

The Freethinker

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ONE OF THE MOST DISQUIETING, as well as surprising features about the orgy of publicity accorded to the death of the late, and the accession of the present, Pope, is to be found in the apathy or, in some cases, downright subservience displayed by the Protestant Churches, and their official representatives towards the arrogant claims by Rome to recognition as the "One True Church." Time was when—had the BBC been then functioning—the way in which, in a still officially Protestant land, it positively fell over itself to provide free publicity for the Vatican would have provoked something not far short of civil war. The Gordon Riots of the 18th century, and the uproar aroused in 1854 by the restoration of the English Catholic hierarchy by Pius IX, are striking examples that England (and still more Scotland and Wales) still regarded itself as very much a Protestant land, with vivid memories of the Reformation, which had broken (it was then believed, for ever) the medieval dead hand of Rome.

A Chorus of "Yes-Men"
Nowadays things are obviously different. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that, on the occasions of Pacelli's death and Roncalli's election, the leaders of the Protestant Churches formed themselves into a chorus of "yes-men," with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the General Moderator of the Church of Scotland at their head. (Does "Geoffrey Cantuar" forget what Rome did to his first Protestant predecessor, "Thomas Cantuar"—Archbishop Cranmer? He was burned alive under "Bloody" Mary. Or does Dr. Fisher think that the Vatican Radio will give him similar publicity when he "shuffles off this mortal coil"?) There were, it is true, a few honourable exceptions, notably in the spirited protest (then recorded in THE FREETHINKER) by a substantial minority of the ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, who rightly dubbed the late "Pope of Peace" as a warmonger and as an aider and abettor of Fascist criminals. But such protests were few and far between. In general the present degenerate successors of the Reformers appear to be falling over each other for the honour of kissing the new Pope's toe! It is a sorry spectacle, and one calculated to make the ashes of the Marian martyrs stir uneasily. Even the *Ulster Protestant* had to remark regretfully that the meeting organised in Caxton Hall, London, by the National Secular Society—at which there was no official Protestant speaker, though our esteemed friend, Adrian Pigott, made a very able speech from an unofficial Protestant point of view—represented the solitary public meeting called to oppose the most alarming modern demonstration of Catholic publicity yet seen in these islands. At this rate, the N.S.S. General Secretary, Colin McCall, who organised (and chaired) that very successful meeting, has a much better practical claim to the title of "Defender of the (Protestant) Faith" than Her Present Majesty, who actually headed the long queue of congratulations to His Present Holiness! Now notice that even the formerly staunch Protestant

Beaverbrook Press (owned and controlled by the son of a Presbyterian minister) is acclaiming Pope John XXIII as a most desirable model for the Bishops of the Church of England to follow. On some, at least, of their Anglican lordships we can be sure that the hint will not be wasted if, indeed, it is not already somewhat superfluous?

What has happened to the "Scarlet Woman"?

To one who, like the present writer, has spent his youth in Protestant circles, all this servile acquiescence in the spectacular advance of the current Catholic Counter-Reformation must appear extremely odd. In my youth it was still a Victorian commonplace among the Protestant clergy that Rome was the *primary* danger

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

What has happened to The Scarlet Woman?

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

both to religious and to civil liberty, an assertion which can hardly be denied by anyone reasonably well acquainted with the course of human, and in particular, European history. To which historical criticism—with which, I assume, all Freethinkers would agree—the Fundamentalists of that day added a number of rather speculative assertions, drawn chiefly from the Apocalypse, purporting to establish that the Pope and his Church were prefigured and described in that mysterious volume under the lurid imagery of "Antichrist," "The Scarlet Woman" and "The Beast (with seven heads) who came out of the Sea." That the Papacy represented the "Scarlet Woman" of "Revelation," was indeed almost a Protestant dogma down to quite recent times. It is set out with often astonishing ingenuity and erudition by many of the older Protestant authors, perhaps most notably by the famous French Protestant scholar, Jean Jurieu, whose monumental controversial work, *Prejuges Legitimes contre le Papisme* (a reasoned critique of the Papacy), was published in Amsterdam, 1685, and is still perhaps the most encyclopaedic indictment of the Papacy as an historical and theological institution. In his vast (c. 900 pages!) *magnum opus*, Jurieu traces the derivation of papal power and pretensions, from the secular Roman Empire and from classical Paganism, with meticulous detail (a great deal of which is as true as when first written), but not, incidentally, omitting "Antichrist" and the "Scarlet Woman" from his calculations. Then, and for long after, such views represented commonplaces among Protestant controversialists. But, in 1958, "where are the snows of yesteryear?" Echo answers, "Where?"

Freethought and Protestantism

Modern Freethought, I submit, stands, and is likely increasingly to stand in the future, in a very different position with regard to Protestantism than it did in, say, the era of Bradlaugh and Foote, when Protestant Fundamentalism represented its main adversary. In 1959, that is no longer the case. Our major enemy, in the Western world at least, is Rome, the effective potency of which we have seen such incredible evidences during the past year. One must never forget that the original Reformation represented an elemental demand for religious liberty, without which any species of radical religious thought becomes—

as it was in the Catholic "Ages of Faith"—a stark impossibility. Even Luther, perhaps the most reactionary of the original Reformers, nailed on the door of Wittenberg the epoch-making statement that "The Holy Spirit does not desire the death of heretics"! If, as unfortunately has often happened, the Churches of the Reformation have often lost sight of their original principles, this makes it all the more incumbent on Freethinkers to prove themselves better reformers than the present official representatives of the Reformation! One fact, at least, emerges from the stormy evolution of religious freedom in modern times. Freethought can co-exist with modern Protestantism, whilst it cannot co-exist with Rome. (If anyone doubts this state-

ment I refer him to that ideal document of 20th-century Catholic sociology, the late Pope's Concordat with General Franco, still in force in Spain.) I hope that the present encroachments of the Vatican will induce more Protestants to revert, if not to the Apocalypse, at least to the defence, along with Freethinkers, of civil and religious liberty proclaimed at the Reformation. Jurieu wrote in 1685 about an older Counter-Reformation staged by the Church of Rome: "One can know but little of the history of Europe if one does not realise that the most formidable tyranny may start from the most obscure and disguised beginnings"—in 1959, one can relevantly add, as well as in 1685!

