

# The Freethinker

Volume LXXIX—No. 17

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Fivepence

SOME TWENTY YEARS AGO I published a small volume entitled *The Papacy and Fascism*. In this book I endeavoured to analyse as far as was possible at that time, the mutual relationship between the two major counter-revolutionary forces in that now bygone era: the "old firm," the "Black International" of Rome, and what one may perhaps style retrospectively, the "Brown International" of Fascism. The era of Vatican-Fascist collaboration has since been repeatedly and exhaustively analysed, most notably by Mr. Avro Manhattan, in encyclopaedic fashion in his book, *The Catholic Church Against the 20th Century*, and with remarkable lucidity and conciseness by the American ex-Catholic priest, Geo.

H. Lehmann, whose booklet, *Behind the Dictators*, is not so well known here. The era of Nazi-Fascist rise, domination and sensational collapse in Europe constitutes one of the most dramatic episodes in modern history. But for what looked very much like a political and military miracle at the time, Hitler would now be the master of Europe and "we lesser breeds without the [Teutonic] law" would now all be helots of the Nazi "New Order." The relationship between the newest would-be totalitarian dictatorship and its clerical medieval predecessor, the Papacy, is a theme worthy of the most serious inquiry. People have short memories and we are, in 1959, already inclined to forget how nearly, between 1940 and 1943, the German-led Fascist powers came actually to dividing the conquered Old World between them.

### Three Types of Fascism

I have already discussed this problem at some length in several books published during this era, including a pamphlet on Fascism which received a special commendation from the late Professor Harold Laski, one of the few marks of official approbation which I have ever received! The conclusions at which I arrived do not entirely coincide (particularly in relation to the German brand of Fascism) with that at which Manhattan and Lehmann eventually arrived. In order to estimate accurately the actual and potential relationship that existed between the Vatican and the Fascist Dictators, one must start with a careful analysis of the Fascist regimes themselves. If one does this it becomes clear that there were actually three generic types of Fascist dictatorship, with each of which the Papacy entered into a different type of political and ideological relationship. In expressing this view, we are surveying Fascism as a group of European States with a definite social set-up and are not using the term as a kind of political swear word, which is about all that it means to most people today!

### Political and Ecclesiastical Fascism

Speaking with scientific accuracy, it is really a tautology to write *The Papacy and Fascism*, for the Papacy actually represents a form of Fascism, the oldest species of Fascism in Europe, dating from July 18th, 1870, when the first Definition of the famous *Fuehrer Prinzip* was proclaimed

to the world in the Dogma of Papal Infallibility. However, Ecclesiastical Fascism represents a different subspecies from its later secular counterpart, and it displays—no doubt due to its vastly greater experience—a much greater political flexibility than any secular Fascist regime. Pope John XXIII represents the same essentially totalitarian dictatorship (the only one to possess *eternal* concentration camps!) as did his openly pro-Fascist predecessors,

Ratti and Pacelli. This would be impossible in any secular Fascist state, or so, at least we imagine. Actually, even under the former pro-Fascist Popes, Pius XI and XII, with whom writers of the Manhattan-Lehmann school make such play, the Vatican never put all its

eggs in the Fascist basket. Throughout the whole period of Fascist-Catholic collaboration, Rome continued in the Anglo-Saxon lands—America, Britain, Australia, etc., to cultivate excellent relations with Democracy, as it did in Eire, too. Then, as now, the main political strength of Catholicism in all these lands lay in the parties of the non-communist Left: in England and Australia in the Labour Parties, and in the U.S.A. in the Democratic Party, which ran Alfred Smith in 1928 as the only Roman Catholic ever to stand for the Presidency. (At the next 1960 Presidential Election there seems a distinct possibility that a Catholic President will actually arrive at the White House—again on the Democratic ticket.) However, whilst this was so, it is indisputable that the Popes who reigned between 1922 and 1945—the Fascist era *par excellence*—were undoubtedly favourable to Fascism; though even then, not equally to all types of the Fascist ideology.

