words, as readers of his books will appreciate, and he proceeded to pour them out in characteristic fashion in the approved style of talking round and round and round without ever coming to grips.

It is probable that at least some of the boys would have

noticed that the Abbot and the Canon cancelled one another out! The Abbot based his belief in a divine Being on the fact that nature behaves in a causally consistent manner which enables the experimenting scientist to get on with his job. The Abbot called this the "innate rationality of nature." What he meant was — to give a simple illustration — that a combination of two parts of hydrogen and one of oxygen yield water today, just as they did yesterday and will do tomorrow. They do not give water on Monday and beer on Tuesday. Such deterministic sequences mean that the scientist is able to carry out experiments, in the knowledge that things are not higgledy-piggledy, but "ordered" (to use the Abbot's term). This, he felt, was only possible on the assumption of a Supreme Being.

Canon Raven, however, possibly without realising he was destroying the Abbot's case, dwelt on the uncertainty of natural causation, on "indeterminism" at the lower levels. (It would be impolite to suggest he has read nothing since Eddington!) This flouting of natural law pointed to the operation of a Supreme Being.

In a nutshell, then: God exists because the Universe is determinate (the Abbot); the Universe is indeterminate so God exists (the Canon). And this is called explaining Christianity to the masses.

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL?

A CURRENT REPORT to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is singularly lacking in that exultant note one expects in these days of the Great Revival of Religion. Has something gone wrong, we wonder? We learn, not of the masses flocking to the arms of Jesus, but of the desperate need for men and money.

Reporting a debit balance of a quarter of a million pounds, the Home Mission's plea is for a million to spend in the next five years to ensure that facilities for worship keep pace with the dispersal of population. The shortage of recruits for the ministry is equally serious.

Another Point of View on Hungary

By PAUL BRAUN
(Translated by H. Cutner)

As *La Pensée* has recently published an article by Andre Lorulot [THE FREETHINKER, March 1st, "Free Men Arise"] on the tragedy of Hungary, I feel compelled to give here my own opinion which differs from that of our courageous French comrade.

I am one of those who followed both with interest and sympathy the revolt in Hungary, which moved so profoundly the ordinary people and the young to throw over the foreign chains and substitute for the devoted Russian puppets, a government representing the aspirations and will of the majority of the nation.

I admired the indomitable courage and sublime abnegation of the insurgents, and on this I recall the powerful words of Goethe — "Only those have the right to liberty if they are ready to fight for it." But at the same time, I share the indignation which the brutal intervention of Russian tanks has provoked among all men who believe in liberty, toleration and justice. I have only to recall the violent reactions manifested particularly in the ranks of those intellectuals who till then had attached themselves to international Communism.

The organ of Flemish Freethinkers *De Vrijdenker*, in a leading article, frankly took sides with the Hungarian people against the butchers. I am delighted to congratulate the journal for having openly taken up this position without the reservations we so often get from politicians afraid to compromise themselves. It is not because the Hungarian people are in general Catholic, and because the Church appears to have supported the revolt, that we should have distrusted it.

In our own country, the Revolution of 1830 joined to that of the independence of Belgium owed its success to the close union between the Catholics and the Liberals of the period, both hostile to the current regime but for different reasons. Should the Liberals have given up their fight against Holland because the Church was expecting some advantages through Protestant influence? They never thought about it and were absolutely right.

Of course, the Church is rather badly placed to pose as a champion of liberty—she knows only one kind of liberty, her own. She ridicules the liberty of those who will not bow down before the sceptre of Rome.

Exactly a hundred years ago, in a work entitled *The Church and Belgian Liberty* the eminent Liberal publicist Louis Hymans, the father of the late Paul Hymans, wrote:

Partisans of the power which defends the throne as much as the altar, the clergy revolt as soon as a liberal sovereign places the happiness of the masses against the interests of churches and monasteries. Allied to the foreigner against the Communes, hangmen under Phillip II, revolutionaries in 1788, all weapons are good for them — the axe, the sword, the dagger, the pen, the word, all, all except tolerance. If the progress of the period, if the intelligence of the crowd does not permit frank and open insolence, if they substitute for it, as M. Verhaegen has said, indirect and artful impudence, if they have substituted for jesuitical diplomacy the haughty threats of Hildebrand, is all this a reason for shutting our eyes to the future of the clergy, and being silent on their past history? For us, in our innocence, the church looks like those culprits who are refused by their judges to be thought sincere — their antecedents condemn them.