Another Bible Translation

By H. CUTNER

ACCORDING to the Literary Editor of the *Daily Express*, Mr. Anthony Hern, 30,000 homes in Britain have now got a copy of "The New Testament in Modern English," by Prebendary J. B. Phillips, and presumably are revelling in this new attempt at publicising God's Precious Word. Is it any better than the old one?

But before answering this question, it is as well to indicate Mr. Hern's qualifications for reviewing Mr. Phillips's book. In black type, he gives us the A.V. of Matthew recounting the Virgin Birth, which Mr. Hern actually calls the *Immaculate Conception*! Naturally, a literary editor need have no claims as a student of theology, or of the Bible, or even of Christianity; but the *Daily Express* has a huge circulation, and we cannot help wondering what most Christians must think of Mr. Hern proven guilty of one of the silliest theological blunders possible.

The Immaculate Conception is, of course, "the supposed conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary without taint of original sin." This "doctrine" was by no means accepted by the early Church (or Churches), though it is supposed to have originated about the fifth century, and was the subject of many controversies between the followers of Aquinas and Duns Scotus. Scotus was for the doctrine, Aquinas was against it. For centuries the question was argued, until Pope Pius IX in 1854 made it a dogma, and all Roman Catholics are now obliged to believe it.

It is just unadulterated nonsense; but perhaps Mr. Hern fully subscribes to it. In any case, he appears to know little of Bible translations except that he obviously thinks that nonsense written in what he calls "archaisms" (previously, and nearly always, described as "the well of pure English undefiled") can become less nonsense because it is written in what he calls modern English. As an example, he points out that in the A.V., "an angel of the Lord appeared unto him [Joseph] in a dream." This piece of sheer rubbish—perhaps Mr. Hern can tell us how an *angel*, not, be it noted, a "dream" angel, but a real, genuine angel, can come to anybody in a dream?—is changed by Mr. Phillips into "an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream," the difference being the archaic "unto" changed into the modern "to." We now can believe it.

Another way of bringing home the truth of the story is changing the archaic "being great with child" into the modern "the later stages of her pregnancy." Nobody these days, or very few could possibly understand "great with child."

Still another delightful innovation guaranteed to make the 30,000 in their lucky homes jump with joy is the change made by Mr. Phillips of the names of the old gents,

called by Matthew "wise men," who came "from the east to Jerusalem" to find "the King of the Jews." These "wise men" had seen his "Star in the East." Mr. Hern calls them "the Three Kings of the Orient," though the word "Orient" does not occur in the Bible. However, Mr. Phillips agrees with neither Mr. Hern nor the Precious Word—he calls them "a party of astrologers," who immediately "fell on their knees and worshipped" the Babe; though here we are not told whether this was because of the Star in the East or because the Babe was a King.

It does seem to me that no matter how the Word is translated, the essential silliness of it all can never be disguised—if taken literally as historical truth. As poetry, or as trying to personify the adventures of the Sun in the sky, with a little (so-called) ethical teaching sprinkled in. I cannot see how, for example, you can better the fairy story of Luke. Following the lead of Tyndale, there is in the Biblical "archaic" narratives just the right amount of "reverence" for "sacred" things. This "reverence" can never appear in a modern version.

As one proof of this, take the Lord's Prayer. It has been translated over and over again, for the Authorised Version is (as has been contended) "grossly inaccurate." The Revised Version has ten words fewer, and there is in it nothing about "thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." Yet all over Christendom, it is the "grossly inaccurate" version which is recited on every occasion where and when the Church can get a look in. Christians will always prefer the Grand Old Book in its archaic setting. It reads far more "sacred."

But, of course, no one would expect Mr. Hern to know this and, after all, the 30,000 homes into which we are so confidently told the Phillips version will enter, are only a few drops in the ocean of Christianity. In Catholic circles, only the Douay Version used to be allowed—a version made from faulty Latin translations—so faulty indeed that the English has had to be corrected over and over again.

The originals of God's Precious Word have long been lost. What we have now are manuscript copies of copies, made by people we know nothing about, without time or place. And all the industry of Prebendary J. B. Phillips can never put back the Word in our homes where, at one time, it was worshipped as the Books of Books. People prefer Television.

—NEXT WEEK—

CHRISTIANITY AND ART

By COLIN McCALL

On Learning and Unlearning

By G. I. BENNETT

MR. H. CUTNER begins one of his articles* by observing: "One of the greatest difficulties we freethinkers have to face is that each generation, so to speak, has to be re-educated." And in amplification of this he goes on to refer to the early doctrinal religious influences at home and at school, which few—very few—children are wholly spared. I myself have never met anyone who could honestly say that he or she had not at some time during childhood been subjected to such influences. The only person I can think of who had not—and he is a classic instance—is John Stuart Mill, who was rigorously educated by his Benthamite father, James Mill, from the earliest age. He of exceedingly few men could truthfully write that he had "not thrown off religious belief, but never had it: I grew up in a negative state with regard to it." For most of us it has been otherwise.

