

The Freethinker

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A COMPARATIVELY SHORT PERIOD—perhaps not more than a couple of centuries—separates the earliest books of the New Testament from the latest books of the Old, Ecclesiastes and Maccabees, dating perhaps from about 100 or so B.C., while the oldest Pauline Epistles and the original draft of the Gospels *may* be as early as the first century A.D. From the standpoint of comparative religion, however, there is a profound distinction between the two Testaments. The Old Testament is the Bible of a national religion, Judaism, while the New represents equally the Bible of another religion, a cosmopolitan one, Christianity. The eventual inclusion of these two radically divergent Testaments within the confines of a single volume, was not a sudden “act of God,” nor, actually, was it so from the earliest beginnings of Christianity. In its present form, the Christian Bible does not go back beyond about 200 A.D.

How we got our Bible

The above was the title of a widely read book in Christian circles during the writer's youth. Actually its title was rather misleading since it dealt mainly with the textual history of the Biblical books rather than with their inclusion in the present Canon, or with their original authorship and nature. The fact, of course, is that the original Bible of the earliest Christian Churches was simply and solely the Jewish Bible, which did not assume its present and final form until after the initial appearance of Christianity itself. It was only after the Destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem by the Romans A.D. 70, that Judaism became what it has been ever since, a religion of the Book, *viz.* of our Old Testament. At this time Christianity still ranked as an heretical sect on the fringe of Judaism, which observed the Jewish Law, read the Jewish Scriptures, and only differed from orthodox Judaism in believing that the promised Messiah had come in the person of Jesus Christ. The original Bible of the Christian Churches was the Jewish Bible and nothing but the Jewish Bible. Even Paul and his disciples, the authors of the Pauline Epistles, while they rejected the authority of the Mosaic Law for their Gentile converts, still continued to regard the Jewish Bible as their Bible also. It is not until well into the second century—as even Bishop Barnes admitted—that the liturgical expression “it is written,” denoting the canonical origins of the quotation, first appears in any book written by a Christian. Neither the Pauline author (or authors?) nor the authors of our four Gospels, at least in their original form, can have regarded either themselves or their writings, as inspired directly by God in the same way as the earlier Jewish Scriptures had been. It is, for example, only necessary to read the present prologue to our Third Gospel, which Luke addresses to his eminent convert “the honourable Theophilus,” to see that the author was only writing down information which he had himself acquired as an alleged eye-witness since the beginning of Christianity. Luke wrote as an historian and not

as an inspired penman of the Holy Ghost.

The First Editor of the New Testament

The original New Testament—that is, the Christian Bible—of equal and even superior authority to the Jewish Old Testament, was the heretic Marcion's, who was solemnly expelled from the Church of Rome in the year 144, quite possibly the earliest *historical* date in the history of Christianity. Marcion's primary heresy consisted in rejecting Judaism and the Jewish antecedents of Christianity altogether; from which it logically followed that he also rejected the Jewish Bible. Marcion did not even concede to it the status of an Old Testament. He was a Dualist, who taught that the Jehovah of the

Jewish Bible was identical with the God of Evil, and actually described him as “The Father of the Devil.” In place of the discarded Old Testament, Marcion put forward the new, and apparently quite original, idea that certain early Christian writings were the real Bible; the New Testament, which had effectively superseded the Old. Henceforth, there was to be only one Bible, the Christian one.

Marcion and the New Testament

Though a heretic whose name and fame have been deliberately obscured by the Christian Churches, Marcion was indisputably one of the most influential as well as remarkable figures in the annals of Christianity. As far as any one man can be said to be so, he may be termed the editor of the first New Testament and more significantly still, as the first person to think of Christianity as a new religion and not merely, as up to that time it had been, just another Jewish heresy. In his book, *The Creation of Christ*, the great French Freethinking author, Paul Louis Couchoud, has emphasised the important role played by the first great heretic in the evolution of Christianity, Marcion of Sinope (on the Black Sea). This is so, particularly as Marcion not only published the first Christian Bible, but also rescued the name of Paul from oblivion. Marcion was the first editor of the Pauline Epistles, which were not accepted by the Church of Rome. Justin Martyr, a contemporary of Marcion, never mentions either Paul's name or his Epistles. It is perhaps possible that Marcion himself was their original author. That is, of course, of the original drafts which, as we shall soon see, have been extensively bowdlerised in the interests of what later became orthodoxy, by the Catholic Church.

Marcion's “New Testament”

Like those of most of all the major Christian heretics, the works of Marcion have long since vanished. But from contemporary Christian writers such as Justin Martyr and Tertullian, who “refutes his heresies,” we know something about him and his ideas, including the contents of his original New Testament. This consisted of Marcion's own Gospel plus ten Pauline Epistles apparently published collectively under the title of *The Apostolikon*. A recent Bulletin of that scholarly group of French Free-

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

The Making of the New Testament

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

thinkers, the *Ernest Renan Cercle* in Paris, concisely describes Marcion's pioneer New Testament in these terms (slightly abridged): "Marcion published two works, a Gospel which Tertullian declared to be that of Luke, in which all references to Judaism were eliminated, plus *The Apostolikon*, which consisted of ten Pauline Epistles, of which Marcion was the original Editor. In publishing his final *Gospel* and *Apostolikon*, Marcion tried to supply the Christian Church with Scriptures distinct from those of the Jews, and even in direct opposition to them. A book entitled *Antitheses* was later published in order to defend this position." Tertullian also adds that Marcion's Gospel contains no reference to the Birth of Christ, but begins with the bald statement that "The Son of God appeared at Capernaum in the 14th year of the Emperor Tiberius."