### Why did the Vatican support Fascism?

The three types of Fascism which existed in Europe during this black era in history were clerical Fascism in Spain and Portugal (where it still exists) and the pre-war Austria of Dollfuss; political Fascism in Italy, founded by the ex-atheist Mussolini, and ideological, semi-pagan Fascism in Nazi Germany. With these three types, the contemporary relations of the Vatican varied. With clerical Fascism it was (and is) 100%—or at least 99% (c.f. the present Spanish Concordat). With Fascist Italy it was 80%. Despite the Lateran Treaty and Concordat, the Vatican was never entirely at ease with Fascist totalitarianism, in particular in the field of education. (Mussolini was, after all, the author of a scarcely orthodox pamphlet, *God Does Not Exist!*) But with German Fascism the relationship was always only partial, and this, after all, was the only type of "collaboration" which really counted on a world scale. For the real behind-the-scenes driving force which cemented the Fascist-Catholic alliance was represented by the unseen presence of a third party against which—though for largely different reasons—Rome and the Fascist States urgently sought to unite, namely, Communism, or more specifically—from the Vatican standpoint—the "godless Bolshevism" of Soviet Russia. Obviously, in such a context, the kingpin of the whole Catholic-Fascist col-

VIEWS and OPINIONS

## The Papacy and Fascism

By F. A. RIDLEY

laboration was Germany, for Hitler alone of the Dictators, possessed sufficient military power—or so it was estimated at the time—to conquer Russia; to smash world Communism, thus finally removing Public Enemy Number One of both Rome and the Fascist Dictators. This was the primary aim of the whole epoch of collaboration.

#### Rome and the Swastika

A good deal of misapprehension appears to exist in this country about the ideology of the Nazi regime. This was at least semi-pagan, and much of Hitler's legislation on marital and sexual relationships was about as flatly anti-Catholic as could well be imagined. Even whilst it may have suited Goebbels (an ex-Jesuit pupil) and Co. to pass off the Fuehrer as a *bona fide* Catholic, it is surely hardly conceivable that any kind of Catholic could have continued, as Hitler did, to the end, to give his confidence to Alfred Rosenberg, the leading theorist of the Nazi racist cult and editor throughout of its official journal, who publicly styled the Pope as "a Syrio-Etruscan sorcerer."

Whilst the house-journal of Hitler's own body-guard regularly published articles describing the Pope and Catholic hierarchy in such terms as "cunningly disguised leaders of cosmopolitan Jewry," etc. We repeat, as far as Catholic-Nazi collaboration was concerned, it was, and could only have been, a defensive alliance cemented by a common hatred of Communism; for a successful "crusade" against Russia without the German army was obviously impossible. No other Dictator possessed anything like the requisite military force. Had Hitler won his war, a breach between Rome and the cult of the swastika could hardly have been avoided. And in such an eventuality, I do not think it would have been the German Fuehrer who would have "gone to Canossa." However, history took another course and we are all good Democrats in 1959, and no one more so than our Holy Father, whose accession in place of his pro-Fascist predecessor, Pacelli, has now relieved the Vatican of a most embarrassing legacy, since Fascism, despite Papal support, did eventually lose the war.

## The Sexual Significance of Religious Belief

By NICHOLAS TOON

THE FACT THAT there is a close association between religion and sex will not have escaped the attention of the careful observer when reflecting on religious belief. Assuredly the Churches do not draw their most vital life-forces from a mere desire to affirm concurrence in an intellectual speculation regarding the causation of the Universe.

The evidences for this view are numerous and well known. Medieval monks composed "odes to God" and "odes to Jesus" which were frankly erotic. The extraordinary Aleister Crowley is reputed to have written verses to hymn-tunes which were sung enthusiastically by unorthodox matrons—until somebody pointed out the true meaning of the words! Again, the Cross is supposed to symbolise the sexual act; and I daresay some people's imagination is greatly helped by having a half-naked figure of Jesus nailed to the crucifix. The Bible, of course, is a wealthy source of pornographic detail. St. Paul, in particular, was quite obviously a man tormented by sexual repression; he repeatedly harps, in lurid language, on the penalties for physical indulgence. Perhaps if he had let himself go and given natural expression to his strong feelings instead of bottling them up inside himself he would have had less terrible things to say about the "lusts of the flesh" with which he was so obsessed—and to which, it is interesting to note, he had apparently been addicted prior to his "conversion."

In addition to the notorious eroticism of several passages in the Bible, it has been pointed out by irreverent observers that the entrances to some churches in medieval times were carved in the shape of the female genital (I believe there is one such church still remaining, in England). And why do churches have spires? It is believed (and even more so of many Eastern temples) that they represent a phallic symbol. Besides all the foregoing, one gets generally a strong impression that many religious rites and observances are invested with a hidden sexual connotation, although the sexual element may not be consciously apparent to the believer. All in all, there is, it seems to me, substantial evidence for the thesis that religion may be considered to be in some respects a substitute for sex.