I was a child of an unhappy marriage which, within a few years of my being born, broke up amid much bitterness and discord, afterwards spelling for me in my callow years a long trail of secret shame and misery. Both sides of my family, paternal and maternal, were of Christian conviction, even though not heavily so, and I at home and in school imbibed, almost insensibly, the elements of the faith. Probably all happenings of any consequence are important, perhaps decisive, in a child's life. My being an offspring of a marriage that failed so badly had, I believe, a curious repercussion on my mental development. It tended to withdraw me, sensitive lad as I was, from my school-mates who, unlike me, seemed to live in eminently normal homes. I was unwilling to talk much about myself or my home life; it was the beginning of a high reserve that I have very imperfectly shaken off with the passage of time. I had friends of my own age, but for the most part I was happiest when I was with grown-ups—or alone. Except in certain circumstances I have never since been really happy in company, and I early found my pleasure in books—the solitary man's friends.

In my middle teens when I bought a copy of C. E. M. Joad's *Liberty Today*, which later inspired me to read John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, my apostasy had begun. Both these works were then available in the Thinker's Library, and they induced me to read many others in that splendid series. In my case, I can recall but little emotional resistance to what at first burst upon me as an extraordinary, breath-catching realisation: that there were good, earnest men and women who plainly disavowed belief in what I had been taught in the home and at school to accept implicitly as unquestionable literal truth. What a different world did the rationalist publishers of the Thinker's Library hold open to me! I later became a member of the Rationalist Press Association. I desired to know more about the application of rationalist principles to thought and life. I was not disappointed in my quest. The Association was in those days my unique educator and it exercised over my mind the greatest single formative influence of my life. Its changes in accent and policy in recent years do not seem to me to have been for the best, and its trend towards a sort of donnish humanism has—for me, at any rate—detracted much from its former full-blooded rationalist message and appeal.

But to go back for a moment to the days of my unquestioning acceptance of the Christian religion—to my school-days, which came to an end before I was sixteen—I can

remember quite well my sense of mild shock at those who irreverently whispered or chattered during school prayers and religious service. My feeling about various things was then as it has been ever since—moral. My ideas about what constitutes wrongdoing have changed considerably over the years, but I still retain my moral sentiments. It was by the yardstick of my new-found rationalism that I came eventually to examine critically for myself all sorts of questions to which most people's response is conventional enough.

There are many who still unthinkingly suppose that religious faith is one's best insurance against sin; that an honourable man is a patriot—My country right or wrong, I bless thee!; that he who won't bow or bend the knee to royalty is properly the object of social indignation and displeasure; that killing those who happen at a particular time to be enemy nationals is a regrettable but dutiful necessity in war, yet at all other times a murderous act meriting the supreme penalty; that love-relations between the sexes are indubitably sinful unless legitimised and sealed by a marriage ceremony; that sodomy is a disgusting crime to be punished, not an unhappy abnormality to be psychiatrically treated; that moral considerations are to be extended only to mankind or, at best, only to those animals that we like and make pets of; that the highly successful businessman is rightly accorded public distinction, and it may be, knighted, for amassing for himself a fortune much too large for his personal needs. . . .

My thinking, once freed from the conformist shackles of religion, moved completely outside traditional sentiment and reaction in these and other matters. I have since my enlightenment come to believe that nothing under the sun is too sacred to question or inquire into—even if it has the support and blessing of eminent men with impressive qualifications or titles.

But I have, as I have said, always had upon life a moral or ethical outlook. I believe that honesty, truthfulness, and good principle should govern all human relationships. And I think there is not enough kindness or fundamental decency in the world. Perhaps it is that the hypocrisy and cynicism of our age has cramped much of it, and it only awaits a sea-change, a new spirit abroad among us, in order to unfold and bloom even in quarters where we should expect it not. At least I cherish the thought that this may be so, because I believe that in simple human decency at all levels of life lies one of the only two great hopes for the future. The other is the exercise of unhampered intelligence. Now intelligence in a moral vacuum would disappoint us because it would give us less than the New Jerusalem; but if it were allied to basic human decency I conceive that tremendous, thrilling things would be possible and within humanity's grasp. Verily, the heaven that men seek beyond the grave is vainly sought there and must be found, if anywhere, here in this life on this earth!

But having written thus, a sobering appraisal of the situation as it obtains today compels me to close on a less sanguine note.

I started this article by quoting Mr. Cutner to the effect that in every generation the work of re-education must begin anew. This in our present, very imperfect, educationally stereotyped world is sadly true. In general, I think children get an unfavourable start in moral and intellectual

**Jesus and Irenaeus*, THE FREETHINKER, 5/12/58.

(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

The new Bishop of Southwark, Canon Stockwood, described by the *Sunday Dispatch* as "the most successful preacher in the country," is also, we are told, "unconventional." He wants "to modernise church services," he wants "to express our doctrine in clear language." He does not think that "the doctrine of original sin" means anything to a biochemist. He wants the Prayer Book "drastically overhauled," and "lessons from the Old and New Testament" should be read in modern English. The worthy Canon even admits that "the Psalms bore" him! All this is most intriguing, for his Christian comrades in the past would probably have burned him at the stake for such awful heresies.