The Catholic Church and the New Testament

The Catholic Church expelled Marcion and denounced him as an arch-heretic. Nonetheless, as so often in later ages, it borrowed his ideas, or at least those which the Church considered that it could use with advantage. Foremost among such was the idea of a specifically Christian Bible: a New Testament distinct from the Old Jewish

Testament. Unlike Marcion, however, they did not reject their Jewish antecedents, but preserved the Jewish Bible along with their own under the significant title, henceforth, of the Old Testament. As for the New, the Church naturally rejected Marcion's own Gospel, but "edited"—or wrote—its own Gospels, including ours (Couchoud thinks that Luke was written as a deliberate reply to Marcion's). The Church, however, kept the Pauline Epistles, but probably rewrote them pretty extensively. Our Epistles have first been bowdlerised by Marcion, and then re-bowdlerised by the Catholic Church. That is actually "how we got our Bible"—or a good deal of it! The Church also forged new Epistles of Paul—Timothy and Titus—in which Marcion's book, *The Antitheses*, is unmistakably denounced, even though it was composed 80 years after the traditional date of Paul's death! (cf. 1 Timothy vi 20).

However, between 150 and 200 our New Testaments came into existence with the blessing of the Church. Manuscripts varied and some doubtful books were eliminated. By the fourth century at latest the New Testament was completed. But the Church has never canonised its first editor as St. Marcion!

CONTROVERSY

Priest and Ex-Priest

G. M. PARIS, O.P., Editor, *The Faith* (Malta)

MR. O. C. DREWITT, though he claims to have been a Catholic Monk, does not seem to know much about Catholic Religion. He does not even know the Latin formula of Consecration over the wine, which he quotes as "Hic est calix sanguinis meæ" (*THE FREETHINKER*, page 139), instead of the correct one, "Hic est calix sanguinis mei," sanguis (blood) in Latin being masculine. Maybe, however, the ex-Dominican still remembers these other Latin words which he must have repeated several times during his monastic life, to wit, *Tu es sacerdos in æternum* . . .

Another sign of Mr. Drewitt's ignorance about Catholic Faith is his believing that there is "obligation to swallow the Communion wafer whole. It must not be bitten. . . ." The bread consecrated by Our Lord in the Last Supper was not in the form of wafer, and evidently the Apostles did bite it before swallowing it! Even Catholic children know that there is no such "obligation." We Catholics try to avoid unnecessary biting the wafer through reverence towards the Eucharistic Sacrament, and not because of any suggestion of cannibalism. (*THE FREETHINKER*, page 174.) The ex-Friar Preacher must have forgotten all about the teaching of St. Thomas of Aquinas with regards to the conversion of *substance* in the Holy Eucharist.

I doubt whether Mr. Drewitt did ever have the gift of the Catholic Faith; and here is all the difference between Believers and Unbelievers.

O. C. DREWITT (Ex-Father Norbert, O.P.)

I MUST APOLOGISE to Father Paris for having changed the sex of the Christian idol. My loathing of the homosexual phantasies involved in Jesuolatry was probably the motive.

Of course there is no "suggestion of cannibalism" in what your correspondent cloudily terms "avoiding unnecessary biting of the wafer through reverence." If Catholic consciousness did "suggest" it, my remarks on neurotic fear would be irrelevant. The pathological behaviour at Communion would be absent and Catholic character-structure would be less infantile. A few more monks and nuns would become capable of a normal love-relation. And that is just what Father Paris and the whole Catholic hierarchy are unconsciously in a blue funk about—why they dare not and cannot understand either normal sex or the deformed sex at work in the phantasies of their own religion. It is why Father Paris has by-passed the significance of my argument and attended only to trivialities. Nowhere in his letter has he dared to use either the word "sex" or the word "love," upon both of which my entire argument turned. The reason is that he is terrified of them unconsciously.

Deep in the unconscious, Catholics are like wriggling worms clamped by the back-end—through the blocking of all natural sex feeling from babyhood. When "love" is mentioned they can only wriggle in impotence.

Father Paris is also handicapped by what appears to be a total ignorance of the principles of depth psychology. Otherwise he could hardly have evaded the whole drift of my observations on cannibalism, depression, Melanie Klein and infants, all of which are fully discussed in the literature.

The use of the word "obligation" outside the immediate psychological context (where it was plainly applicable) may have been unwise. If this "error," and my turning of the divine substance into a female, help Father Paris to wriggle more securely in the belief that "I don't know what I am talking about" (the insinuation with which the whole of his charitable letter is concerned), I'll admit them. They are trifles compared with his failure to discuss the real subject at all.

O. C. DREWITT.

TING-A-LING

The same old ding-dong, same old bell,
The same old heaven, same old hell.
The same old Parson, dressed in black,
The same old sermon, Quack, quack, quack.
The same old Churches, deep in gloom,
The same old faces, preaching doom.
The same old custom, hating life,
The same old humbugs, causing strife.
Despite all their cunning, now so vast,
Truth shall destroy it all at last.
For men will follow reason's light,
In marching upward, from the night.

PAUL VARNEY.