As Freethinkers we cannot ask for liberty for us only. We must ask it for all.

"We must liberate even those who curse us" was one day proclaimed by Georges Clemenceau. Paul Janson, the great democrat and Freethinker, has declared that if the Mass was forbidden, he would at once register his protest.

Inspired thus, the Federal Committee of Brussels voted on December 8 last the following motion: —

The Committee recalls that Freethought is secular, democratic, and social, that is, it rejects the interference of the Church in affairs of State, the privilege of authority or of a party in political matters, and of capital in economic matters. In the name of these principles, it condemns all foreign intervention in the internal affairs of nations. It salutes the Hungarian people for its liberty and declares that any government which sustains its power with the help of a foreign army is neither democratic nor national. It denounces the manoeuvres of the thousands of Catholics labelling the Hungarian revolution political, and reproves the attitude of international clericalism; reaffirming its unalterable attachment to the liberty of conscience now in peril by all oppressive regimes.

These principles are from the famous declaration at Rome in 1904 taken to the International Congress by Ferdinand Buisson, one of the chief founders of secular schools in France. Here is his eloquent peroration: —

This declaration published in our *Annals*, published in the press all over the world will prove that we Freethinkers do not wish to suppress any creed or impose any dogma, but to affirm the liberty for each of us to revolt against an authority pretending to impose itself on us no matter under what name. Whether it is the authority of the Bible or of any other book which is invoked, we won't recognise it nor bow before it or a God or a master. (Loud applause.)

This resolute language implies condemnation of all dictatorships, religious and secular, and of all dogma, whether religious, philosophical, social, or political. As for me, I intend to stand immovably steadfast to the great ideas of our famous predecessors.

[Readers will also be interested to read Mr. Shipper's third commentary *From Hungary* on page 175].

The Rising Generation

XXI — THE MARRIAGE AT CANA

"TELL ME about the marriage at Cana", said Ann, "We're having it at school tomorrow and I want to know what it's all about."

"Very well, Ann," said Daddy. "Here's how it goes. Mary the mother of Jesus was invited to a wedding at a place called Cana; Jesus was there and so were his disciples. Mary told Jesus that all the wine had been drunk, and Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? My time has not yet come.'"

"Daddy, isn't it rather rude to call mother 'Woman'? What did his mother say?"

"She said, 'Whatever he tells you to do, do it'. There were six large water pots each capable of holding two or three firkins of water, and Jesus said, 'Fill them up to the brim.'"

"Daddy, what is a firkin?"

"About nine gallons, Ann, so if we say one pot holds 2½ firkins, that will be about 22½ gallons. Jesus then told the servants to pour out the water and lo and behold, it had turned into wine."

"Do you believe this story, daddy?"

"No, Ann, I do not."

"How much wine was there altogether?"

"About 136 gallons or if you like, 1,088 large lemonade bottles full."

"What do the Band of Hope people say about all this?"

"Well, Ann, perhaps you had better ask your teacher that one tomorrow morning."

C. H. HAMMERSLEY

—NEXT WEEK—

GOD IN THE ROCKIES

By G. H. TAYLOR

This Believing World

We are always pleased to record any agreement with our clergy, so we must confess to being delighted with the Rev. C. Singleton's suggestion that everyone in church should put 2s. in the collection box. This is a brilliant idea, and should supersede the buttons, pennies, and threepenny bits which so often — and not so often — fill the box. If people want to go to church they should pay for it, and be delighted if possible to make their contribution half a crown or even five shillings a time. Lots of Christians will do anything for Christ — except pay for him.

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As everyone knows it was Joanna Southcote who over a century ago was destined by God Almighty to be the Mother of the next Messiah—an event anxiously expected by her followers, who must have been deeply disappointed when the Messiah turned out to be a drowsy from which the Holy would-be Mother died. Whether Joanna insisted that God spoke to her direct we are not certain, but we are more than pleased to introduce a Mrs. Eileen Caddy, who — according to *The People* — received her first Message from God in September 1953. It was written by the Divinely-inspired lady on a piece of notepaper — “Peace, be still, and know that I am God. Love is the greatest gift I am holding out in the world.” Blatant Materialists will be hard put to confute such convincing proof of the existence of God.

