

The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Fivepence

THE Anglican clergy are finding it very difficult just now to maintain their customary air of respectable depression. Cheerfulness will keep breaking in. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, master of the *mavtier in modo*, has allowed himself to say "The Church of England is in good heart". The reason is that the money is just rolling in.

In 1949 the income of the Church of England was £17½-millions, a sum that few businesses can attain to; but by 1956 the income reached £30-millions. Most of this money is paid out in stipends, which have rocketed. In 1955 the Church was congratulating itself that (with a very few exceptions) no incumbent was receiving a lower stipend than £550, but in 1957 the average stipend is £670. No wonder it is hard for the clergy to look solemn.

Of course, that is only the basic salary. In addition to that, the incumbent receives a free house (and sometimes relief from rates). He is allowed to keep the Easter offerings of his faithful parishioners (in some cases, only up to £50; but in London and some other dioceses the whole amount). No doubt a popular clergyman gets a good many gifts from his flock. Then there are perquisites in the form of search fees. These extras are worth at least £150 a year, making the minimum worth of the job £820 a year, so it is no wonder the Lord's ministers are so happy!

Prayers and Pounds

It is not surprising that the number of ordination candidates is rising rapidly. The *Church Times* says, with its tongue well in cheek, "The prayers of countless faithful folk have been answered."

The Church Commissioners have been selling out their gilt-edged securities, and investing the proceeds in higher yielding industrial securities. The average yield on their commercial property is £6.17s.0d. per cent. They have built factories in London to let out on leases, and are large landowners. They own over a thousand farms, and over fifty thousand buildings — houses, flats, offices, shops and factories. The Church must in fact, be among the three or four biggest owners of property in England. A few months ago, for instance, the Church Commissioners bought the Holme Hill Estate, near Carlisle, for £205,000. It consists of some 3,000 acres, twenty farms with a total rent roll of £8,000. The Longden Manor Estate, six miles from Shrewsbury, was bought by the Commissioners for £100,000. It consists of six farms, with a rent roll of £3,500. This illustrates the scale of Church activities.

The Race for Wealth

The Welsh Church has similarly been going in for commercial properties. A couple of years ago it bought Bush House (near the London Strand) and Kern House close by, both high class office blocks. And consequently it has been able to distribute an additional £39,780 per year to the Welsh clergy.

The Scots clergy have not been left behind in this race for wealth.

In 1955 the Episcopal Church raised the minimum stipend of its ministers from £450 to £475. Then it went up to £600. But in June 1957 the minimum was raised to £660, though in large cities, Orkney and Shetlands the minimum is £710! These minima are in addition to a free manse.

Creed or Cash?

It is easy to see why the Church is in good heart; why the Archbishop's suave smile is so broad and permanent; why the Bishop of Sothwell has been publicly sneering at Fundamentalism and why the *Church Times* supported him. All the

"livings" are good livings nowadays, and the young men are flocking into the religious training Colleges to be ready for them. No precious bunkum about "the Divine call" — give 'em the money, and they'll soon learn to cloud any argument by an emission of cant phrases about the empty tomb and the risen Lord, justification by faith and the remission of sins, etc.

It is easy to see why the *Sunday Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* and other periodicals devote space to sermonettes. The Church is big business, and these people think it worth while to keep in with it. I don't debit any of them with *believing* in all the outworn creeds: they are not illiterates.

Death Merchants

This sort of thing has happened before, thousands of years ago. In Ancient Egypt there was a well-knit, powerful hierarchy of priests who elaborated a system of rites and ceremonies in connection with the embalming of corpses and preparing them for the judgment that the individual had to undergo. Later, it came to be believed that it was not the actual body that underwent the judgment, but there was a soul that flew to heaven on the death of the body. This later doctrine seemed as if it must injure the businesses of the embalmers, the makers of unguents, the builders of the elaborate tombs, to say nothing of the priests with their everlasting rites and ceremonies. But, as Professor D. S. Margoliouth remarked in a guarded but yet revealing passage: *Whole professions do not allow themselves to be abolished by logic*. The priests asserted that the embalming processes and the appropriate ceremonies were still necessary for securing immortality and paradise. They invented a myth of the god Osiris to explain the matter.

Money from Myths

So it is in England now. Intellectually, morally, logically the Christian religion has been dead any time during the last hundred years. The doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible has been exploded by tracing its sources to Babylon, Egypt, etc. Vast sums of money have been expended on exploration in Palestine and elsewhere without unearthing one solid piece of evidence that there ever was a Jesus or any of "the Twelve." The Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, J. F. Bethune Baker, publicly

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

The Big Business of Religion

— By E. H. GROUT —

declared at the Modern Churchman's Conference in 1934: "We cannot assert the historical accuracy of such stories as those of the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ." Yet we do not hear of any large resignation of conscience-stricken "divines." "What would Jesus do?"

Gilbert Murray and the Catholics

Go leave me Priest, I would be alone with the consoler death.
—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

ANOTHER rebuttal of the Catholic claim that Dr. Gilbert Murray was converted to Roman Catholicism on his death-bed comes from Mrs. Isobel Henderson, a don at Somerville College and a lifelong friend of Dr. Murray's.