Gains and Losses

By COLIN McCALL

IT IS CURIOUS how one sometimes learns things in a roundabout way. For instance, I have just discovered that England is "returning to the faith of its forefathers." But the discovery was made via the United States and Germany. An American soldier in Germany—a reader of THE FREETHINKER—sends me a cutting from the American Roman Catholic paper, *The Register*, of 25th May, 1958. And, if you hadn't guessed at once, you will have done now, that the faith in question is Roman Catholicism. "Forefathers" is an impressive-sounding term, and conveniently elastic: it may be applied to as little or as long ago as one likes. For Protestants, our forefathers were Protestant: for Catholics—conveniently going a little farther back—they were Catholic. Nobody, in England at any rate—and this is the specific country under consideration—seems at present concerned in going back a little farther still and invoking our Celtic-Druidic forefathers. "Before Henry VIII's break with the Church in the 16th century, England belonged to the True Church", declares *The Register*. No mention, of course, of the centuries before the conversion. They are clearly unimportant once the True Church has been founded on a rock and a pun!

But there is a serious side to the report before me and, without by any means wishing to shout "panic stations", I do wish to sound an alert. Key phrases will, I think, assist me in doing so as far as Freethinkers are concerned. It is then up to them to convince their apathetic countrymen that the Roman Catholic Church is a very real danger to our liberty and our culture.

The alleged return to the faith is taking place "quietly and unobtrusively" said Archbishop Francis Grimshaw of Birmingham, whose speech to the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom forms one of the bases of the report. And even those who—like me—think the penny has another side, must admit that there has been a quiet and unobtrusive infiltration and, to some extent, undermining of English life and institutions by the Church of Rome.

Father Thomas Fitzgerald, priest in a working-class parish in the East-end of London, enlarged on this. "An ethos is being formed that is purely Catholic"—he said—"and Protestants are becoming accustomed to it." He pointed out that in modern British films there are Catholic priests, not Protestant ministers, who appear as representatives of the Christian religion. He added that the same thing applies to modern literature. There is undoubtedly some truth in this; and to the extent that it has happened, it should be exposed and combatted.

Our thanks are due to both the Archbishop of Birmingham and the East-end priest for speaking so clearly on a matter that so vitally concerns us all. Promising conversion work has resulted in Catholic multiplication in "tens and hundreds" in places "dotted all over the country", claimed the Archbishop, and he opted for a gradual process as being "much more sure than a sudden mass conversion." No doubt he was feeling pleased with the Catholic Inquiry Centre which—reported the *Sunday Express*, 25th May, 1958—recently dealt with its 100,000th request for information about the free correspondence courses. We have all seen those appealing pictures of the little girl at her first communion, and so on. We have all been amused by the deliberately disarming style of writing in the advertisements: You may not have any

intention of becoming a Catholic but . . . etc. We might have guessed that, as the *Sunday Express* informed us, the advertisements are designed by Father O'Connor, who planned the correspondence courses, and "an agency that also handles the advertising of a chain-store chemist and a hair shampoo."

Anyway, of the 100,000 people who have made preliminary inquiries, 56 per cent have taken or are taking the course (I know there are some Freethinkers among them, who are taking it as a matter of interest). And of that 56,000, said Father O'Connor, 6,400 have approached parish priests for instruction and 3,001 (mathematical precision for you!) have told him they have been received into the Church.

Archbishop Grimshaw might well feel happy about these and other conversions, even if they don't exactly presage the conversion of England. And at first Father Fitzgerald seemed equally happy. He referred to a changing religious spirit that was "forsaking Protestantism and drawing nearer to the Catholic outlook." Eventually, he declared, the bulk of churchgoers will be Catholics. But the obvious reply—maybe, but not the bulk of Englishmen!—must have been lurking in the back of his mind.

Indeed, a reference to "the country's secularism" showed he was aware of the really important religious change that is taking place in England, namely, a general decline. True, this is more noticeable among Protestants than among Catholics, but that is largely because Protestant indoctrination and supervision are considerably less thorough than Catholic. Plus, of course, larger Roman Catholic families and quite considerable Irish and other immigration. And the Father went on to supply statistical proof that his own Church is declining too. Whilst there are many converts, this was no time for complacency, he said. For many Catholics are "lost also". In his own parish—states *The Register*—"there are 4,000 persons who ought to be Catholics against 2,000 who actually come to church." Figures for one parish to set against Father O'Connor's for the whole of Britain. The other side of the penny, in fact.

Father Fitzgerald puts the blame, most unconvincingly, on the "horrible nightmare" of Victorian industrialism, which made "the problem of keeping the faith in their families too great." Unconvincingly, because this cannot possibly account for the obvious retreat "from the faith of its forefathers" that takes place in each generation of Catholics. Among the readers of this paper and the members of the National Secular Society there are many ex-Catholics. We must all know some lapsed Catholics who, whilst not necessarily unbelievers, are "fed up with the Church!" And, though the Roman Catholic Church understandably boasts of its gains and remains generally silent about its losses, it occasionally, if inadvertently, indicates its awareness of them. Only such awareness, I take it, can explain Archbishop William Godfrey's request that the faithful should "spiritually adopt" an individual lapsed Catholic.

—NEXT WEEK—

**HOMOSEXUALITY:
THE NEED FOR LEGAL REFORM**
By D. SHIPPER

This Believing World

The ITV offering on religion recently was on "What does the Book say?"—the "Book" being, of course, the Bible. Three live Bishops, a Christian Hindu from Pakistan, one from Queensland, and one from the U.S.A. gave a beautiful exhibition of pure and unadulterated Fundamentalism which, we are sure, would have astonished the first General Booth himself. The Bible had *everything*, and the Bishop from Queensland and he of Pakistan outvied each other in heavenly praise. For the Hindu, the *whole* of the Bible meant Christ Jesus, and could anything be more wonderful than that?