★

After all, it is time for the world to realise that such recipients of God's favour do exist. Was there not Bernadette, the young lady who was visited by the Virgin Mary at Lourdes, and confidentially told by the Mother of God that she was “the Immaculate Conception”? Addle-headed infidels only show their crass ignorance in refusing to believe these undeniable evidences of God's relations with us. They are as true as the stories so often told priests by young Catholic ladies in confession — that the babies they were then bearing were fathered by the Holy Ghost. If it happened once, could it not happen again?

★

One of the classic stories in anti-Catholic literature is that of Maria Monk who, over 100 years ago, shocked the world with her harrowing experiences in a convent. When she finally escaped, she became a Protestant, and her unparalleled history easily became a best seller. (That most of it was a pack of lies only adds piquancy to the narrative.) But Eire has been recently in the throes of religious turmoil through the disappearance of a 15-year-old girl, Maureen Lyons, who, though Catholic born, actually wants to be a Presbyterian. So she disappeared for a time.

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Recently she was found in Belfast, and police took her from the home of Dr. Paisly, of the Free Presbyterian Church — though this did not prevent Holy Water being thrown over her by the really true followers of Christ in the hope that she would return to the Faith of the One Church. Maureen, as any good Catholic will tell you, must be possessed of the Devil, for she simply will not go back to her parents, nor return to God's Own Religion. It is all very heartbreaking, and the only thing we can suggest is for the Virgin personally to implore Maureen to go back to the Faith of her Fathers. After all, why should Bernadette be the only teenager to get a visit from Mary?

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To the 1,978 “free” religions with Christ and the Bible backing them up must be added the latest “Hot Gospel” with its unique four followers in the news. Headed by a

skipper cripple and three young ladies, the boat Saroda will be — it is hoped — soon sailing for Jerusalem with a Message from Christ to convert all the Jews in Israel. The actual time of sailing is a little complicated because the ultra-pious skipper is being sued by his wife for maintenance and wants to marry the youngest of the three ladies, but we have no doubt that faith in Jesus will soon find a way. Perhaps the Almighty will send an Angel by day and a Cloud of Fire by night to his trusty Hot Gospeling followers. Nothing can better a little Divine encouragement.

Facts for Freethinkers—18

IRISH CITIZENSHIP

ALMOST unnoticed in this country was the passing by Eire Parliament of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1956.

Examining the provisions of this act, we find, in the first sub-section of Section C that it is stated that *every person born in Ireland* (NB the entire island, including Ulster) is an Irish citizen by birth.

The second sub-section states that *every person is an Irish citizen if his father or mother was an Irish citizen at the time of that person's birth, or becomes an Irish citizen under the previous sub-section, or would be an Irish citizen under that sub-section if alive at the passing of the Act.*

Section 7 states that pending what is termed “the re-integration of the national territory” (perhaps not an immediate possibility!) people born in Northern Ireland, *not otherwise Irish citizens*, are not Irish citizens unless certain formalities are complied with. Note “*not otherwise Irish citizens*”; according to the Irish Free State Constitution Act (1922) and the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act (1935) practically the entire population of Ulster are “*otherwise Irish citizens.*” Actually then, this Section only applies to a minute percentage not of Irish origin in any sense!

Therefore the ultimate effect is that, apart from this minute percentage, every citizen of Ulster and their descendants in future generations are now citizens of the Republic of Eire! This is, no doubt, in anti-Partitionist eyes, a vast improvement on the Irish Free State Act (1935), which provided that children born in Ulster after 10/4/1935 had to be registered in a special Northern Ireland register of births (recorded in the Republic) in order to acquire Eire citizenship, not many availing themselves of this seemingly philanthropic gesture.

With the 1956 Act removing the necessity for registration, Eire citizenship would thus be imposed on every child born in Ulster (of an Irish citizen), as far as the worthy members of the Dail are concerned! This gift of dual nationality is, apparently, unwanted by a majority of the citizens of Ulster. In October the Stormont Parliament passed the following resolution:

“That this House, having taken notice of a measure passed by the Parliament of the Republic of Ireland entitled the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1956, repudiates the gratuitous attempt therein to inflict unwanted Irish Republican Nationality upon the people of Northern Ireland, proclaims the *indivisible allegiance of its people* to the British Crown and rejects outright the unfounded claims of the Republican Parliament to legislate for Northern Ireland or the people of Northern Ireland.”