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Think of it—out of 150 Psalms, the Canon could find only 10 worth singing. And he wants that wonderful well of "pure English undefiled," the Authorised Version, put into modern English. In fact, he is almost taking the view of the Deists of the eighteenth century, and perhaps it won't be long before he gets as far as the Freethinkers of the nineteenth century. The Churches with their Bible are generally a century or two behind Freethinkers.

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Our Spiritualistic contemporary, "Psychic News," has discovered that Darwin was not really a Christian, but a Unitarian; that is, he would have been a Christian but he did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. But what did Darwin himself say? Here are his own words—"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, that an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind." We can only be charitable and hope that *Psychic News* never saw that passage—written in 1879 three years before he died—otherwise we might feel that the statement that Darwin was a Unitarian was deliberately made up for Spiritualistic readers.

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The Bolton "Challenge" Crusade—to bring people to Christ—we are now informed, "attracted" 22,000 of them. But what does "attracted" here really mean? No doubt, people went along to hear all about the Crusade, but the real object of this kind of mission is to make believe in pure, unadulterated Fundamentalism; that is, in Jesus as the Son of God and God himself, in the Virgin birth, in miracles, in angels, in hell and heaven as real places (up above and down below) and, of course, in devils. How many of the 22,000 now believe in all these fundamentals without which Christianity could never have survived? Most of them (like the Billy Graham converts) are probably just as indifferent as they were, and are now.

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Those earnest Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, who believe that every other Christian sect is wrong, have discovered that the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, is a pagan myth. In a little pamphlet, they tell their Christian brothers that the Egyptians, Babylonians, Hindus, Buddhists, and many other "pagans," all had their Trinities—and, of course, they are right. But they seem unable to see that many, if not all, that they do believe in their version of Christianity comes from Paganism. Their God Jehovah is a myth, and hundreds of other things in the Jewish and Christian Testaments are also myths taken over from pagan beliefs.

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Jehovah's Witnesses all believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus, they believe in a real Heaven and Hell, they believe that the human race was born in sin through Adam and

Eve and so on—in fact, they believe in all the imbecilities which the Holy Bible perpetuates. Nearly all can be traced to Paganism. Why they should kick at the Holy Trinity and believe in Adam and Eve is one of those religious mysteries which staggers the average Freethinker.

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Leicester was once the home of some advanced ideas—was it not vigorously opposed to vaccination, for example?—but religion has in the main slowly prevailed, and now the question of opening Sunday cinemas before 6 p.m. looks like being shelved because of many letters "from religious groups." As for the anti-religious groups, would any Watch Committee dealing with the problem take the slightest notice of them? The idea that anti-religious groups have any rights at all is always unthinkable to the religious crowd who somehow get into town councils and committees. They much prefer a town on Sundays always to be miserable, dismal, and gloomy.

ON LEARNING AND UNLEARNING

(Concluded from page 19)

life. They absorb so many cluttering half-truths or palpable untruths, which only very few manage to unlearn, with greater or less pain, as the years go by. The rest never do discard them, and are consequently the poorer as civilised human beings.

But even in the best milieu where children are taught the essentials by wise, tolerant, and knowing parents and tutors, and are spared the conglomerate, unintegrated learning, the garbled knowledge and false accents of school life, much has to be found out by themselves (particularly in regard to the conduct of personal life) slowly and at considerable cost, and there's many a mistake before the age of discretion is reached. But this, after all, is one of the unalterable facts of life. It is a melancholy thought that a man must die at 70 or 80, if not before. For, if he has used his life well, been mentally alive, and not become soaked in the inward-driving cynicism that seems so seductive of middle and later life, it is then in old age when he comes at last to a calm understanding of the fundamentals of existence, having blown away the worthless chaff. It is then that he attains finally to something like true philosophic insight into many of the problems of life that perplexed his youth, and his wealth of experience gives him a rich, deep, ripe wisdom. Yet, tragically, this must perish with him. He cannot, except in very limited degree, pass that lifetime's harvest on to the "young bloods." Not one in a hundred would give him a hearing, anyway, in the erroneous idea that, because in a changing world some of it would not in their case be applicable, then all of it must be rejected. And so the next generation must find out for itself by making many of the foolish mistakes of a too headstrong and passionate youth.

Of course, civilisation *tout ensemble* is like that. It does not represent a smooth onward triumphant march to ever grander heights, as seems theoretically feasible. No, because its wise elders eternally fail to bequeath very much of the fruits of their experience to younger man, rather is it something analogous to a climb up a steep, rubbly slope on which, for every yard of progress made, there is many a loss of foothold and backward slip.

APPRECIATION

AMONG many good wishes which we received from our readers for 1959 was included the following from our valued supporter, Mr. Adrian Pigott, author of *Freedom's Foe—the Vatican*:

Wait not to be backed by numbers.

The fewer the voices on the side of truth

The more distinct and strong must be your own.