According to a report in the *Sunday Express* (June 30th) Mrs. Henderson testifies that *two days after* the alleged conversion she visited Dr. Murray and asked if it were true that he had been seen by the priest, Father Crozier, on April 17th. Gilbert Murray replied "No. No-one has been to see me except you."

Did Dr. Murray fully recognise his priestly visitor and, what is even more to the point, the purpose for which he had come? Were his monosyllabic replies made with full conscious reference to the few questions put by the priest? That extreme unction would be given we do not doubt, and we can suppose the average priest to be only too ready to administer it in such a case.

Dr. Murray's son, a barrister, has stated categorically that "(Catholic) allegation is untrue," and expressed his opinion of the Catholic authorities: "They really are the limit!" In a letter to him Mrs. Henderson has recalled (according to the *Express* report) that only a week before Dr. Murray's illness she had been discussing Roman Catholicism with him and found "his attitude towards the Roman Catholic Church was highly critical."

Hardly the attitude of a man who was making up his mind to become a convert.

I think there is a moral in all this. When I visited Joseph McCabe a few days before he died, I learned that the priest had called but had not been admitted. The moral is: Don't let the priest get past the front door.

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Replies to Mrs. Henderson were made in the *Telegraph* on July 4th and 5th, from the two people present when the sacrament was given on April 17th; Fr. Crozier himself and Rosalind Toynbee (Dr. Murray's daughter). The latter maintains that although her father was mainly unconscious during his six weeks' illness, the visits of the priest and of Mrs. Henderson coincided with two of his intervals of "lucidity and consciousness". There was no continuity between these intervals, we are told, so that "If I had asked him two days after her visit whether she (Mrs. Henderson) had been to see him, I should have expected him to have forgotten completely." As to the genuineness of the "conversion," she added, "it can never be known with certainty."

Father Crozier maintained that there was no need for Dr. Murray to remember the sacrament being given and received. It is objectively valid whether the patient remembers it or not.

That of course, is all very well so far as Catholic theology is concerned, but the evidence from Mrs. Henderson's visit two days later raises an interesting point. She asked whether the priest had called and the question might have been expected to set up a train of thought in the mind of a man, "lucid and conscious", who had decided to become a Catholic. Instead, the question was answered (wrongly) in the negative and there was no follow-up on Dr. Murray's part. Now if he had decided to seek the help of the R.C. Church, then the mention of the priest calling should have

suggested, if not a *past* visit by the priest, certainly a *future* one. On April 19th, then, he had forgotten his conversion and did not seek one. In other words, he was still under the impression that he was an agnostic rationalist, and was content to remain such. How does Catholic theology get over that? (I have no doubt it *does* get over the difficulty — it will get over *anything* if you accept its premises!)

Fr. Crozier quotes dates in January and March at which he discussed Catholicism with Dr. Murray and, if all his evidence is accepted, Murray had left Agnosticism and had become a Deist, if not a Theist. However, his son, Stephen Murray, on the occasion of the burial of the ashes in the Abbey, was still of the opinion that any evidence that his father died other than a reverent agnostic was unsatisfactory.

Two questions remain and they may never be answered: (1) Was Dr. Murray fully aware of what was taking place during the priest's visit on April 17th? (2) If he was aware, was his conversion a whim, or was it the sequel to a responsible decision?

Basically the issue leaves freethought unaffected. Dr. Murray claimed to be a reverent Rationalist, and the conversion, if genuine, shows where reverent Rationalism can be led to.

G. H. TAYLOR.

REVIEW

A Physical Culture Classic

The Culture of the Abdomen by F. A. Hornibrook. A Penguin Handbook, 2/6d.

MR. HORNIBROOK needs no introduction to these columns, and his book has gone through numerous editions since it was first published as far back as 1924. In this cheap form, there can be no excuse for anybody not finding out what he has to say on "tummy" troubles, based on long experience with patients in his work as a physiotherapist.

It is true, of course, that once a student has passed all the necessary examinations he can immediately practise as a doctor; but whether this means that he can at once start *curing* his patients is quite another matter.

It takes many years of hard work and weary experience before a doctor can handle his "humans", all so different, even when suffering from the same disease. Mr. Hornibrook's book is an epitome of his long and varied practice, and the fact that so many medical men like Sir Arbuthnot Lane, Dr. Geoffrey Evans, Professor Tait Mackenzie of McGill University, Canada, and many other doctors heartily recommend the exercises and the opinions expressed in this book is a fine testimonial to its merits. And as for laymen, there are Sir Alan Herbert and the late H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett among many others who are in full agreement with the doctors.

Balloon tummies, and expanding waistlines disappear if the author's directions are followed, but more than that is the general health of the patient, which rapidly improves. Moreover, if more people took Mr. Hornibrook's advice the sale of cascara and other "cleansing" medicaments would come down with a rush.

All the exercises are clearly explained, the plates and illustrations make everything easy. I doubt whether, from the point of view of health, there is a better book in the whole of the Penguin series. *Don't* borrow the book from your library — buy it.

H.C.

—NEXT WEEK—

I. G. Y. AND THE CHURCHES

by G. H. TAYLOR

Problems of Church and State - 3

By F. A. RIDLEY

Protestant Churches and the State

So far we have been dealing with Rome exclusively, that is, with *totalitarian* Christianity. In the case of the Reformed Churches, which are, in theory at least, non-totalitarian in character and which do not claim to be the *exclusive* possessors of Truth, the relationship between Church and State assumes a form more favourable in general to the Secular power, the State. One can, in fact, distinguish between two kinds of mutual relationships: one in which the State predominates, and another in which — in the words of the great English Protestant poet, John Milton — “New presbyter is but old priest writ large.” We distinguish below between these two types.