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The Bishop of Queensland, however, pointed out that only 50 years ago the Bible was a "discredited" work—scientists and Rationalists ridiculing it on the grounds that it wasn't true. And now? Well, has not archæology stepped in and proved that everything which hitherto had been discredited was *literally* true? With the discovery of Ur of the Chaldees, for example, has not the story of Abraham been proved to the utmost? The people who talked like this were, be it remembered, "Bishops," and if any proof were needed how demoralising true Christianity can be, their performance on the Bible with an audience of millions was a great demonstration.

★

We have never been quite sure what exactly was the difference between "Black" Satanic Magic and "White" Christian Magic. Christians have, of course, white altars and white candles, while "Satanists" prefer black altars and black candles; but both are divinely and diabolically sure that their incantations reach respectively God and Satan with, as far as we know, precisely the same result. It appears, however, that some awful Black Magic is being devilishly inspired on an island in Loch Lomond, and the police, according to the *Sunday Pictorial*, "kept an eerie midnight vigil on the lonely island. . . ." But why "eerie"? What is there to be "eerie" about in "Black Magic"?

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The truth is that Christianity propagates a kind of mind which encourages belief in devils, angels, miracles, spooks, "elementals," etc., especially if in addition we get hints of "magical rites" all complete with daggers, black crucifixes, and candles. The late Aleister Crowley was a dab hand at this sort of thing, and he never found any difficulty in finding religious fools to believe him. However, in this Loch Lomond case, the police found nothing, though "there may be future developments," they said. Not too sadly, we hope.

★

We welcome plain speaking and congratulate the Rev. D. R. Blackman of Depiford on saying outright that he objects very much to people getting married in his church, and then never again taking part in its services. He objects also to people, all devout Christians naturally, who tell him that "they used to come to church when they were young." In reply, Mr. Blackman said that he "was getting very tired of marrying ex-choir boys," and added, "I have always had my doubts about inoculating the little brats with so much religion in their youth that they were immune from it later on." What a weary, wicked world this is even for parsons!

★

Anybody tired of Christianity or, for that matter, any other religion, should join the School of Universal Philosophy and Healing—the members of which shun "meat, alcohol, nicotine, and sex" One of its disciples, *Sunday Pictorial* tells us, is a young barrister who receives

"guidance" from a "spirit guide" called "Ra-men-ra" (this is suspiciously like Amen-Ra, one of the Gods of Egypt, who is responsible for the Christian "Amen") and in consequence married the young nursemaid who made headlines when she was hit at the Cambodian Embassy the other week.

★

This marriage is "sexless," both parties want the union to be "celibate." There is nothing new in either the idea or the sect, for history is full of similar "philosophies." In fact, it is claimed that the sect which has become so well known through the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Essenes, had the same "Universal Philosophy." It is a pity that the people who believe in it don't follow the Essenes and live in their now historic caves!

The Rising Generation

XXXIII — PLUTO

IF YOU LOOK UP THE NAME PLUTO in a Classical Dictionary, you will find that he is the son of Saturn and Ops, and that he inherited his father's kingdom with his brothers, Neptune and Jupiter. You will also find that all this is "mythology"—that is, there never was a Pluto or, for that matter, a Jupiter or Neptune or Saturn as Gods or as people who once lived. They are mere names or invented "personifications" of ideas or teachings.

It is not surprising therefore that, as the planets which go round the sun have been given mythological names, the planet which was discovered only during this century should also be given a name taken from classical mythology. The ancient astronomers knew about Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; but it was not until 1781 that Sir W. Herschel discovered Uranus, thought at first to be the outermost of the planets until Neptune was discovered by the Astronomer Galle in 1846.

For nearly 70 years, Neptune, which is 2,800 million miles from the sun, was in turn considered the outermost planet; but in 1915, Dr. Percival Lowell suspected the presence of another planetary body still further away from the sun—and in 1930, he was shown to be right by C. Thombaugh of Arizona Observatory. The new planet, named Pluto, was actually 1,000 million miles away from Neptune, and is therefore bitterly cold—impossible to describe or imagine. No life—as we know it—could possibly survive upon it.

It takes Pluto 250 years completely to revolve around the sun; and it is not unfair to ask those who see "plan" and "intelligence" in the Universe—which they prefer to call God—of what use is Pluto? Why was it planned? Is it not just a useless block of "matter," so useless indeed that we really know practically nothing about it? It is, in fact, just one of the 400,000 million bodies in our own system, as was pointed out by Sir James Jeans.

If Pluto was really "created" when God Almighty "made the stars also," there is nobody in the whole world who can tell us why. And no one shuns explaining such "creations" more than believers in the Creation story given in the first chapter of Genesis. H.C.

THE CHURCH'S WISDOM

"And I pondered upon the wisdom the Church shows in preserving her true foundation, which is the faith of the people. She is quite right not to allow the content of the phial to be subjected to chemical analysis. At all costs let us keep at these scientific probers who always will know everything or, in other words, destroy everything."—ROGER PEYREFITTE on the Miracle of St. Januarius, whose blood in a phial is supposed to liquefy on the Saint's day, September 19th, each year.