In proclaiming the “*indivisible allegiance of its people to the British Crown*” the Stormont Government may (possibly) have overlooked the fact that 33½% of the Ulster population divide *their* allegiance between His Holiness Pope Pius XII, The Virgin Mary, and the Eire Government.

The Emerald Isle is the perfect example of “Christian Unity.”

D.S.

THE FREETHINKER

41 GRAY'S INN ROAD, LONDON, W.C.1.
TELEPHONE: HOLBORN 2601.

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

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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

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

INDOOR

- Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Stork Hotel, Liverpool)—Sunday, June 2nd, 7.15 p.m.: A Lecture.
- South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).— Sunday, June 2nd, 11 a.m.: DR. RICHARD PETERS, "Living without Authority".

Notes and News

RESERVED accomodation for the Leicester Conference of the National Secular Society has now all been booked. Other members wishing to attend, therefore, are asked to make their own hotel bookings. Details of the various functions will be found on the back page.

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THE DEATH of Dr. Gilbert Murray removes one of the great classical scholars of our age as well as a noted Humanist. No one supported the old League of Nations and the modern United Nations more than he did or spoke more strongly against such an anachronism, in these days, as war. We shall be publishing next week an article dealing with his Rationalism.

★

IN RECENT YEARS the Catholic campaign among the Adivasis, jungle aboriginals of the Sambalpur diocese has been increased and recently culminated in the ordination of the first tribal (aboriginal) priest in front of a crowd of 4,000 Catholics.

Religion without Revelation

REVIEW OF JULIAN HUXLEY'S ILLUMINATING BOOK

By BAYARD SIMMONS

THE ABOVE TITLE, which is that of Dr. Huxley's book, recalls that of another book. Yes, it was *Morals Without Religion* by Mrs. Margaret Knight, published by Dennis Dobson, Ltd., a year or two ago. That book contains certain essays of this enterprising lady, and, particularly, the text of her two broadcasts on the BBC in the early days of January 1955. That title explains itself, as does the title of Dr. Huxley's book under review. Dr. Huxley in it maintains that revelation (of a supernatural character, as from a God) is not necessary to religion, as he understands and defines it; while Mrs. Knight avers, more popularly perhaps, since it is on radio, that religion is not a necessary adjunct to teaching the young to lead a moral, i.e. civilised life.

Mrs. Knight's broadcast on January 5th, 1955, certainly, as the saying is, "started something." I give the date for it was an historic occasion: it was, in effect, when for the first time, an honest, serious attack on the Christian faith had been able to o'erleap the taboo on discussion "on the air" of this religious faith. Thereafter the religious leaders closed their ranks, the shattered barriers were hurriedly repaired, but the taboo on religious discussion on the radio will never return to the *status quo ante*. The attempt to set up the "Coward's Castle" (the pulpit) on the air, without answer, is now assuredly a thing of the past.

I feel sure that Dr. Julian Huxley is so big a man in so many directions that he will excuse the beginning of a review of his book by a reference to the slim volume of Mrs. Knight. I mention her for it is many years since Dr. Huxley was one of the four musketeers of the BBC's original Brains Trust — two professors, a naval commander, and a BBC permanent official. One professor was "It-all-depends-on-what-you-mean-by" Joad; the commander told us of "when I was in Patagonia" (or wherever it was); and the third man was so much the first man that it would take many lines to enumerate his achievements. There is little doubt that the Doctor's unorthodoxy over many months made less arduous Mrs. Knight's attempt to break into radio. For his other achievements suffice it to say that he is an F.R.S.; a professor of biology who is a grandson of the celebrated Thomas Henry, who played the apostle Paul to Charles Darwin, and that grandson Julian measures up to his stature. He has been the first Chairman of UNESCO; is now President of the International Humanist and Ethical Union; colleague of H. G. Wells in his *Outline on biology*; broadcaster; brother of Aldous and, like him, whiles away his scanty leisure by writing verse with a tang all its own. If you want to know more, look it up yourself in *Who's Who*. We must get on to giving an outline of Huxley's illuminating book on the stripping of religion of inessentials.

First, the necessary details: publisher, Max Parrish of London; price, 21s. net.; preface, dated "Christmas, 1956" (?ironically); 252 pp. including bibliography and index. All good serious books should have an index, but it is a pleasure to see here the titles of books in the ample bibliography arranged in groups according to subject.