Lutheranism and the State

One is often inclined to forget that the cult named after the initial Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, is still by far the most powerful and extensive of the Protestant churches. A recent computation puts the total membership of the Lutheran Churches at 68.5-millions which easily tops the Protestant denominations. In Scandinavia Lutheranism still represents the State Church; in Sweden especially it has very wide powers; both the Royal Family and, until recently, the members of the Swedish Government having by law to be enrolled officially amongst the adherents of that religion. A quasi totalitarian character was given to the Lutheran Church in Sweden by a peculiar enactment only repealed, we understand, in recent years by which a Swedish citizen was *ipso facto* enrolled in the Lutheran Church and had to have formal *police permission* from the Ministry of the Interior before being permitted to register his changed allegiance to some other denomination. Nowadays, however, the State appears to be the predominant partner, but as in England, the reigning dynasty must still profess membership of the State Church as a condition of exercising, or of inheriting their State functions.

The Democratic Theocracy

If Lutheranism was, until recently characterised by a strain of totalitarianism no doubt inherited from Rome, its great Protestant rival, the Calvinism of Geneva was at its inception perhaps as totalitarian as the medieval Papacy itself. In which connection, one can recall either the spiritual despotism exercised by Calvin himself at Geneva or the “Democratic Theocracy” as a Scottish historian has aptly termed it, exercised prior to the Act of Union with England in 1707 by the Presbyterian Kirk in, and over, the Scottish State: a totalitarian despotism which would have delighted the heart of the Canossa Pope himself! These Calvinistic regimes belong to the past, but in considering the problems raised by the mutual relationships of Church and State, one cannot, I submit, ignore them and the historical lessons that they teach altogether. The Scottish Kirk was a kind of *collective* Papacy! Today though, with much reduced power, the Calvinist Kirk is still a State church; by a kind of political chicanery the English Monarch is *ipso facto* an Anglican in England and a Presbyterian in Scotland!

“Over all persons and causes supreme”

At the opposite end to the Scottish Kirk stood, and still stands today, the “Church of England by law established”. Here, ever since the now remote era of its effective Founders, those ruthless Tudor despots, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, the Church has been effectively subordinated to the State; here the Secular power has predominated. As the present writer has remarked elsewhere, “The Church of

England has never known whether it was Catholic or Protestant but it has always known that it was English”. In contemporary England the control of the Church of England is in the secular hands of a Government and Parliament in which Anglicans — and even Christians — may be in a minority. Incidentally, it is this fact which still effectively prevents the powerful Anglo-Catholic Party in the Church of England from coming to terms eventually with Rome. How long however, England which is now only one country in a world-wide Commonwealth can continue with a State Church which represents only an infinitesimal minority of the peoples of the Commonwealth and actually only a minority of the English people can continue as at present is anyone’s guess. Currently, there are probably more Muslims and Hindus than Christians in the world-wide Commonwealth of which Queen Elizabeth, by the Grace of God, Defender of the (Anglican) Faith presides. Though the Russian Revolution has now liquidated the Tsarist regime, it is a matter of historical interest to recall that the Tsarist Russian Empire also embodied a relationship between Church and State somewhat similar to the present English one; with the State predominating over the Church. After Peter the Great the Tsar was himself a sort of “Orthodox” Pope. It was to his spiritual “Little Father” Tsar Nicholas I that the famous Russian anarchist Michael Bakunin confessed his sins in his *Confession*, one of the most curious documents ever penned. Since 1917 the Communist regime has solved, or attempted to solve, the problem of Church and State in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the English Tudors in the sixteenth century, entirely favourable to the Soviet totalitarian State again “over all persons and causes supreme”. Whilst information is deficient regarding the various lands of the present Communist *bloc*, we believe that it is correct to state that the theoretical separation of Church and State and the practical supremacy of the *State* represent the predominant features.

Church and State in Non-Christian Religions

Thus far we have considered the problem of the mutual relationships between Church and State exclusively from the standpoint of Christianity, whether in relation to Rome, totalitarian Christianity, or to the Reformed Churches. But we live increasingly in what the American publicist, Wendell Wilkie significantly described as “One World.” In this world, ever increasingly united by the current Revolution in technology and transport in, despite ideological differences, a common industrial civilisation, the non-Christian religions which, like Christianity, have survived from pre-industrial ages, will also find themselves effectively confronted by the rapid onrush of an industrial civilisation based on science and engendering a rationalistic philosophy. “The Conflict of Religion and Science” and the Secularist philosophy based on science, which have agitated Christianity since the Industrial Revolution, will inevitably confront the other Oriental religions in the near future as the East passes rapidly into the orbit of the Industrial Revolution. The present Indian “Five year Plans” which promise to transform the immemorial agrarian bases of Indian civilisation, will inevitably fulfil the famous prediction of Karl Marx written at the time of the introduction of railways into the sub-continent, that the introduction of the scientific technique of the West into the social frame-

(Continued on next page)

This Believing World

The really interesting fact with regard to TV's brilliant show, "The Restless Sphere" — the story of the International Geophysical Year which at the same time made H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh an outstanding television personality, was the complete absence of any reference to God Almighty as the "Creator" of it all. We had no pictures of archbishops blessing everything and everybody and even Jesus himself was "conspicuous by his absence". What happened? Did the Royal Society *deliberately* leave out all reference to the way the Lord created everything out of nothing — that profound truth upon which Christianity is eternally based? The proceedings were not even opened by a prayer!