THE FREETHINKER

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

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

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

- Edinburgh Banch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Every Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MURRAY and SLEMEN.
London (Marble Arch).—Meetings every Sunday from 5 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER and C. E. WOOD.
London (Tower Hill).—Every 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.
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, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

- Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute Cinema, Room 8, Paradise Street).—S. M. CAINES, "Freethought and Race Relations."
Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, January 18th, 7 p.m.: E. T. Fox, "World Government."
Central London Branch N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1).—Sunday, January 18th, 7.15 p.m.: AVRO MANHATTAN, "Of Ants and Collectivism."
Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, January 20th: Prof. H. LEVY, D.S.C., "Can Jewry survive the Modern World?"
International Friendship League (St. George's Hall, Queen Square, Southampton Row, W.C.1).—Thursday, January 22nd, 7.30 p.m.: J. M. ALEXANDER, "Secularism."
Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, January 18th, 6.30 p.m.: M. HOOKHAM, B.S.C., "Democracy à la Française."
Men's Fellowship (Radcliffe-on-Trent School, Radcliffe-on-Trent).—Monday, January 19th, 7.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY, "Secular Society Views."
Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (N.C.S. Public Relations Hall, Broad Street).—Sunday, January 18th, 2.30 p.m.: B. NOTLEY, "The Local Authority and Welfare Services."
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, January 18th, 11 a.m.: M. BURTON, D.S.C., "The New Approach to the Animal Kingdom."
Study Circle.—Friday, January 23rd, at 7.30 p.m., N.S.S. Office, 41 Gray's Inn Road, W.1.—"Religion's Mark on History," a course of six talks by F. A. RIDLEY, with full discussion. First: "The Origins of Religion." Fee 1/- per meeting. Non-members also welcome.

Notes and News

OUR refreshingly forthright contributor, Dr. J. V. Duhig, of Australia, sends us a suggestion for a question to Father D'Arcy by Mrs. Margaret Knight, if and when they should meet on television. It is: "Father D'Arcy, if you were God, would you, as he does now, inflict paralytic poliomyelitis on a defenceless child of five?" If—as Dr. Duhig says—Father D'Arcy's answer is yes, he must be accused of wanton cruelty. If the answer is no, Father D'Arcy repudiates his god.

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £9 10s.; Mrs. Goldsmith, 5s.; A. H. Briancourt, 10s.; W. Ostler, £1; W. Maybank, £5; E. Henderson, £1; M. Byrn, 10s. 6d.; L. Lewis, £2; T. R. Williams, £1 1s.; Mrs. C. Simpson, £1; T. H. Laird, £3 3s.; S. G. Leech, £1; Miss L. Pye, 10s.; M. D. Silas, £1; Mrs. M. Rupp, 5s.; D. Davies, £1; H. Beck, 10s.; Mrs. S. Wearing, £1 10s.—Total to date, January 9th, 1959, £30 14s. 6d.

A PAINTING of Beatrice Webb was among the 42 works acquired last year by the National Portrait Gallery (*News Chronicle*, 24/12/58). The work of a "little-known" artist, Edward Swinson, it is signed and dated 1934, and it bears the signature of Beatrice Webb herself. Edward Swinson was a quiet, unassuming man, and a member of the North London Branch of the National Secular Society until his death in March last year. It is nice to know that one of his works now belongs to the nation.

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REMEMBER—says the Glasgow membership convener of the Catholic Truth Society—"we in Glasgow form the largest Catholic community in Britain, and yet only 1/2% of the Catholics of Glasgow Archdiocese are members of the C.T.S." Such lethargy is most surprising in the light of the "privileges" that membership of the C.T.S. confers upon its members. There is, to start with, an annual Mass arranged for all members, living and dead. And there is a "Plenary Indulgence (applicable to the Souls in Purgatory) on the day members join the Society, and on the Feasts of St. Columba (June 9th), St. Andrew (November 30th), St. Ninian (September 16th), St. Patrick (March 17th), St. Margaret (November 16th), or on any day within the Octave of these Feasts under the usual conditions of one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be to the Father for the Pope's intentions." What more could those 99 1/2% Glasgow Catholics ask? Perhaps they would also like a personal indulgence of 100 days every time they succeed in getting a new member and every time they attend a General or Local Meeting of the Society? Believe it or not, they can have that too!

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Now that the occupants of The Small World balloon are safe, we can smile at the hoax perpetrated by Mr. Harold Pook, who sent a cable saying they were "down in the jungle," and started a widespread air search. We can smile, too, when we read (*Daily Mail*, 30/12/58) that Mr. Pook is known in London as a spiritualist of "high repute." "I feel he must have had a message from the people upstairs. There is nothing flippant about Mr. Pook," said a medium friend of his, Mrs. Nan MacKenzie. But Mrs. MacKenzie assured the *Daily Mail* reporter that her own Red Indian spirit guide, Running Water, "certainly had nothing to do with Mr. Pook's balloon message." Anyway, whether it was the "people upstairs" or "a hunch" (as Mr. Pook said) it was wrong.

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WE honestly don't know what to say about the much-heralded article in *The People* (4/1/59), "Did Prayer Cause this Miracle?" It leaves us speechless. Not the "miracle," we hasten to assure, but the realisation that reporters can write about water which has been prayed for making plants grow quicker than similar water not prayed for. Of course—in the modern fashion—the experiments were "scientific," under the charge of Mr. Franklin Loehr, of the Religious Research Foundation. We learn, not surprisingly, that Mr. Loehr was encouraged to begin his work by that E.S.P. die-slinger, Dr. J. B. Rhine. *The People*, incidentally, boasts that it is "the paper that looks ahead." What to—the revival of black magic?

A Catholic Critic

By COLIN MCCALL

PERHAPS I HAD BETTER APOLOGISE IN ADVANCE for what must inevitably be a rather complicated article. Consider the position. A friend has given me a copy of *The Irish Theological Quarterly* for October 1958, published at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth (5s.), and has asked me to comment on an article by the Rev. C. B. Daly, D.D., M.A., of Queen's University, Belfast, entitled "A Criminal Lawyer on the Sanctity of Life"; this being in turn a criticism of the book, *The Sanctity of Life and the Criminal Law*, by Dr. Glanville Williams, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge (Faber and Faber, 1958, 30s.). This, it would seem, is sufficiently complicated, but Dr. Daly makes things worse by broadening both his own and Dr. Williams's side. That he, as a Roman Catholic, should refer to authority is understandable and forgivable, but Dr. Williams is quite capable of standing on his own feet. Indeed, Dr. Daly's gratuitous—and facetious—wish "to acknowledge Dr. Glanville Williams's precursors" strikes me as a deliberate attempt at evasion. At least a third of Dr. Daly's three dozen pages make no reference whatever to *The Sanctity of Life*.