The publisher's "blurb" on the dust-cover of this book is entitled "Evolutionary Humanism." No name is more deeply associated with evolution than that of Huxley (grandfather and grandson) and most readers of these lines have a general idea of what that word conveys. But the exact meaning of humanism, a term coming more into vogue in these days, is not so well known. The Concise

Oxford Dictionary defines the word, *inter alia*, as a "system concerned with human (not divine) interests," also, more specifically, as "Religion of Humanity," and refers us to the word "humanity," an inch or so below. Here the *Religion of Humanity* is stated to be the "rejecting the supernatural, and concerned chiefly or wholly with the advancement of man's welfare." Let us return to the blurb: "Dr. Huxley," it says, "is a leading scientific thinker who is deeply convinced of the need for a religious outlook." (We cannot stop here to enquire whether this is a personal need, or one desirable for humanity generally). The "blurb" continues: "For him, the conflict is not between Religion and Science, but between established theologies and modern knowledge. His conclusion is that an evolutionary humanism could provide the basis for a new outlook reconciling the religious spirit with scientific fact." But enough of blurb-quoting, the lazy and rushed reviewer's stand-by. One often suspects that the blurb is written by the author of the book that it enfolds, though supposed to be the work of the publisher. Therefore in fairness one must quote the author's own words.

In his preface Dr. Huxley deals with "three points that have forced themselves on me personally." The first point is that what he terms idea-systems are of importance in human history. These systems involve beliefs, attitudes and general assumptions as well as intellectual ideas, and they include religion and "ways of life," as well as rigid ideologies. He compares these systems of ideas to skeletons in biological evolution. In a sense they provide the framework for the life that animates and clothes them, and in large measure determine the way life shall be lived. (The much-publicised "American way of life" is presumably an example of an Idea-system.)

This brings our author to his second point — the need for ideological unification. The Cold War, Dr. Huxley asserts, is a war between idea-systems, both of them vulnerable. The weakness of the Western system is insufficient unity, which deprives the West of any intrinsic driving force. Their strength lies in their freedom and resistance to brute totalitarianism. (Note qualifying word "brute.") This schizophrenia (divided mind) comes from the split between natural and supernatural, or God and the world, which makes for a weakened purposeful action.

Dr. Huxley's third point is the need to increase knowledge and make our comprehension ever more comprehensive. New knowledge has been the basis of more satisfying ways of life, and idea-systems must aim at making man's increasing knowledge comprehensible and effective. The Communist idea-system of Marxist ideology, in Dr. Huxley's opinion, has plenty of driving force, but it is vulnerable because of its over-rigid unification. This unification is based on a premature and inadequate synthesis which prevents it keeping up with knowledge of the facts of nature (including human nature) and social development.

Keeping up with the facts is essential for any enduring idea-system. He bids us not to forget that, in the long run, all that deserves to be called *progress* depends on new comprehension — new facts, new interpretations, new knowledge, or new organisations of knowledge. This applies as much to the abandonment of magic as to that of alchemy, to the rise of monotheism as to the spread of agriculture and civilised life.

Keeping up with the facts, scientific facts. Dr. Huxley shows that even religion is a legitimate subject of scientific analysis. We quote, "Any set of phenomena can be treated by the method of science." Scientific method is steadily extending the fields of its investigation; from physics and chemistry to the biological and on to the historical, the social and the psychological. Religion is one of the latest

fields to which the method of science has been extended. The resultant sciences of comparative religion and religious psychology will, asserts Dr. Huxley, certainly be of value in leading humanity out of the impasse in which religion now finds itself.

We come now to the root of the matter, and I will leave Dr. Huxley to clinch his argument in his own words.

"One of the major results has been the realisation that God is one among several hypotheses to account for the phenomena of human destiny, and that it is now proving to be an inadequate hypothesis. To a great many people, including myself, this realisation is a great relief, both intellectually and morally. It frees us to explore the real phenomena for which the God hypothesis seeks to account, to define them more accurately, and to work for a more satisfying set of concepts and symbols to represent them in our mental organisation."

Dr. Huxley concludes that what the world needs is an essentially religious idea-system, unitary instead of dualistically split. This system should be charged with the total dynamic of knowledge old and new, objective and subjective, of experience scientific and spiritual. This he regards as not merely desirable but urgent—urgent for individual men and women, urgent for the separate nations of the world, urgent for mankind as a whole.