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In truth, everything that was shown and spoken on this memorable occasion emphasised unadulterated Materialism. There wasn't a hint of anybody, not even the Creator, designing anything in Nature. The Universe, as envisaged by scientists, and not by the Lord's elect, was discussed, and whatever new discoveries will be made they can only stress all the more strongly that "Matter" (however defined) underlies every phenomenon under the earth, on its surface and in the skies above. In short, God can be ignored.

★

Once again we must record our hearty agreement with a priest on Christianity. Father Trevor Huddleston on TV's "Meeting Point" the other Sunday made mincemeat of the idea that "it doesn't matter what you believe provided you show a bit of human kindness." That was *not* Christianity he scornfully maintained. Genuine Christianity was *supernatural*. It was an *historical* religion — God Almighty the Creator of the Universe, incarnating as Jesus Christ, dying for mankind, and rising from the dead. You have to believe these things on sight. No discussion allowed whatever for they are true.

★

With pride, the gallant Father quoted from Matthew — "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me . . ." We half expected him to quote the other and even more famous *bon mot* of "our Lord" — "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." These two quotations should suffice to show how right is Fr. Huddleston to reject "a bit of human kindness" as representing the true religion of Jesus Christ, and we heartily agree with him. Any picture of Jesus as a kind-hearted Sunday school teacher is just milk and water Modernism and should be forthwith rejected. Bravo Father Huddleston!

★

In this "Age of Scientific Discovery" as a C of E writer Mr. H. Fairlie, on the *Daily Mail* so cleverly puts it, we must all "now, if ever, have Faith." We must all have "a New Sense of Wonder" at "the Creation of which we are a part." He means that we must all go back to God Almighty for "Science is the greatest buttress which faith has received in 2,000 years." Science has shown that "the universe has been deliberately willed." Which just goes to show how stupid everybody was in claiming that Religion and Science have always been at loggerheads.

★

Anyhow, as everything in the Universe has been deliberately willed, it is good to know that cancer, small pox, blindness, bugs and similar beauties of nature have been "designed" by an All powerful Designer for the delight of human

beings; while in the physical world, we now learn that for tempests, floods, volcanoes, etc., we also have to thank the same All Mighty. How very comforting!

★

It is astonishing how easy it is to wipe out Materialism. Years before World War I, Mr. Shaw Desmond confidently told Chapman Cohen in their debate that Materialism was fighting in its last ditch. Now we have a Spiritualist called Harry Boddington writing that "psychic facts will compel Materialism to burn half its books." He calls it "blank materialism," but however it is called, it is so much alive that we are compelling Christians and, of course, Spiritualists, to spend most of their time demolishing it. And it is still very much alive.

Polish Society For Secular Schools

IN JANUARY the Society for Secular Schools was formed in Poland, and in May the second conference of the Society was held in Warsaw. The Society has now over a hundred branches.

As will be recalled, the recent agreement between Church and State in Poland makes it possible for schools to give a wholly secular education where this is desired by the majority of the parents. To date, thanks to the collaboration of the Society with the Ministry of Education, some 15 schools in Warsaw are now of this character. Throughout the country 25 secular schools are now functioning, and another 29 are in the course of organisation.

The educational section of Conference proposed that the Society should organise a wide social movement embracing both believers and non-believers, to deal with the moral education of young people. The aim of its work should be to convince society of the high moral standards that can be achieved by a non-fideist education, with the introduction in all schools of teaching in ethics.

Addressing the concluding session of the conference, the Minister of Education answered the many questions raised by delegates. In the view of the Ministry, as of the Society, he said, work for the secularisation of education could only be done by educating society, and not by administrative means.

PROBLEMS OF CHURCH AND STATE

(Continued from page 227)

work of Hindustan will ultimately do away with the animal gods of Hinduism, with Suraste the cow and Hanumam the monkey god. Similarly, the oil pipe-lines across the Arabian desert which intersect the caravan routes that are trodden by pilgrims to Mecca, will propel the Arabian wilderness from the age of the Koran into the Atomic Age. Vast horizons open up before the World Union of Freethinkers. The problem which agitated the West in the 19th century including that of the relationship between Church and State will inevitably loom large in the next century. Accordingly it is, we submit, entirely relevant to direct a brief glance at the current and future problems of Church and State in Eastern lands and in relation to non-Christian religions.

The above is the third part of Mr. F. A. Ridley's Paper to be given at the Paris Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers next September.

To be continued.

In Melbourne, a Japanese war bride was given custody of her child, having left her Christian husband because of his excessive drinking and cruelty. Custody was only granted on condition that the child was given a Christian upbringing, when, presumably, like her father, she would be assured of becoming a good Christian.

THE FREETHINKER

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS

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

P. VARNEY.—It was Mr. Huxley's point that the glory is Fitzgerald's, not Omar's. This view has been well established for a long time.