Free Love is, no doubt, an interesting subject, but it is outside the scope of Dr. Williams's book. Bertrand Russell, however, discussed it in *Marriage and Morals* (which was first published in 1929); Russell is one of the "precursors" chosen by Dr. Daly, so the Roman Catholic reviewer proceeds to deal with it at some length. The other "precursor" who is singled out is the Protestant, Rev. Joseph Fletcher, author of *Morals and Medicine* (1955). He, too, is dealt with constantly by Dr. Daly. Now it is true that Dr. Williams cites Lord Russell about three times and Mr. Fletcher perhaps seven or eight times in his three hundred odd pages, and I am not saying that he hasn't been influenced by them. But criticism of Russell and Fletcher, even if valid (and some of this definitely isn't valid) is not criticism of *The Sanctity of Life*. This book is quite different in character from Russell's: it is written by a lawyer (based on a series of lectures at Columbia University and at the New York Bar Association) and, although it doesn't always remain strictly within the limits of the law, it never loses sight of it; all questions are related to the law and many cases cited. But, like all who think about birth control, sterilisation, A.I.D., abortion, suicide and euthanasia, Dr. Williams finds it necessary to take account of religious influences, and especially of Roman Catholic opposition, in connection with these subjects. And, of course, he falls foul of Dr. Daly.

I only wish that Dr. Daly had been straightforward in his criticism. I don't resent his slurs and facetiousness—calling names won't hurt Dr. Williams!—but I do take exception to his misrepresentation. Not all his readers are likely to refer to the original text, as I have done. No doubt this is what Dr. Daly is banking on. How, otherwise, could he have said that the Catholic doctrine of Natural Law fills Dr. Williams with indignation and that "he retorts with Place, that nature is 'a blind and dirty old toad,'" when Dr. Williams expressly calls Place's "a short and offensive reply"? Dr. Williams's own reply is that "the supposed connection between nature and morals (a connection that underlies the terminology of natural law in its Catholic currency) is completely mistaken."

Why, otherwise, should Dr. Daly omit an eleven-word definition of the term "unnatural" (as well as the portion in parenthesis immediately above) from a long quotation,

immediately prior to a discussion of Catholic conceptions of "natural" and "unnatural"? I can only assume that it is to lighten his own critical task. Dr. Williams believes—quite rightly, I think—that "One of the surest ways of running off the rails in a moral discussion is to introduce the words 'natural' and 'unnatural.'" This, he points out, is what opponents of contraception persistently do. "They assert that mechanical or chemical preventives are against nature, and, therefore, wrong." Men, he says, do many things that are unnatural (and here is the definition omitted by Dr. Daly) "in the sense of being merely an acquired skill or habit."

Now it is quite futile to quote Aquinas against this, as Dr. Daly does. The Angelic Doctor took us not one jot further when he said that "The natural law is nothing but the specifically rational, moral way in which rational beings conform their conduct to the eternal law." This is simply the substitution of one unknown (eternal law) for another unknown (natural law). St. Thomas was equally unhelpful when he asserted that "the divine law is communicated to rational beings through their intellectual and rational powers," for there have always been differences of opinion on the "law" between rational beings, as there are now between Doctors Williams and Daly. As for the latter's own, "Man is *moral* because he *is* morally. Man is the being who has-to-be, who ought-to-be what he is." and "Morality is man's knowing that he *ought* to become what he *is*"; I present them for the reader's contemplation, complete with italics, hoping they will prove more enlightening than they did to me.

I turn now to the quite surprising efforts to defend St. Paul on marriage against Dr. Williams. "It is tiresome arguing at this level," says Dr. Daly—and I can fully believe it. But he nobly decides to "persevere and, for answer, patiently quote some texts from St. Paul which were not in the books our authors read about him." Patience has produced precisely four texts, two of which (1 Cor. VI. 15, 20, and Rom. XII. 1) make no reference to marriage; a third (Eph. V. 25–32), which exhorts men to love their wives as Christ loved the Church; and a fourth (1 Cor. VII. 4), which, he claims, "affirm, for the first time in world history, the equality of the sexes." This text reads: "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife." (Here, and subsequently, I quote the Authorised Version, which differs slightly in wording, but not in sense, from Dr. Daly's source). It follows—and is completely subject to—the specific statement that "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (verses 1 and 2). It is followed by a repetition (verse 7) that "I would that all men were even as I myself," that is, celibate. Doubtless it would be much too "tiresome" for Dr. Daly to bother about these justifications of Dr. Williams's view that "The early Christian attitude towards marriage was largely negative, or at least one of indifference, as befitted a religion that concentrated upon the hereafter; and celibacy was long regarded as a peculiar virtue—as, indeed, it still is in Catholic circles." Or to refute the remark that St. Paul "expected the Second Coming in his own lifetime" (verse 29). And when Dr. Williams shows that the argument from biblical texts is a "selective argument, used to reach a predetermined end."

If attention is concentrated on individual texts, the Bible can be made dialectically to prove anything"; ennui apparently overcomes Dr. Daly. At least he has no reply.