This impression is strengthened by consideration of several interesting circumstances. It cannot be without significance, for instance, that Catholic priests and monks

take a solemn vow of permanent chastity—although they express their "love of God" in highly improper language. The Churches, moreover, have always laid especial emphasis on the iniquity of sexual "sin." The main point of interest here is the psychological genesis of these anti-sexual sentiments; and I am of the opinion, tentatively, that they represent a form of reaction against sex, and thus an insurance against strong emotions to which people dare not give way. No doubt going to church in one's best clothes subserves a subconscious desire for "purification," like the Catholic confessional. "Puritanism" was just an extreme expression of this reaction against sexual pleasure.

Of course, religion is only a very diffused form of "love." Still, the bishop who quite recently denounced youth for turning from religion to sex was not without some justification, from his point of view. Sex is associated with intense pleasure, and when men are in a state of intense happiness they do not need to bother about a god. Conversely, the statement that it is when men are in suffering that they stand in greatest need of God is very true. For the mind plays queer tricks on a man when he is in such a state; and truly, great thoughts are not born on the battlefield. And it is a vile and mad God indeed to whom acute suffering and mental unbalance lead the way!

The fact is that the pleasures of sex are innocent as compared with the real evils of the world, and provide a useful outlet for man's energy. Moreover, in no other sphere of life can there be such an extraordinary discrepancy between what men are supposed to think and how they actually behave. Even the monks and nuns of old could not live up to their solemn vows and, as McCabe tells us, the monasteries and abbeys degenerated into hotbeds of vice and indulgence. The truth is that man cannot live contrary to his own nature, and the repression of these powerful instincts is a form of rebellion which in most people is foredoomed to failure. Laws which allowed people to express their sexual desires naturally in accordance with their feelings would be of far greater help in rendering the world a happier place to live in than are mass-delusional systems of "loving" gods, "reverence," and rites and observances feeding on the emotional powerhouse of suppressed sexuality.

# Fraud and Telepathy

By DR. EDWARD ROUX

THE EVIDENCE for telepathy was of so flimsy a nature that few critical minds were prepared to take it seriously until 1935, when J. B. Rhine, of Duke University, North Carolina, published his *Extra-Sensory Perception*. This marked the beginning of the so-called "quantitative experiments" based on card guessing. These experiments were said to prove that certain persons possessed paranormal ability. Though they were unable to guess right through a pack of Zener cards, and though their guesses were more often wrong than right, they nevertheless made more "hits" than could be accounted for by the laws of chance. A pack of Zener cards numbers 25, and contains five different symbols, each of which is represented five times. The most probable score by pure guesswork is obviously five. By good luck one might score as much as 10 or even 15, or by bad luck as little as 0. But such scores would be very exceptional, and over a long series of runs (guessing through a pack each time) the average score should be very close to five. A person scoring a mean of seven or eight on such a series would be judged to have "something" in the way of paranormal ability. It could be calculated that the odds against making such a score by pure chance would be so many thousands or millions to one, depending on the number of runs.

Paranormal ability was said to be of two kinds: *telepathy*, when the cards as dealt were viewed by an *agent*, whose thoughts the *subject* or percipient was presumably able to read to some extent; or *clairvoyance* when no agent was employed, and the subject presumably possessed the ability to "see" into the pack.

Rhine was apparently a spiritualist with a firm belief in the occult. It was proved that his early experiments had been slovenly from a scientific point of view. He had failed to take the most elementary precautions to prevent fraud. He was not taken too seriously. However things took on a different aspect when Dr. S. G. Soal, of London University, began to repeat some of Rhine's experiments. At first he got no results: his subjects merely scored what was expected in terms of pure chance. Then the most amazing things happened with B. Shackleton. This subject failed to score significantly above average on the target card. But when his guesses were compared in each case with the following card, i.e., the one *about to be observed* by the agent, he scored a significantly high number of hits. He went on performing similar feats for 40 sessions over a period of two years.