F. P. ARNOLD.—Libraries of up to seven hundred thousand books existed in the cities of Greece and Rome until the fifth century, preserving what the race had won in human knowledge: they were destroyed by the Christians.

Mrs. C. BULL.—No Christian body condemned slavery till it became unfashionable to defend it.

W. FYSCH.—Catholics oppose euthanasia on the grounds that, to quote one of their pamphlets, "Our life is not our own, but belongs to God."

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

- Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Messrs DAY, CORINA, 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, FINKEL, SMITH or CORSAIR.
- Sunday, 3 p.m. (Platt Fields) Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS, etc.
- Sunday 8 p.m. (Deansgate Blitzed Site): Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS, SMITH or WOOD.
- Mercyside 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: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.
- Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square) — Thursday, 1 p.m.: R. POWE. Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY and R. POWE
- Wales and Western Branch (The Downs, Bristol).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: D. SHIPPER, A Lecture.
- West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday, at the Marble Arch, from 4 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

INDOOR

- Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Bristol Street School).—Sunday, July 21st, 7 p.m.: J. L. SHEPHERD, "The Creed of a Freethinker."
- South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, July 21st, 11 a.m.: Prof. F. T. TEN HAVE (Amsterdam), "The Humanistic Adventure in Our Time." (Under auspices of I.H.E.U.)

Notes and News

Nine students, members of the Cardiff University Catholic Society hitch-hiked to London to take part in the annual Student Cross Pilgrimage to Walsingham (Norfolk). They took it in turns to carry a 1,001 lb. wooden cross to the shrine, walking 20 miles each day. When invited in the

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £229 12s. 9d.; A. Hancock, 2s.; H.C., 10s.; F. Slater, 2s. 6d.; A. H. Briancourt, 10s.—Total to date, July 12th, 1957, £230 17s. 3d.

columns of the *Cardiff and South Wales Times* to tell the readers what they hoped to achieve by such "misplaced enthusiasm", the budding intellectuals could not — alas! — muster a reply between them.

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SOUTH Viet-Nam is Vatican HQ for South-East Asia and Catholics comprise approximately 12½% of its population, a phenomenal proportion for this area. President Ngo Dinh Diem is a member of one of the oldest indigenous Catholic families and he is supported by numerous Catholic ministers and advisers. In the Legislative Assembly, the President, Iran Van Lam, is Catholic and it is estimated that about 60 out of the 123 Assembly members are also Papists. The R.C. Church is also a big land-owner in South Viet-Nam.

★

FRENCH papers have been headlining a remarkable civil war which knocked H-bombs, changing governments and the Folies Bergere right into the background. It followed the repairing of the church bell in the village of St. Maxire. The battle commenced when the parish priest gave the bill to the Mayor, saying that the municipal authorities should pay for the bell, used for civic as well as religious purposes. When the mayor returned the bill (unpaid!) to the priest the latter immediately pronounced a campanological ex-communication and forbade civic use of the bell, placing it "in sanctuary" on the altar.

However, the heretical mayor, assisted by a posse of Vigilantes raided the church, captured the bell and drove it in triumph to the town hall on the ancient local fire engine. Just when it seemed that U.N.O. troops would have to mediate, a gift bell arrived from the U.S.A., (definite evidence of Divine intervention). Now the village has two bells and, at least until one cracks, an uneasy armistice prevails.

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A BOMBSHELL has been dropped in the long-fought Maesteg Sunday Cinema dispute. The local cinema-proprietors have found that Sunday opening is made impracticable by the harsh conditions imposed by the Urban Council, who would not permit opening before 8 p.m. and still wished to levy 1d. per seat (occupied or not). The public, who voted for Sunday cinemas and also paid for the plebiscite, are to be denied the elementary freedom which should follow plebiscite victory. The blame for this lies with the chicken hearted petty bureaucrat who succumbed to the ecclesiastical and fundamentalist bigotry of the Maesteg Valley Christians, this from an overwhelmingly Socialist council. For the time being the Sunday nine-mile trek to Bridgend (where the cinemas open at 5 p.m.) will continue for those debased pagans iniquitous enough not to wish to spend Sunday night in a chapel or in drinking:

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WE ARE GLAD to state that many of the books published by the Pioneer Press have encouraging sales. Week by week our office staff send out dozens of parcels, not only all over England, but also to America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as to the East. Considering the almost complete boycott of Freethought works by our booksellers, this is highly gratifying. It will not come as a surprise to readers who possess a copy that Foote and Ball's *Bible Handbook* can rank as probably our "best seller". And well it deserves to be!

Behind the Scenes in Rome

By COLIN McCALL

WHEN *Report on the Vatican** first appeared 12-months ago, it received good reviews. Now that I have been able to read it, I can understand why. It is a fascinating trip behind the scenes at Vatican City (St. Peter's is aptly called a "baroque theatre") in the company of a broad-minded Catholic who is keenly aware of the modern world and the problems it presents to an ancient institution. Mr. Bernard Wall, the author, has lived in Rome for many years, and he has explored the Vatican pretty thoroughly. His book imparts a great deal of information in very readable form and it is finely illustrated. It is not in any way a religious book. "The greater part of it" — as Mr. Wall says — "concerns institutions which have little more to do with theology than the Vatican Museums have." And its treatment of Church organization is not religious or theological. It is a book about "the organization of the Vatican, how it impresses an observer, how it works." This is clearly a subject of importance: it is one that Freethinkers should know something about, and this book is a good place to start.