THE FREETHINKER

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

W. MILLS.—We cannot see what good purpose can be achieved by allowing you to propagate your flat-earth theories in this journal. Why not try the *Church Times* or the *Methodist Recorder*? These journals are almost on your side and we are not.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Messrs. DAY and CORINA.

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

Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Every Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. F. HAMILTON, E. MILLS and J. W. BARKER.

London, March Arch.—Meetings every Sunday from 5 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

London (Tower Hill).—Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: G. WOODCOCK. Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS and WOOD.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Every Wednesday, 1 p.m.; every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Various speakers.

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).—Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY. Sunday, 11.30 a.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Orpington Humanist Group.—Ramble to Westerham, Toys Hill, Ide Hill and Bearstead. Meet Westerham Station, 11 a.m. (Train from Charing Cross 9.57 a.m. Change at Dunton Green. Orpington, 10.34 a.m.)

Notes and News

How right Cummings was in his *Daily Express* cartoon (4/7/58)! We make no apologies for referring to this matter again; instead we call attention to the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent reply to Mr. Philip Toynbee on the choice before mankind in this nuclear age. Dr. Fisher, trying, as Cummings depicted, to reduce 20th century man to fit the hopelessly outworn dogmas of Christianity, says: "For all I know it is within the providence of God that the human race should destroy itself in this manner. There is no evidence that the human race is to last for ever and plenty in Scripture to the contrary effect." This statement illustrates the basic antagonism between religion and freethought: is man to put his faith (and his fate) in God or is he to shape his own destiny?

★

AMERICAN Monsignor Matthew Smith recently dismissed the claims of Christian Science with the utmost contempt.

I am very sure—he said—"that no evidence can be given that sin, sickness, and death can be destroyed by this system, for its own founder is dead and nobody ever heard of withered legs suddenly shooting out whole or of the dead being raised to life through Christian Science." As for hypnotism: "One would scarcely try to calm a storm at sea or to multiply loaves and fishes by hypnotism." Supposing, however, that Monsignor Smith had "heard" of legs suddenly shooting out whole through Christian Science. Would he believe what he had heard? We doubt it. Nor do we think he would try to calm a storm or multiply loaves and fishes by a Roman Catholic miracle, and in each case he would be wise. Catholics can be very sceptical—within limits.

★

In the course of his professional duties as a commercial photographer, our contributor Mr. Dave Shipper was present in Porthcawl, South Wales, on July 2nd for the weigh-in for the heavyweight boxing match between Dick Richardson of Newport and American negro, Cleveland Williams. Mr. Shipper noted that Richardson looked extremely healthy on a warm sunny day. But it was too cold for Williams and he refused to leave his bed, though pronounced fit by four doctors! Later, of course, the Texan's chill was traced to a message from "beyond." The spirits informed him that it would be bad for him to fight. The British Boxing Board of Control were unimpressed and Cleveland Williams has been duly suspended.

★

A RECENT (undated) copy of the *American Army Times* contains the reply of an Ohio newspaperman, James Garrett, to criticisms of his war novel, *And Save Them for Pallbearers*. We have not yet read the book, but it has been described as "accurate, but too literal in its description of brutality and bloodletting." Mr. Garrett believes that fiction "is the very best method by which to indict war," and he does not think that a writer can "honestly use the language of the drawing room to illuminate the battlefield." "When a writer delves into brutality"—he says—"he must be prepared to use the tools that can best explain the workings of that particular machine. I feel little sympathy with writers who deliberately gloss over the obscenity, the sadism, the brutality and the ultimate viciousness, that are of war's make-up because they fear to offend the reader... I did not write *And Save Them for Pallbearers* for the amusement of children or the edification of the ignorant. It was conceived and written to protest the inane brutality of men, one to the other... There is a love story in this book simply because I feel the world of today needs all the love it can get. There is brutality because men at war are brutal." And—added Mr. Garrett in a memorable phrase—"There is obscenity because war is the only three-letter word I know that is more obscene than any four-letter word in our language." We join him in hoping that it will some day be "made obsolete."

★

It was nice to see the *Daily Telegraph* (15/7/58) report of the reception to commemorate the centenary of Emmeline Parkhurst's birth, for it contained the following reference to a man who has been associated with this paper for many years, first as contributor, lately in an advisory capacity:

The old campaigners present included Mr. Bayard Simmons, 76, the first man to go to prison in the votes-for-women troubles. He served 14 days in Brixton in 1906.

He had flung a bundle of pamphlets to the floor of the Chamber from the Strangers' Gallery. As a result the gallery was closed for a year.

Apologetics and Social Expedience

By LEON SPAIN (U.S.A.)

WITH THE REBIRTH of classical culture, by the Renaissance, and the critical attitude it fostered, many of the unchallenged assumptions of Christianity were shaken to their foundations. The Reformation, introduced and furthered by heretics and honest doubters, drove a great wedge into Christian dogma. Voyages culminating in new geographic discoveries, controlled experiments in scientific method, and the increased secularisation of various provinces of society necessitated a recasting of the official Christian attitude in the light of the new data which it found overwhelming.