But it isn't sufficient just to yawn and close our eyes; or to misrepresent. Dr. Williams quotes Lecky; Dr. Daly sneers. But this, again, is not enough—not for an honest truth-seeker, at any rate. "Deep historical research (to be precise, W. E. H. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, London, 1911, vol. II, pages 109—118, 322 ff. . .)" this is really poor polemic. We need only counter: Has Dr. Daly's "deep historical research"—or that of his fellow religionists—enabled him to answer Lecky? That is the test, but Dr. Daly, significantly, never applies it. How much easier it is "wearily" to place *The Sanctity of Life* "on the book-shelf beside Lecky, Lea, Blanshard and other assorted Exposures of the Errors and Crimes of Rome."

Among the greatest of the crimes of Rome is its encouragement of intellectual dishonesty (perhaps again

following St. Paul—Rom. III. 7). Dr. Williams does not assume that "what is right for animals is, *eo ipso*, right treatment for men." There is no evidence that "the demand underlying the whole argument of Dr. Glanville Williams" is "that sex indulgence must be freed from all restrictions whatsoever, religious, moral, legal or conventional." And, provided he didn't completely fall asleep while he was reading the book, Dr. Daly must know that these allegations are not true. I can excuse his Roman Catholic absurdities, that "There is nothing in man that is properly to be called animal"; that "Love of itself postulates indissoluble and monogamous marriage"; and "The birth of a child is never a biological process." I can excuse Dr. Daly's indeterminacy on whether or not procreation is the primary end of sexual union (there can, I take it, be only one *primary* end!). I can excuse all these and, as I said earlier, I can overlook his rudeness. But there are things I cannot forgive. There is some sanctity surrounding truth, as well as life.

The Democrats and the Atheist

By D. SHIPPER

WISCONSIN WILL LONG BE ASSOCIATED with the name of the late unlamented Senator Joseph McCarthy, but may yet be known as the State which produced Kenneth F. Klinkert—a counterblast to McCarthyism, if ever there was one.

Mr. Klinkert describes himself as a "Democratic, Atheistic, Unitarian"—a by no means unusual combination in the U.S.A.—and not long ago began a campaign which he hopes will eventually lead him to the U.S. Senate. Perhaps we should begin this story at the point where Mr. Klinkert mailed \$2 subscription and an application form to join the Democratic Party. He had already achieved State-wide newspaper publicity and some notoriety by an announcement that he would be an independent candidate for the U.S. Senate in the next primary election. Two of the more controversial planks in the platform of the "Democratic, Atheistic, Unitarian" were: (a) a demand that all Church property be taxed; and (b) a call for the removal of the words "Under God" from the pledge of allegiance as being restrictive of freedom of belief.

He proceeded to attend Democratic Ward unit meetings, requesting permission to speak as a candidate. He received permission at the first, spoke, and gave a press release to the papers. One Milwaukee journal printed it, an act which made local Democrat leaders extremely disturbed. It was obvious that they did not want an Atheist—especially such a news-worthy Atheist—associated with the party during election time.

Two days later Mr. Klinkert attended another Ward meeting, arriving in time to hear the district chairman warn the members about an Atheist who was attending Ward meetings as a candidate, and requesting permission to speak. Only *card-carrying* Democrats should speak, and after Mr. Klinkert made himself known and explained he was merely awaiting delivery of his card, he was refused permission to speak.

Following this meeting, Mr. Klinkert spoke to an important District official, who admitted his agreement with Klinkert's religious views, but said this must be kept quiet. In the political world Atheism was *not* a sure way to success!

The State Chairman referred the request for membership to the Waukesha County Unit (where Mr. Klinkert lives), asking them to determine whether the applicant "subscribed to the liberal principles of the party."

Mr. Klinkert visited the office of the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* to explain his position, and their reporter headed a front-page article "Atheist puts Dems in Dilemma." The *Milwaukee Journal* (circulation 357,000) followed this with a story on the front page of the second section (a column 18 inches long) headlined "Party in Stew over Atheist." Having discovered that it was up to the members present to vote whether he should speak or not, Mr. Klinkert continued to appear at Ward unit meetings, speaking to eight and being refused at a similar number.

An added complication arose when two fellow-Unitarians applied for Democratic Party membership. They were Mrs. Sheila Krueger—another Atheist!—and her husband—who believes in God. No questions were asked and when Mrs. Krueger received a letter asking her to pick up her card at the next Ward unit meeting, Mr. Klinkert released the news to the papers. When the story appeared party officials claimed she still had to be interviewed by a membership committee of her Ward unit—and a committee of three was appointed to "investigate" the applications of Mr. (believer) Krueger and Mrs. (unbeliever) Krueger!

The committee accepted Mr. Krueger's application without dissent and two of the three were satisfied that Mrs. Krueger—in spite of her Atheism—subscribed to the "liberal principles" of the party. The third, an R.C., dissented strongly, pointing out that their preamble contained the words "being firm believers in Almighty God" and that the pledge of allegiance to the U.S. flag included the words "under God."

Mrs. Krueger's application was thus put off for the next Ward unit meeting, where all members could vote. At this meeting Mr. Klinkert asked for permission to speak and did so after a 16—14 vote in his favour. Mrs. Krueger was finally elected to membership with several members expressing strong disagreement. The press were present and much publicity again resulted, the *Milwaukee Journal*, for instance, headlining their story "Democrats Argue Atheism at Meeting." The publicity obtained by Mr. Klinkert was really far-reaching. A Democratic candidate for Governor was quizzed on television about the matter; Mr. Klinkert had several interviews recorded, which were used by a local radio station. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* printed a number of letters, both pro and con, on "Atheists in Politics"; the *Waukesha Daily Freeman* carried the story

on its front page four times, printed letters for and against, and devoted two editorials to the subject. After printing several letters from Mr. Klinkert, they called for local ministers to reply to his attacks!