Mr. Wall is surely right in regarding the Papacy as the inheritor of two traditions: the Greco-Roman and the Christian. Popes are "successors of Caesar and successors of Peter" and must in some way attempt to synthesise these "apparently opposite things." St. Thomas Aquinas attempted a theological-philosophical synthesis and probably came nearer to success than anybody before or since; but Popes have had to attempt a political synthesis also. In some respects the Vatican City is the graveyard of Ancient Rome—the great Papal Altar under the dome of St. Peter's contains bronze from the Pantheon — but artistically it might be said to be the custodian of Pagan tradition. In the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo's Christ — which you can look at best "during the Holy Week ceremonies"—is "also Apollo and Jupiter". Raphael "brought the Greco-Roman world and the Christian world face to face" on the walls of the Segnatura.

Of the three Romes, the second — or Papal — Rome has lasted far the longest, and it is not surprising that "time doesn't count in the Vatican." But Mr. Wall is candid about the present problems that beset the Church. "Catholic dogma no longer has the hold on people's minds that it once had and the daily practice of Catholic religion has been for long declining. In Italy, despite all the monks and nuns, and despite the Cabinet Ministers who religiously attend functions in St. Peter's, within a kilometre of St. Peter's there live tens of thousands of people who vote for the Pope's worst enemies." The traditionally Catholic countries "were shaken up by the French Revolution" and "they have never had any real stability since." Religious belief in Italy is weakest among the intelligentsia. Indeed, Mr. Wall says "It would require great efforts of ingenuity to find the names of men of academic or literary standing in Italy who are in accord with the Church." As for France — "eldest daughter of the Church" — "the most agreeable and honest people won't have anything to do with it, whereas it gathers like a jampot the lame and ugly gossips, the people with possessions to increase or lose, and those who are afraid of life." A priest's reading is "very limited"; his education "still exactly what it was in the seventeenth century". Italian clergy "tend to sink into mental torpor and aridity."

The great hope for the Vatican is the United States. The English-speaking peoples have now greater representation

*Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1956.

in the Vatican than the Spaniards and Portuguese — a situation inconceivable two hundred years ago — and there are "unquestionably far more practising Catholics in Chicago than in Paris or Buenos Aires; possibly more than in any other city in the world." "The South American countries have a brilliant future," writes Mr. Wall, "but they are as yet too far away from it . . . It is therefore natural that the Vatican should look favourably on the English-speaking countries which, though Protestant, have substantial Catholic minorities and are able to produce a kind of stability in which the Church can flourish." In addition, American Catholics pay half the total income of the Vatican, Cardinal Spellman having one of the richest archdioceses in the world — New York. America has then, literally opened up a new world for Catholicism. But this does not mean that the Church is committed to democracy. "The Vatican will not thinkably ally itself in a formal political way with the aims of the White House and the Pentagon", says Mr. Wall. Still, its future depends preponderantly on the United States, South America, Canada and Australia.

Of Mr. Wall's own Catholicism little emerges from this essentially objective book. But he is often critical and sometimes slightly Voltairian. The rule barring the public from the loggia in St. Peter's where the relics are kept was originally to prevent robbers stealing them, "but now, perhaps, the motive is one of delicacy." "No one in the Vatican would like or even dare to deprive pilgrims and Romans of the veil of Veronica. There has to be a diplomacy about miracles or the devout get angry." The marble of some of the Papal tombs "seems enormously heavy. What an effort one thinks, for the Popes to push up such gigantic objects so as to rise from the dead on the Day of Judgment". References to St. Januarius, "who miraculously liquefies" and to St. Joseph of Cupertino, "who performed prodigies of bilocation", are surely irreverent; that some of the saints "did not exist" more so. Then there is the Madonna that nodded during the 1948 elections "thereby helping the cause of the Christian Democrats." And Mr. Wall seems to have a particular dislike of the Curia Cardinals (those who live in Rome and assist the Papal Government). "They have misshapen faces and bodies; they bulge with fat in the wrong places, they have huge avaricious noses with tufts of hair sprouting from the nostrils or thick slobbering lips and enormous ears." "In the days of Pope Pius IX they used to spit and take snuff in St. Peter's as the Pope himself did . . ."

Did you know that, before the election of a Pope, three sizes of robes — large, medium and small — are prepared "so that the Pontiff can put on a ready-made suit without delay"? That as soon as the Pope is elected he is in charge of all Vatican funds? That Vatican Radio is controlled by the Jesuits? These are a few of the varied and interesting facts that the book contains.

Here then, is a Catholic who is prepared to view his Church frankly: to face the contradiction between temporal power and spiritual claims. He must surely share the standing Roman joke that the pontifical registration of cars, SCV (Stato della Città del Vaticano) means *Se Cristo Vedesse . . .* (if Christ were to see . . .) He certainly recognises that excommunication — "a weapon that once paralysed armies and governments" no longer has much effect. He knows that it is possible to draw "many conclusions" from the wording of some Papal encyclicals; that the Index "exists perhaps more out of habit and inertia than for

any other reason". And he realises that the Assumption of the Virgin — "that is to say the elevation of one particular woman with all her clothes on into some wisely undefined interplanetary space" — has nothing on earth to do with a man who works in the Renault factory. "The whole structure of the ecclesiastical mind and of the society which drove people from the Church must be changed", writes Mr. Wall. But that is a tall order.