Subtlety of intellect came to the fore to explain the inconsistencies of theology. To equate the letter of theological dogma with social innovations and scientific discoveries became a matter of paramount importance if theology were to sustain a vestige of its former power. However, dogmas of Christianity unaffected by changes in the social and scientific sphere, regardless of their inherent absurdity, have remained virtually unchanged with changing historical conditions and scientific discoveries.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* recently contained instances of the effect of circumstance on doctrine. Two merging conferences of Free Will Baptists, meeting recently in Dunn, North Carolina, deleted from among their disciplinary articles a dogma which would have made smoking a "sin." The concluding sentence in the item pertaining to this issue commented, "Many members raise tobacco for a living." The need for apologetics, superficially at least, was deemed unnecessary, for the need for removing smoking from the list of "sins" was expressed as bluntly as could be. Economic necessity and the wealth and material welfare of many of the members was at stake. In fact, in all likelihood—and it would not be unreasonable to surmise—the wealth and material welfare of this particular sect was at stake, for its "pillars" drew their sustenance from the tobacco industry. From secular sources indisputable proof is increasingly forthcoming as to the definite harmfulness of the tobacco habit, and testimonies for its discontinuance are urged by many physicians and health authorities. However, in this instance, seemingly, tobacco and its evils will be restored to good grace by the Free Will Baptists who met in Dunn.

Another item in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* says the Rev. Edw. J. Hogan, S.J., of St. Ignatius Loyola Church of New York City, recently told a Communion Breakfast of the Catholic Guild of the Liquor, Beer and Wine Industry that alcoholism and its resultant evils pose major problems for the liquor industry. He quoted, in effect, that if government regulations and the liquor industry do not contribute to the general welfare, "then every thinking citizen, heartsick of tragedy, is tempted to cry out for almost desperate experiments of law." He told his listeners there are about 4,500,000 "alcoholics who drink miserably" and several million more, not alcoholics, "with severe drinking problems." The liquor industry—Religious News Service quotes him as saying—"is a responsible modern institution except in a very few instances." Alcoholism in its present large scale proportions has become a social problem, and was brought to its present state by the relentless social stress and strain upon its victims who sought surcease and relief, in most instances, and by degrees became confirmed addicts. No amount of ecclesiastical apologetics can nullify the fact that, in this particular instance, the Catholic Guild of the Liquor, Beer and Wine

Industry is playing a pernicious role by serving as a minion to an institution which never condemned alcoholism when alcoholic beverages were the only means of escape from an intolerable existence by the industrial and agricultural populations of past historical eras. Where faith does not seriously conflict with facts and problems of daily existence, apologetics are hardly, if ever, exercised.

All the flights of theological rationalisation and subtle casuistry of the theological hairsplitters and logic choppers cannot do away with the inherent hollowness of their cardinal tenets. The relentless march of secularism and the victories of the human intellect have acted as solvents in keeping the stream of thought pure and free flowing. Theology and all the obscurantist religions will by degrees have to abandon their antiquated mental furniture to meet the needs of the new social household which is coming into being, and which will ultimately relegate theology and its apologetics to the limbo of needless thought patterns. Preconceived dogmas, in politics and religion and in other avenues of thought, will have to conform to what is most tenable and true, and not leave their heavy hand or dead weight upon the vigour of the human intellect.

Harry Ryan, Friend of Jack London

ROBERT H. SCOTT of California who, in 1946, made the first atheist broadcast in America, sends us details of the funeral, on July 9th, of Harry Ryan, 82, owner of the 140-acre "Call of the Wild" ranch near Los Gatos. The ranch, of course, was named after Jack London's novel, for Ryan was a close friend of the novelist after their first meeting in the 1890's. He was proud of the fact that they had been in jail together 22 times (three times in one night) for labour activities, but never convicted. "Jack and I cemented our friendship that way," he said. He also knew Mark Twain, Eugene V. Debs and Clarence Darrow among many others.

Mr. Scott points out that the town of Los Gatos and the nearby city of San Jose are in an area of California which is a stronghold of Catholicism, and in which the newspapers and radio and TV are "either owned or dominated by Roman Catholic groups or individuals." He therefore regards it as "nothing less than a victory for atheism and for equal freedom of belief and expression when the *San Jose Mercury* and the *San Jose Evening News* gave so much space, objectively and impartially, to Harry Ryan, a man who was widely known to be an outspoken atheist."

The latter paper, in fact, described Ryan as "an atheist, a naturalist, and a friend of the working man." He had "no religious beliefs," it went on, "and was an outspoken atheist, as was Jack London." (*San Jose Evening News*, July 10th, 1958.)

Mr. Scott conducted an impressive secular service in Los Gatos, a recording of Ryan himself reading from Thoreau and Whitman being included. The service ended with the song "Home on the Range."

We reprint below Mr. Scott's concluding remarks, which we think will be of interest to readers.

"As for the belief that atheism brings unhappiness to the atheist because it precludes the possibility of an after-life

for human beings—this notion is readily proved to be unfounded. Why should anyone desire a future life? Not every thoughtful man or woman has the desire for personal immortality, either with or without a physical body. I could name many such persons, living or dead.

After all, a death which is an everlasting extinction of the consciousness of personal identity is, except in duration, the same as a dreamless sleep. Truly, you and I and everyone else have already died many, many times. Many times since birth, in our beds, we have been extinguished and created anew. Each period of total unconsciousness is an actual death! Every complete return of consciousness is a veritable resurrection!

Clearly then, a death that is equivalent to an undisturbed sleep with no awakening can have no sting for the one who dies. To die thus is to become as one unconceived, for it is obvious that non-existence after death can be no different from non-existence before birth. And the unconceived have no cares, no sorrows, no suffering. They have no longings to be satisfied, no wrongs to be righted, no ambitions to fulfil. They have, in fact, no need and no wish for life even on the best of terms.