Shackleton was therefore said to possess the faculty of *precognition*: he was able to sense what would come into the mind of the agent *before* it had actually entered the latter's mind. Another amazing performance reported by Soal was that of Mrs. Gloria Stewart who possessed ordinary telepathy to a high degree. Her hits on the target card were significantly higher than average over a period of five years, during which she made 37,000 guesses. The odds against Shackleton's and Stewart's performances being due to mere chance ran into many millions of millions.

What impressed the previously hostile critics and won over many of them was, firstly, the extremely rigid experimental set-up which Soal had devised and which seemed a complete guarantee against fraud, and secondly his statistical analysis of the results which conformed in all particulars to the standards set by professional statisticians.

In 1957, G. Spencer Brown, in *Probability and Scientific Inference*, sought to cast doubt on the evidence for tele-

pathy, etc., by suggesting that the statisticians might have overlooked certain properties of random numbers and that the results obtained might be explained as extraordinary "runs of luck." He pointed out that in any series of random numbers there would always be some sort of pattern, however obscure or intricate this pattern might be, and that if the guesser happened to hit upon this pattern he would score an unusually large number of hits. However those who had worked with random numbers felt that Spencer Brown's explanation was not satisfactory. It might account for the successes achieved by casual performers and for much that passes for evidence of the occult among amateur investigators, but it could not account for the amazing performances of Shackleton and Gloria Stewart. There was nothing for the sceptic to do, if he was not prepared to accept telepathy or clairvoyance, but to assert that the results were "phoney." When asked how the frauds were perpetrated he would say he did not know. That left him in a rather weak position.

However it is now clear that some of the precautions taken by Soal to forestall criticisms, precautions which, as I have said, helped to convince the doubters, actually made possible other and unforeseen types of fraud.

We are indebted to C. E. M. Hansel, lecturer in psychology, at Manchester University, for showing how collusion between subject and agent might result in just the kind of results obtained in Soal's experiments and how this collusion might deceive the experimenter who did not realise how the trick was done. Hansel's article, *Experiments on Telepathy*, appeared in *The New Scientist* for 16th February, 1959. It should be read by all devotees of parapsychology.

In Rhine's first experiments, subject and agent sat at opposite ends of a table with a screen between them. It was suggested that the agent might convey the names of cards to the subject by means of sub-audible whispers, if the latter had a particularly sharp ear. Therefore in Soal's experiments the two persons are placed in separate rooms in positions where they cannot see each other. The door is left ajar so that the experimenter can shout out the number of the trial, at which moment the agent looks at the card and the subject writes down his guess.

In the original tests a pack of Zener cards was shuffled and handed to the agent. He picked them up one by one and looked at them. To counter the criticism that the cards might not be properly shuffled, this method was dispensed with. Instead the agent sits at a table with a pack of only five cards containing one each of the five symbols. We could call them A, B, C, D and E representing, say, ass, bear, cat, dog and elephant. He shuffles these and places them face down in a covered box open on the side facing him. In front of him is a screen with a small opening. The experimenter stands on the other side of the screen. He has prepared a list of random numbers, and he has a set of five cards carrying the numbers one to five. Consulting his list, he picks up the card with the appropriate number and holds it at the opening for the agent to see. The latter then picks up and turns over the card lying in that order in the box, counting from the left. He looks at this card while the signal is given and then replaces it face down. At the end of the run the experimenter records the order in which the cards lie in front of the agent. Referring again to his

(Continued on next page)

## This Believing World

Thanks to our contemporary, "News Chronicle," Borley Rectory is once again in the news. A suitable time has elapsed since the story of its "hauntings" was exposed as sheer fraud, most of it exploited or invented by the late Harry Price. Lots of people may have forgotten this, so, of course, we can now be asked, "Can the ghost of Borley be buried?" and provide the reassuring answer that it can't. The Rectory was burnt down before the war, but the people who remember it simply will not forget the spooks of the "coach and horses" and the "murdered nun," and the ghostly "smell" of violets, which used to confound the sceptics, and now only makes us laugh. The "smell" of violets over the place where the Rectory stood is actually still there—and what can better prove the reality of the "ghosts" of Borley Rectory?