The foregoing paragraphs have summarised Dr. Huxley's purpose in writing his book, but a few words describing certain details and merits of his book will not be out of place. This first appeared 28 years ago, and is now out of print. This new edition has undergone much revision, and two chapters, 3 and 8, have been wholly rewritten. Chapter 3 is entitled "Science and God: The naturalistic approach," and Chapter 8 is devoted to "Developed Religion." Of Dr. Huxley's nine chapters, the present writer has been most interested in the fourth and seventh. Chapter 4 is entitled "Personalism," which is an account of the author's mental development through the years from schooldays upwards. Dr. Huxley says he hesitated for some time before writing this chapter of a personal nature. This I found intensely interesting and a quite necessary part of the book for the light it throws on the Doctor's argument. Dr. Huxley makes no apology for, as he says, "intruding this personal chapter." I am glad to say it is no intrusion, but an integral part of his book.

Dr. Huxley's *cheval de bataille* is naturally biology, but in Chapter 7 he treats of psychology in connection with religion, which is right and proper, for man is a unity, not a duality, but one body-mind entity. From his brief consideration of an admittedly difficult subject, masterly handled, Dr. Huxley strips away many alleged supernatural causes of religious phenomena. No one could be more aware than Dr. Huxley that any new and reformed religion, if it is to endure, must come to terms with psychology.

A feature of this book, which greatly adds to its charm, and helps to its understanding, is that each chapter is preceded by a page of quotations from philosophers, writers, poets, scientists, and religionists, these quotations having a bearing on the matter of the following chapter.

Finally, may Dr. Huxley's reviewer claim a final paragraph? I find this a fascinating and most informative book; I recognise the eminence and sincerity of the writer; but I have personally no liking for the thing, or the name, religion. Religion may be, and indeed is, a natural phenomenon, but why cling to the word? Is this clinging necessary? I cannot believe it is. And, believing this, I say so. But I take comfort in the thought that without gods, or God, there can be no religions. Without religions there can be no bishops, and without bishops there can be no kings, as King James I remarked. Back to Dr. Huxley for

a final remark of his. "A personal God, be he Jehovah, or Allah, or Apollo, or Amen-Ra, or, without name, but simply God, I know nothing of. And what is more, I am not merely agnostic on the subject. . . . I disbelieve in a personal God in any sense in which that phrase is ordinarily used."

That seems to me to put the lid on Christianity and all religions. I am satisfied.

What to teach children about God

WHAT SHOULD parents who are freethinkers teach their children about 'God'? This is a question with which Mrs. Margaret Knight has been dealing most ably in recent years. It by no means, however, a new problem. Hypatia Bradlaugh—then still unmarried—dealt with it in an address to the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society in 1883. A few of her phrases may have an old-fashioned ring, but the advice she gives in the concluding portion of her speech — no doubt a reflection of Charles Bradlaugh's own teaching to his daughters — is as sound as ever. She said :

"A child goes to a Board School and hears for the first time the word 'god'. Perhaps a favourite playmate says to your astonished little one: 'my mother says that your father is a very wicked man, he doesn't believe in god and I am not to play with you any more.' The child wonders, comes home and asks: 'What's god, father? Don't you believe in god?' Perhaps you answer, 'Little children should not ask questions,' or something to that effect. The child goes away unsatisfied and uneasy. To avoid that I would have you yourselves in your leisure hours teach your children about all religions. Tell them that in the world there are many religions which have all grown out of ignorance. How religions have appeared and disappeared how when man did not understand the running water there was a water god; when he did not understand the natural causes which brought about good and bad seasons, then the deity who had charge of agricultural operations was pleased or angry. Tell, how, even long after a cause has been removed, its ill effects unhappily remain, and although the world is rapidly growing less and less ignorant it cannot escape from the toils of its manifold superstitions with equal rapidity.

"I would have parents talk to their little ones of Thor, Woden and Freia, worshipped by our Saxon ancestors, explain to them that that was a worship belonging to a barbarous age, and that there are not many people who believe in the Thunder god today. Tell the children, too, of the beautiful fancies of the Greeks, of Zeus, of Pallas, and the host of gods and goddesses. Neither omit the Jewish God Jahveh: explain that, lacking as this superstition is in beauty or high moral teaching, nevertheless thousands of their brothers and sisters are still in its toils. Tell of Brahma, of Buddha, of Allah, of Krishna, of Christ, of Mahomet, and their millions of worshippers. Moreover, never lose an opportunity of making comparisons between these beliefs, and not to your little student how all have grown out of the hydra-headed dragon, Ignorance.