Though it is true that in a death that would be equivalent to a dreamless and never-ending sleep there could be no happiness of any kind, we know, as I said in an atheistic broadcast in 1946, that it is no evil not to have that which cannot be missed. This, as I said in that broadcast, we know with the certainty of those who were once unconceived.

A death that is for the personal self an everlasting annihilation can be a misfortune only for the living, as when death takes away some loved one or one who gave support, companionship, or aid. But in this respect death is no less an evil for him who believes in personal immortality than it is for him who doubts or denies it.

Therefore, let no one recoil from the practical certainty that again we shall not exist. Let no one deem it a loss to himself or herself to fall dreamlessly asleep and never wake again. Let no one shrink from the prospect of a death that will open no door to post-mortem happiness for oneself and one's loved ones, but which will, instead, return them and oneself to the unneeding, unwanted nothingness of the unconceived."

What Rationalism Means To Me

By ARTHUR G. CROMWELL (U.S.A.)

I KNOW OF NO BETTER WAY of starting off this thesis than by quoting the various definitions as given in any accredited dictionary: *Rationalism*: 1. The practice of guiding one's opinions and actions solely by what is considered reasonable. 2. The theory that reason is a source of knowledge in itself, superior to and independent of sense perceptions. 3. Explanation according to reason of what appears to be supernatural. 4. The habit of mind by which one thinks reasonably for himself, instead of conforming to authority.

Rationalism is the open door—the "Welcome Mat" to human knowledge and intellectual experience. It investigates every old and new thought, every old and new doubt. It is absolutely unafraid to cast aside the false in favour of truth. It welcomes the light of new and advancing knowledge as it would destroy the dark and false stories of fable and superstition.

Rationalism means much to me, as it has given me an intellectual independence that is worth more than life itself. It is life—lived in its fullest meaning and enjoyment,

and appreciation of all the realities that give full and rounded measure to this experience we call "Living life at its fullest."

Freedom of mind, or Rationalism, also means much to me as I reflect back over the many years and remember the many and varied religious, political and social experiences and fears I had. I now feel that I do not have to violate my reason in order to comply with any so-called authoritative dogma, either religious, political or social. When I came to know that all men have feet of clay—even as you and I—I realised that there could be no gods or supernatural revelations. Rationalism brought all mankind into proper perspective and myself to full stature. It permitted me to keep my eyes on the stars with my feet firmly on the ground. As Rationalism has given me the joy of living, it has banished the fears of death in favour of a dreamless rest when my day is done.

I feel that the power of reason and the courage to use it by all men will develop a human society worthy of the name. It will prove that hate cannot beget love nor war peace. It taught me the eternal nature and indestructibility of matter, and that so-called creation, gods, spirits and supernatural things and beings are of less meaning and substance than dreams—they being but the illusions of ignorant and mistaken men.

Rationalism demands that one must be absolutely honest with oneself and always have the intellectual courage to accept facts rather than faiths. Let Reason be our guide, justice our determination, and with love smiling approval, we may all live in a world of realities in a realistic manner enjoying *this life now* and thus profit by the fruits of Rationalism in action.

CORRESPONDENCE

REPLIES TO MR. ANDERSON

"If this life is all, and death is the end ethics and moral principles are meaningless," says J. W. T. Anderson (June 27th). One quite fails to see the logic of this statement. A number of people stranded on an otherwise uninhabited and isolated island would have to find a *modus vivendi* for their situation if they were to survive in comfort and amity. This is only possible under a code of moral principles suited to their position, to be observed by all, and surely it was on these lines that our own social and ethical codes evolved and developed, from the crudest and simplest forms of primitive societies to the more elaborate present day systems. No ordered life is possible on any other terms, and this our primitive forefathers discovered as soon as community life began to exist, necessity compelled and still compels in all communities and at all times. The strict and almost ruthless Jewish code of laws which for 3,000 years has, for good or ill, formed the basis of Western law and ethics, is directed entirely to the maintenance of tribal and communal welfare and was quite suitable to the social and world conditions in which Jews found themselves, and has no hint of *post mortem* reward or punishment. The Jews had no theory of a "future life." Our problem today is to use our greater knowledge to adopt our ethics to the different social conditions of life and to extend them into the international sphere, not for any object of reward or punishment, benefit or otherwise in any "hereafter," but because the alternative to such a programme is mutual annihilation and the destruction of all that has been so painfully built up by millions of our predecessors. This may not sound so good to the idealist but is the stern reality of today. Mr. Anderson discourses on purpose and design in nature. How beautifully fitted is the liver fluke, to take one example, to introduce itself unnoticed into a human body where its "urgent desire to reproduce itself" soon causes agony and death to its unfortunate host. "The highly intelligent purpose of a highly developed mind"? I cannot believe it.

(Mrs.) G. MATSON.

Mr. Anderson's letter contains so many verbal confusions that it would take a week to sort them all out. I shall concentrate on what appears to be the most important one. Mr. Anderson states: "Personally, I have no doubt that the difference between

the animate and the inanimate lies in the fact that the former possesses an entelechy, whereas the latter does not."

Let us examine this statement to see what, if anything, it could possibly mean. At first glance we might be misled by the grammatical structure of the sentence into thinking that an entelechy was a physical object. Clearly, however, this cannot be the case. Physical objects have existential qualities that can be empirically examined. We can ask of a physical object such questions as "What colour is it?"; "How big is it?"; "What shape is it", etc. But these questions obviously cannot be asked of an entelechy. But if an entelechy is not a physical object then what is it? How can its existence be proved or disproved?