Jews in Russia

by DAVE SHIPPER

THE three million Jews of Soviet Russia have been practically isolated from their co-religionists on the other side of the "iron curtain" for almost forty years, but recently a party from the Rabbinical Council of America became the first rabbinic delegation to enter the USSR since 1917.

Their reports were published in a series of articles which appeared in the *New York Journal-American*.

During the articles Stalin is charged with extremist anti-Semitism and although there are many signs of amelioration it is pointed out that neither Bulganin nor Krushchev has made a denunciation of Stalin's anti-Semitism.

It is charged that the final years of Stalinist rule were "among the blackest in Jewish history", and it is asserted that Stalin, like Hitler, practised genocide, the difference being that where Hitler's genocidal bestialities were directed on the body, Stalin concentrated "on the mind and spirit". Rabbis were sent away for teaching Zionism and "countless thousands" of Russian Jews who showed a desire to emigrate to Israel were sent, not to the "Holy Land", but to slave labour camps. They state that a Rostov cantor served three years imprisonment for "putting too much emphasis" on this passage in a synagogue service — "And may our eyes perceive thy return to Zion in mercy." Recently some "posthumous rehabilitations" have been announced — a great consolation to the unfortunate victims!

The rabbis found Russian Jews, "within limits", were free to worship. They saw them "praying, observing dietary laws, circumcising their sons and ritually burying their dead."

They deplore the lack of religious school instruction — strictly forbidden — and also the fact that all public schools trace the natural interpretation of history and attack and scoff at religion."

Public lectures are delivered to combat religion and citizens are encouraged to visit the Museum of the History of Religion, which was once called "the anti-religious Museum and is precisely that." Their impression was that the synagogue or church in the U.S.S.R. must pay a price in return for its right to function. "The pulpit is fettered — and made to serve the interests of the State".

American-style religious freedom was unknown under the Tsars, just as it is today. Perhaps the difference is that prior to the October Revolution the Church was master of the State, whilst today the State is master of all the churches.

In the U.S.S.R. a Jew, whether Orthodox or completely atheist, must carry an identity card which indicates that he is of Jewish nationality. In spite of this the Delegation say he has no opportunity for purely ethnic or cultural expression as a Jew.

The shortage of synagogues brought very unfavourable comment from the Delegation. Moscow, which has an estimated Jewish population of 500,000 has only one large synagogue (capacity 1,000), one with a 500-capacity, and a smaller one with accomodation for 150.

Although a synagogue is not taxed, the individual clergy-

men pay a *higher* income-tax than others in comparable earning-groups because they are engaged in "unproductive labour".

There are grave shortages of prayer books, phylacteries, prayer shawls, religious calendars, etc., and, in the whole USSR only 100 Rabbis "not one of whom is much below the age of 70." Not a single Rabbi has been ordained or imported for the last forty years. With the State fixing Sunday as the day of rest, Jews find it impossible to observe their own Sabbath, the observance of which is a fundamental doctrine of Judaism. Adequate facilities for ritual slaughter have never been provided, although in both Moscow and Leningrad are government bakeries which produce unleavened bread. Most young Jews are married without religious ritual, and although every city visited by the Delegation had a mikveh (traditional ritualarium for immersion) "this basic religious practice is being ignored by many."

The Delegation concluded that the majority of Jews in Russia "have become estranged from the whole religious and cultural heritage of their people."

The Delegation concluded their series of articles by stating, in a fashion so typical of theologians, "We are confident that the God of Israel who has preserved the Jew throughout the ages, will make him the victor over every method devised against him."

In view of the history of Jewish persecution through the ages, whilst a supposedly all-powerful God stood silently watching the massacre of millions of Jews, this statement is rather pathetic.

Outside Eden

By A. R. WILLIAMS

In a hut of interwoven branches and reeds a woman lay on a pile of dried animal skins. A man walked in and stood erect, yawning and stretching his arms.

"Adam," asked his wife, "D'you want any supper?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I've eaten some fruit."

"Fruit" repeated Eve in tones of dubiety.

"Yes. Fruit", returned Adam, adding in sneering emphasis, "But not apples. There's only one thing I hate more than apples."

"What's that?"

"Snakes. Them I kill whenever I get a chance to."

"You needn't be so bitter about it. I'm not."

"Then you ought to be" declared the man.

"I don't know" murmured Eve. "The first serpent who talked to me was charming, both of voice and manner."

"Charming!" mocked Adam, "and look what it led to."

"To life" retorted Eve. "And knowledge. And to varied experiences we should never've had in the sheltered monotony of the Garden."

"Ugh!" snorted the man, dropping on the furry couch beside his wife and stretching his full length on his back.

"Adam" said the woman "I try to forget all that past life, except one thing."

"What's that?"

"It's too beautiful to forget: When we walked naked arm-in-arm with God in the Garden."

"We can walk arm-in-arm naked now."

"But we never do. Why don't we?"

With no answer from the man a long silence was suddenly broken by Eve exclaiming suspicious and insistent "Adam! You've been out with those Simian women."