"Let the children be shown the temples frequented by Protestants and Roman Catholics: take them inside and point out the images and idols. Then show them pictures of Buddhist and Mahometan temples, or take them into a museum and show them models. Let them there look at the scores of idols worshipped by different peoples, and having shown them Madonna and Child in the Catholic temple, point out Isis and Horus in the museum.

"Put all these legends and myths on the same footing to the child, and then when he hears the word 'god' he will

not be cast into a state of uneasy wonderment as to whether his father really is wicked, but will have a feeling of tender pity towards his little friend that he, too, has not a father or mother to explain to him that his god is but one of many, and all created out of man's ignorance.

"As he runs by your side, free and happy on Sunday mornings, when you are going for a long walk, and about to enjoy the beauties of nature, when he sees the people flock by to their different places of worship in their best clothes and with joyless faces, he will not feel that you and he are outcasts, but his heart will be full of compassionate tenderness towards these less fortunate people. He will feel as though he, in the full possession of freedom, was looking at a procession of slaves. Personally, I know few more melancholy sights, few spectacles which fill me with more pity.

"When the child is old enough to think and judge a little for himself, then the Bible should be put into his hands. He will find it a very curious, interesting, and in some parts beautiful, piece of literature; but his brain will then be trained to distinguish between the good and the bad in it, and he will be prepared to study, not to worship it."

From Hungary—3

MY LATEST communication from Radio Budapest is as follows :

Thank you very much for the sympathy you expressed on behalf of your friends and yourself at the sad fate which had overtaken our country. I note from your letter that you attribute these happenings to the lack of anti-religious propaganda which in your view was failed to institute. I am sorry to disagree with you, but we still hold to the belief that it would be wrong to dictate to our people regarding the question of religion. Each adult person has to decide for himself. It is true that Cardinal Mindszenty took an open stand against our social system, more openly than most of the counter-revolutionaries who tried to mislead our people by pretending to be for socialism. I daresay, however, that many of our working people of the Catholic faith were as disturbed by what the Cardinal said as were those of non-Catholic faith. We cannot blame Catholics for the actions of the reactionary leaders of their Church, such as Cardinal Mindszenty. We believe in the true separation of the State and Church and we believe it is in the interests of our people for church leaders not to work against the power of our people. Church leaders who do so must be exposed, there is no question about that. Just as we must fight against those who tried to force our children to take part in religious instruction in the schools even though their parents did not want them to. These are anti-social acts and do not conform with the agreement of our government with representatives of the Church and violates the principle guiding the separation of Church and State. Anti-religious ideas, however, cannot be forced upon a person. The way of life, the constant improvement of the standard of living and scientific teaching in general are the best means of convincing people. This is the policy our government has followed, though it has made it clear that it will allow no pressure from the Church on non-believers. I know that my answer is by no means all-inclusive, because this is a very complicated question and one that has concerned many people. Because it is such a deep-going question, the solution is not a simple one either. I personally feel that the problem will be solved only with deep-going changes in the social and economic conditions of the people. It requires a lot of patience and understanding, but so do many other things.

I am sending you under separate cover a copy of the first part of the government White Book on the activities of the counter-revolutionaries, which will help you to understand what has actually taken place in our country.

Thank you once more for your sympathy and good wishes.
Yours sincerely, Gabi Timar,

First, I did not say that the *sole* blame for the uprising could be attributed to lack of anti-religious propaganda, but did claim it as a contributory factor. It is certain that the Roman Catholic leaders "fanned the flames" once the revolution was under way. Gabi Timar is correct in

asserting that we cannot blame Catholics for their reactionary leaders. However, no leader represents a danger unless there are people willing to follow. It appears there were Catholics willing to follow, otherwise Mindzenty would hardly warrant censoring at all. Here we find a Communist defending the Catholics from the charges of a Freethinker. I have pointed out that Freethinkers believe that a school is an establishment for providing secular education and that those desiring religious instruction might well find a church an institution for that purpose.

I did not suggest that the Government should "dictate" or "force" anti-religious ideas on people. In fact I suggested that *Societies* such as the National Secular Society or American Rationalist Federation (for example), would be best suited to this style of work.