Let us try another approach. The terms animate and inanimate simply mark a rough man-made distinction between the behaviour of different types of phenomena. Now, asserts Mr. Anderson, in addition to this difference in behaviour there is also an **additional** difference, i.e. that animate objects also possess entelechies. Now this looks like an empirical assertion, consequently we should expect it to be verified or falsified empirically. This, however, cannot be done. There are no conceivable experiments or discoveries that could prove or disprove the hypothesis that animate objects also possess entelechies. But if no evidence could even in theory count for or against the hypothesis then we can only assume that the hypothesis is cognitively meaningless.

When Mr. Anderson asserts that animate objects possess entelechies he is making a statement of the same form as "Anything that sends people to sleep has soporific power." To answer the question, "What is the difference between animate and inanimate phenomena?" by saying, "Animate objects possess entelechies" is to say no more than that animate phenomena behave in a different way from inanimate phenomena; it is just a different way of saying what has already been said. Mr. Anderson thinks he is saying something; in actual fact he is saying nothing. S. A. JOSEPHS.

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

The action of the N.S.S. at its annual conference in again advocating nuclear disarmament is deplorable, because the subject has nothing whatever to do with secularism. There are some people who believe that nuclear arms are necessary to deter potential aggressors, and they may well be sincere secularists. Is this continued political activity on the part of the N.S.S. deliberately designed to keep us out?

Letters over my signature in the Bournemouth *Daily Echo* have brought several congratulatory replies from former members of the N.S.S. and to them I have sent copies of *The Freethinker*. Interest in the subject is reviving and I am confident that the political activity of the N.S.S. is the only thing which prevents the formation of a strong branch here. W. E. HUXLEY.

E.S.P.

As a statistician, I cannot quite follow Mencken's criticism of Rhine's E.S.P. experiments, which Mr. McCall quotes with approval. He appears to imply that it is possible to increase the average score above chance expectation merely by selecting those persons who have had a run of luck and continuing the investigation with them alone. If this is what is meant, it is a fallacy, for the simple reason that we have no means of knowing which of them will continue to have runs of luck. As long as guessing the cards is a matter of pure chance, the overall score will not significantly differ from chance expectation, however the players are selected at any stage of the scoring.

On the other hand, it may be that Rhine is being accused of neglecting low scores in his calculations. If he were really guilty of such an elementary fallacy, however, it is hard to believe that the American Institute of Mathematical Statistics would have approved his methods, as it has done (see supplement to *New Frontiers of the Mind*, Pelican Edition, p. 211).

Rather more plausible is Mr. Martin Gardner's criticism that experimenters who get a run of successes are more likely to continue their work than others, and to terminate it when the run ends. I fail to see, however, why this should prevent us from drawing positive conclusions from properly conducted experiments. If I toss a coin a hundred times and it comes down heads ninety times, surely my conclusion that the coin is probably biased is not invalidated by the possibility that other persons unknown to me have been tossing coins without finding evidence of bias?

Critics who wish to shoot down E.S.P. would be well advised to keep clear of the statistical theory, which is well established. Instead, why not make a frank arrival that one finds the notion of E.S.P. so inherently improbable (giving reasons) that no finite

odds against chance will suffice to establish its truth if any other explanation, however far-fetched, is conceivable.

D. BEAR.

[Mr. McCall writes: I did not question statistical theory, but Dr. Rhine's use of it. And I gave reasons why I consider Rhine's experiments to be very *improperly* conducted. As a statistician Mr. Bear should know that Mr. G. Spencer Brown has, however questioned "chance expectation" in his book, *Probability and Scientific Inference*].

CHRISTIANS LOOK IN THE MIRROR

There is something very disturbing, and indeed alarming, in the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on the Church's Ministry of Healing, as summarised in the *Daily Telegraph* of June 12th. The twenty-eight-member Commission, headed by the Bishop of Durham, feel moved to rebuke the Church—from which alone of course they derive their authority—in such terms as: "Had the Church faithfully and intelligently carried out the Lord's commission . . . Had the Church more convincingly and simply taught a doctrine of the hereafter . . . It is humbling but true that the Church must bear no small measure of responsibility for the contemporary confusion caused by the growth of so many strange sects."

If the Church, with Christ as its head, and having the guidance of the Holy Ghost, can thus be condemned for negligence and incompetence by its own Commission, it is difficult to feel that its teaching can be relied on in anything.

There seems, by the way, to be a serious omission in the Commission's recommendations concerning the exorcism of demons, in that no provision appears to have been made for a herd of Gadarene swine to be available, in order to furnish alternative accommodation for the evicted tenants. Failing this, they may take refuge in others of the faithful, and the process of exorcism will have to be repeated interminably.

CHARLES CRISPIN.

HOLY MATRIMONY

THE romance of Leland Cummings Jr. and Mary Louise Werner roused Protestant and Catholic tempers last year. When the pair decided to get married, Leland's Roman Catholic parents sued Mary's Lutheran parents for \$500,000 for enticing Leland away from his Church with a \$75-a-month allowance and the promise of a \$25,000 job in Mr. Werner's ironworks in Milwaukee. Mary's father filed a countersuit, the litigation was dropped, the wedding bells (Lutheran) rang out.

Last week Mary charged in a divorce suit that during the single month they had lived together before she left him, Leland had threatened her life, had quit his job at the ironworks and said that if she didn't support him, he would find somebody else who would. He did not contest the suit.—*Time* (June 16th, 1958).

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