"I've not."

"Then where have you been?"

"In the forest, walking about till I got tired and lay down."

"With those Simian women, after you'd walked miles to search for 'em."

"I tell you I haven't seen a Simian woman much less gone near one. I wouldn't touch one."

"I'm not so sure."

"I am. They're too hairy."

"You're hairy yourself."

"Of course. That shows strength in a man."

"If you haven't been with a Simian woman where have you been all these hours?"

"I've told you. I had a quiet lie down and sleep in a clearing of the forest."

"Yes."

"God might've come to you."

"Not that I'm aware of."

Eve hesitated before enlarging the theme, "God was so fond of you he might've come and created you another woman, like he did before."

Adam laughed, saying "God won't repeat that experiment again. It ended too disastrously. You and the serpent made a rare old mess of the final act of creation; what was to've been the supreme and perfect act."

"Don't be cruel, Adam" answered his spouse, with a slight sob.

"Forget it, my only love. And go to sleep as I'm going to."

Soon the man's steady breathing showed he slept. Turning toward him Eve lifted the covering deerskin and felt her mate's ribs, trying to count if a second one had been abstracted to create another woman who would usurp her place.

CORRESPONDENCE

JOHN STUART MILL

"What Happened to John Stuart Mill?" asks Mr. Cutner in his article of July 5th. My answer would be that John Stuart Mill became one of the great Englishmen of the 19th century. It may well be true that "with one or two exceptions," his books are hardly read today, but has any book by T. H. Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, or G. H. Lewes been reprinted more often or read more widely during the 20th century than Mill's *Autobiography* or his *On Liberty*? There is hardly a defender of free speech or an opponent of Stalinism or McCarthyism in the English-speaking world who has not quoted or borrowed from *On Liberty*.

Can any other 19th century "intellectual" be credited with having written the basic text-books for half a century in both logic and economics as well as being responsible for launching the woman suffrage movement in England? Mill's exposition of Neo-Malthusianism, which Mr. Cutner no doubt justly stresses, was but one of Mill's many interests. That Mill disapproved of parts of Drysdale's *Elements of Social Science* is surely irrelevant to his advocacy of contraception, Drysdale advocated a form of "free love," while Neo-Malthusianism is hardly incompatible with the institution of marriage. Bradlaugh's attitude towards both questions was, as a matter of fact, very similar to Mill's. That Mill's Socialism was "ambiguous" is hardly surprising in that there was no organised socialist movement in England at the time of his death. Mill did much, however, to modify some of the more "dismal" doctrines of the earlier classical economists.

Finally, whatever Mrs. Taylor's shortcomings, it is obvious that it was under her influence that Mill wrote many of his greatest works. And while he may not have been a militant atheist, he was far from being a coward either. It was, after all, his public endorsement of Bradlaugh as Parliamentary candidate for Northampton in 1868 which cost him his own re-election as M.P. for Westminster.

Whether Mill was a "saint" or not would appear to be less important than the conclusion that he fulfilled his early promise as well as any child prodigy ever has.

WALTER L. ARNSTEIN.

A CATHOLIC COMPLAINT

I see that the Vatican paper, *Osservatore Romano*, complains that in Czechoslovakia the clergy may not even decide the times of Masses, which have to fit in with the times of "real or imaginary" extra work. It claims that in Czechoslovakia "oppression of the Church's external activities is more complete than anywhere else." The R.C.s should count themselves fortunate. The Czech Freethinkers were *completely* suppressed by the Communists.

D. SHIPPER.

MATTER AND MIND

Mr. Cutner has a thing about weighing electrons, but it won't get him anywhere philosophically, since, as A. J. Ayer points out in his recent book *The Problem of Knowledge*, "Philosophical theories are not tested by observation. They are neutral with respect to particular matters of fact." This, of course, was Chapman Cohen's standpoint. If by matter preceding mind Mr. Cutner means that the earth existed before there were men on it, no one, least of all a thorough-going evolutionist like Chapman Cohen, would bother to argue about it, but it has nothing at all to do with Cohen's "Materialism." If he means that the generalisation "Matter" preceded the generalisation "Mind," then he is hopelessly confused.

W. E. NICHOLSON.

[Mr. Cutner writes: Never mind about my "confusion." Will Mr. Nicholson tell us whether he agrees that this world of ours was once such as no life could exist on it, or not? And if life could exist on it, then give me his authorities.]

OBITUARY

WILLIAM JAMES FREEMAN was a cheery, indomitable little man who retained his mental and physical vitality until his death on holiday at the age of 88. His periodic visits to the office were enjoyable occasions for everyone concerned. A secular service was conducted by the General Secretary, N.S.S., at Bruce Castle Cemetery, Tottenham, on July 15th.

The sudden death of JOHN T. BRIGHTON must come as a shock to all who knew him and the splendid work he did for the N.S.S. over a period of many years. He was one of our active Vice-Presidents until his other duties made him regretfully resign. Mr. Brighton died after an operation for appendicitis in Chester-le-Street Hospital on the 14th July at the age of 62. The cremation will take place at Newcastle Crematorium on Thursday, 18th July at 2.25 p.m.

We regret to learn also of the recent death of J. J. BURY, who was an active member of the West Ham and District Branch.

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