Noting the inauguration of a Society to promote secular education for children in Warsaw, closely following the strengthening of Polish Catholic power, and the efforts being made to revive the old Polish Freethought Association (suppressed during the Stalinist regime), I have asked my correspondent whether we may expect similar moves in Hungary. Also whether such a Society would be permitted. Finally, I pointed out that although many Catholics may have been "disturbed" by recent events, a remarkably high proportion of the "refugees" reaching this country were Roman Catholics.

Recently, Radio Budapest announced that the Education Minister had found it necessary to forbid religious teaching in schools except for children whose parents had enrolled them for this by last July—the commencement of the school term. The Minister stated that this "was necessary to prevent children being drafted into politics as at present".

D. SHIPPER

OBITUARY

CHARLES WILLIAM MOLE

CHARLES William Mole was a close friend and adviser of Chapman Cohen and R. H. Rosetti. Many who may not have heard his name will have read books which he helped them to produce. A lifelong Freethinker and keen member of the National Secular Society, he had lived for some years in retirement in the Isle of Wight, but he still sent his cheerful letters and always called in when in town. He has now died at the age of 77, active to the end. To Mrs. Mole and his large family, we send our condolences. A secular service was conducted in Southampton Crematorium on May 23rd by the General Secretary, N.S.S.

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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

CORRESPONDENCE

SCOTLAND AND THE EMPIRE

Mr. J. Stewart ignores the fact that Scotland itself was, after Ireland and Wales, the first colony of the *English Empire*. It was temporarily conquered by Edward I and permanently by Oliver Cromwell, who perhaps deserves the title of Founder of the modern Empire. Mr. Stewart should pay a visit to Smithfield, where, only last year, Scottish Nationalists raised a memorial to their national hero, Sir William Wallace, who was barbarously executed on that spot by English imperialists because of his refusal to accept colonial status for Scotland.

I must sincerely apologise to Mr. Yoxall, and to the author of *Ecclesiastes*, for calling the latter an apostle, and for mixing him up with St. Paul. I am indeed pleased to find that the *Holy Book* is even better known to the readers of *THE FREETHINKER* than it is to its regular contributors who, like the Pope, are not quite infallible!

F. A. RIDLEY.

NO MATTER ?

Mr. Nicholson appears determined to distort quite sensible statements made by Mr. Cutner and to give them some sort of metaphysical twist.

Having read Mr. Cutner's contributions to *THE FREETHINKER* for many years now, I am sure that he has the happy knack of writing sound common sense that is worth more than the quibbling on words. I do not suppose that Mr. Cutner's statement that "this world of ours was once something like a gaseous ball on which no life or mind could possibly exist" would be obvious to an Australian aborigine—intelligent or otherwise. It is obvious that Mr. Cutner was not writing for Australian aborigines! I suggest that if the Australian aborigine was in fact intelligent enough to undergo a few years' instruction on the findings of science to date, he would readily see that Mr. Cutner's statement that matter existed before mind is proved.

P. JORDAN.

"NEWS CHRONICLE" GALLUP POLL

The following was, as expected, rejected by the *News Chronicle*: "Your Gallup Poll on ARE WE STILL CHRISTIANS? is misleading in view of the fact that no mention is made that circumstances point to the only conclusion which is inevitable. You do not mention that Christianity is hammered into the minds of the people and at the same time no Atheist is allowed either on wireless or television — or newspapers to explain his views. The secretary of the National Secular Society was asked to speak for five minutes on God, and the recording was not broadcast. About 20 hours a week of broadcasting is devoted to religion and none to Atheism.

"The Gallup Poll reveals that only 6 per cent regard themselves as Atheists, and that the overwhelming majority in Britain today Affirm their belief in a God, and that the religious man tends to be happier than the Atheist — the last part is not true and not worthy of your paper.

"If the Gallup Poll were taken in Russia the Result would be the exact opposite. It is just as dishonest for Russia to state that 6 per cent only are Christians as it is for Britain to state that 6 per cent only are Atheists. In the first case freedom is not allowed to Christians and in the second freedom is not allowed to Atheists. You will gain a few more Christian readers. You will not lose any Atheist readers as they are broadminded. Both the Russian newspapers and the British have power, but neither seem to realise that too much power is danger."

J. ALMOND

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