★

Once an eminent cricketer, now an all-believing parson, the Rev. D. Sheppard tells in *Woman's Own* the story of an "atheist" slave trader who found Christ—John Newton. He was the friend of the poet Cowper—who became a "mental" case through religion—and in his youth was in the Navy and, of course, was "godless and foul-mouthed." To people like Mr. Sheppard this means that all Atheists are "foul-mouthed." Newton was "converted" and gave up slavery and wrote hymns, and all this just shows what Christ Jesus can do to a "godless atheist." All the same, there is not a scrap of evidence that the Rev. J. Newton was ever an Atheist, or had the ghost of an idea what Atheism was or is; though no doubt he was at one time "foul-mouthed." Lots and lots of Christians who were never foul-mouthed have even become Atheists and now feel free and happy, and can talk and write quite as decently as the Rev. D. Sheppard.

★

The "Methodist Recorder" records a wonderful success of "an interdenominational Protestant Mission" led by the Rev. D. Tytler in the University of Hull recently. It was an eight-day mission on such subjects as "The Bible—Fact or Fiction?", "The Christ," "What is Truth?" and 150 students at a time attended with, of course, the inevitable "non-Christians and agnostics." We may not have noticed this marvellous mission but for the fact that a Mrs. J. Morton, of Scotland, opposed a motion that "The Christian Faith is an obstacle to clear thought" and "a member of a London Atheistic society"—unnamed naturally—supported it. The motion was "decisively defeated."

★

We do not expect that in a hotbed of Methodism and Wesleyanism like Hull there is much chance for any frontal attack on Christianity, but we are certainly intrigued as to who the "member of a London atheistic society" really is. Perhaps if he sees this item he will let us know. In any case, it is good to learn that the "other side" can sometimes be represented in these marvellous missions for Christ.

★

We are delighted to report the conversion of a one-time Nazi. This gentleman, Col. Kappler, is serving a life sentence for butchering hundreds of Italians in 1944, and well earned his title of "Butcher of Rome." Thank God, he has now become a Roman Catholic—which, by the way, he always was—through Monsignor H. O'Flaherty, who paid him several visits, and at last captured him for Christ Jesus. We are delighted it was not for Freethought.

In "Church News," Mr. Tom Driberg, formerly a Labour M.P., has an angry article because this paper published a photo of Mr. Macmillan outside a church, with the caption that "It is a long time since we have had a British Prime Minister so conscientious in his churchgoing." Mr. Driberg points out "that it is only eight years since Lord Attlee was Prime Minister, and he is and was a conscientious churchgoer." He thinks that the statement about Mr. Macmillan might be regarded "as damaging to the Labour Party." We wonder whether this means damaging to individual members because it might imply that they do not go to church and thus lose them many Christian votes?

★

In an effort to emulate the fabulous Billy Graham, the "wonder" child of evangelism—at the age of five or six she used to bring people to Christ—Miss Renee Martz is touring Britain and collecting vast audiences of 24 or thereabouts. But with the dauntless courage of so many "hot-gospellers," she has informed the world that she doesn't "intend to give up." She is going to carry on "until people are coming to be saved by the thousand." Her mission is billed, "Presenting Christ to the Unconverted." but which simply means presenting Christ to Christians. We would dearly like Miss Martz to try her luck with the genuine "unconverted"—that is, Freethinkers. But that would be too much of a miracle!

### FRAUD AND TELEPATHY (continued from page 131)

list of random numbers he converts these numbers into the corresponding Zener symbols. He now compares this new list with the guesses made by the subject and records the number of hits. Thus while the experiment is running the only person who knows what the target cards are is the agent. The subject cannot possibly know by any ordinary means, and even the experimenter does not know. A neutral and critical observer may be present in one room or the other, or a pair of such observers may keep watch over the whole proceedings. This was the fraud-proof set-up devised by Soal.

However, Hansel suggests that this set-up does not eliminate the possibility of the agent altering the order of the five key cards in his box after he has dealt them. It would conceivably be possible for him even with somebody watching him from the side to get his cards into a different order, even eventually to move a card from one end of the row to the other.

The addition of a small number of certainties to the list of guesses would make all the difference between a "chance" result and a "significant" result. If such deceptions could be repeated over a large number of runs they would give those astronomical odds against chance, so beloved of the parapsychologists.

To demonstrate precognitive hits on the card after the target card, all that the subject and agent have to do is to agree beforehand that the subject will record certain guesses at certain points in the sequence. For instance, he tells the agent that he will record symbol D at the seventh trial or signal. The agent then waits for the eighth trial. Suppose that the experimenter presents a three at the opening. The agent then places the card bearing D in position three. This gives the subject a precognitive hit. He has guessed D for trial seven and it turns up in trial eight.