Mr. Klinkert expresses optimism for the future and declares his determination to do battle again. He believes firmly that the publicity given to Atheism and the discussion resulting has been very useful and that even those still suffering from McCarthyism now realise that Atheists are not necessarily Communists.

But what about his Democratic Party application? you ask.

"Atheist Turned Down by Democratic Party" headlined the *Milwaukee Journal*. Several reasons were given for the rejection, ranging from his "inability" to subscribe to the "liberal principles" of the party to his independent candidature.

The *Journal*, however, stated that "it was made clear that the reason for questioning Klinkert's application was that he didn't believe in God."

Obviously it is possible to be an atheist and a democrat, but to be an atheist and a Democrat is much more difficult.

TO LONDON READERS

DURING THE WINTER OF 1956-7 a Study Circle meeting on Friday evenings in the N.S.S. office, with Mr. F. A. Ridley as lecturer, produced results and attendances which were promising enough to warrant repeating the experiment.

We are hoping to commence again on Friday, January 23rd, at 7 p.m. (or 7.30 if more convenient), with Mr. Ridley delivering a series of six talks which will, as before, be followed by full discussion. The subject of the course can be adapted to some extent to meet the interests and wishes of those prepared to attend. A small fee will be charged per meeting, and we are sure that readers and members will agree that a shilling for his thoughts—instead of the proverbial penny—is excellent value. A number have already intimated to me that they are prepared to attend. Will others interested please write to the office stating their preferences as to time and subjects, and I will keep them informed as to developments. G. H. TAYLOR.

CORRESPONDENCE

FREEMASONRY

Surely Mr. Cutner has made a mistake; there were many more letters against Freemasonry than for. Freemasonry is a menace to society, seeks an unfair advantage, is a bulwark of "Privilege," and is contrary to Freethought. R. JONES.

G. I. BENNETT

As a veteran reader and unrepentant septuagenarian atheist, allow me to express my appreciation of the writings of G. I. Bennett. Master of a fine style, he succeeds in putting over a serene philosophy of life which is as rare as it is inviting to the discriminating. Long may he continue to brighten the columns of our paper. ERIC A. McDONALD (South Africa).

AGE OF REASON

I recently watched the BBC's programme "Tonight," with an item, "Schoolboys' Exhibition." Commentator: "What are your ambitions?" Schoolboy: "I'm 12 and want to be a priest, to preach the Catholic religion all over the world." Commentator: "How long have you had this ambition?" Schoolboy: "Since I was five—the age of reason." Well! Well! Shades of Thomas Paine! Good luck to THE FREETHINKER for the future. T. C. OWEN.

A QUESTION ANSWERED

So Roman Catholic Michael McCafferty is a thinker! He says so himself so it must be true. He thinks in fact so deeply, clearly, cleverly, and (to me) comically that he even concludes you will hardly dare to publish his letter. And, poor man, even in this he thinks wrongly.

If he would think a little further, if he would think out quite honestly and without prevaricating, why he is an R.C., he might arrive at some disconcerting but illuminating reasons. He might

even get a glimpse of the fact, so plain to non-Catholics, that for intolerance, unscrupulousness, fraud and tyranny, the Roman Catholic Church has no equal throughout history. Which is one answer to his questions. REGINALD UNDERWOOD.

[We regret that Mr. McCafferty's signature was misread as McCafferty when his letter was printed.—Ed.]

LITERATURE AND DOGMA

In the course of an essay on "Religion and Literature," T. S. Eliot remarks, epigrammatically, "Those who talk of the Bible as 'a monument of English prose' are merely admiring it as a monument over the grave of Christianity."

True, O Thomas! Only when one is sufficiently aloof and critical about Christian dogmas is it possible to see the Bible in true perspective. As "the Word of God," "the divine guide to living," the Bible is hopeless; it is a jumble of self-contradictory nonsense. As an anonymous compilation or anthology of folktales, poetry, rustic saws and proverbs, etc., which, by a happy chance, has been rendered into a wholly appropriate Elizabethan English version, it is a gem, comparable to Chapman's *Homer* or Adlington's *Apuleius*. As "moral truth" it is bunk; as entertainment it is unique. S. W. BROOKS.

RUSSIA AND FREETHOUGHT

I hope the space allocated to Robert H. Scott for his "Atlantic Views" on November 28th was in the interests of free speech and that the article did not reflect the opinions of THE FREETHINKER.

His sycophantic admiration for the U.S.S.R. is as ludicrous as his attack on Dulles. The potentialities of the U.S.S.R. "for social and political and intellectual progress" are admirably represented in the Pasternak case.

There is no FREETHINKER in Russia.

RAY SEATON.

AN ATHEIST IN HOSPITAL

I recently had to spend a month in Liverpool Royal Infirmary and my case card was left blank in the space for religion. Every parson and priest seemed in something of a quandary when he saw this, and I had quite a lot of fun. As the other patients found out I was an Atheist, some of them came out with the fact that they didn't believe in a God either. One man, described as a "Roman Catholic," even had an open row with his priest, told him to get to hell out of it, and vowed that he would never enter a church again! My FREETHINKER was in great demand, too, and the whole affair shows that a lot of religion is only lip-service. W. HUMPHRIES.

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