(To be concluded)

—NEXT WEEK—

CATHOLICS CHASE THE CHURCHLESS

By G. H. TAYLOR

# THE FREETHINKER

41 GRAY'S INN ROAD, LONDON, W.C.1.

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN 2601.

Hon. Editorial Committee:

F. A. HORNIBROOK, COLIN MCCALL and G. H. TAYLOR.

All articles and correspondence should be addressed to THE EDITOR at the above address and not to individuals.

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 10s.; half-year, 15s.; three months, 7s. 6d. (In U.S.A.: 13 weeks, \$1.15; 26 weeks, \$2.25; 52 weeks, \$4.50.)

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.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

H. KARTOPF.—About 39% of the population of West Germany is Catholic.

F. BARBER.—Mr. O. C. Drewitt (ex-Fr. Norbert, O.P.) is extremely busy with scholastic duties at the moment but is keeping in touch with us.

S. W. BROOKS.—Outside the New Testament, there is no evidence that the Apostles ever lived, let alone were "fanatics." Or even that Jesus "cured" anybody at all.

A. HARVEY.—Many thanks for your interesting reminiscences of the Salvation Army.

R. P. LITTLE.—See forthcoming article on Calvin. We entirely agree with you regarding him.

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch 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

Aberdeen Humanist Group (Saltire Room, Provost Ross House, The Shiprow).—Friday, April 24th, 7.30 p.m.: Annual General Meeting (non-members admitted).

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics Institute).—Sunday, April 26th, 7 p.m.: A Tape-recorded Documentary on Life of Bradlaugh.

Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, April 26th, 6.30 p.m.: F. MAITLAND, "Religion Disguised as Politics."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, April 26th, 11 a.m.: A. ROBERTSON, M.A., "Keep the Human Race Alive."

Wales and Western Branch N.S.S. (Bute Town Community Centre, Cardiff).—Tuesday, April 28th: Rev. T. CYNOLWYN PUGH, "America—the Land and its People."

## Notes and News

ONE of our University readers, Mr. Mark Lillingston, is "considering taking some active part in the cause of Free-thought and Humanism" during his summer vacation (June-September), and he wonders if he could do some sort of opinion poll in a selected area, at the same time distributing and selling literature. We very much appreciate Mr. Lillingston's offer and the literature side of it can be readily attended to. But, at his request we invite suggestions for the opinion poll.

★

WE haven't had a chance yet to judge the new crystal chandeliers in St. Paul's Cathedral which prompted the Queen Mother to ask the Dean, "Aren't they a little ball-

## The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £181 14s. 9d.; Miss A. Muspratt, 5s.; Mrs. A. Allbon, 2s. 6d.; W.H.D., 2s. 6d.; J. C. Cleary, 5s.; Mrs. N. Henson, £2; P. G. Bamford, £1; A. Bamford, £1.—Total to date, April 17th, 1959, £186 9s. 9d.

roomy for St. Paul's?" On the other hand, we note that the Queen Mother and her younger daughter intend to visit the Pope this month. No doubt they will also nip into the adjacent St. Peter's. If so, the Queen Mother must be prepared for a good deal more than chandeliers that are "a little ballroomy."

★

MENTION of St. Peter's reminds us of the many times that somebody has "proved" the apostle is buried under the great basilica bearing his name. The latest person to do this is Dr. Margherita Guarducci, who claims to have "solved the mystery of many inscriptions which nobody else could understand till now." (*Sunday Dispatch*, 22/3/59.) After kneeling at the tomb almost every day for five years, the Doctor has decoded an inscription which "was scratched on the Red Wall" "before the end of the second century," as "Peter is buried in here." Now, assuming that her decoding is correct (and it must obviously be a puzzling series of scratches to have occupied her for five years), assuming her dating to be correct (and we feel it must be hard to date scratches accurately) she has "proved" that somebody scratched "Peter is buried in here" on the wall before the end of the second century—say (conservatively), 100 years after the apostle is supposed to have died. Really, Dr. Guarducci!

★

WE referred in these Notes (*THE FREETHINKER*, 13/2/59) to the reactions of a Nottingham newspaper critic to the city's Co-operative Arts Centre's production of Nigel Dennis's play *The Making of Moo*. Mr. J. W. Challand, Hon. Secretary of the local branch of the National Secular Society, has sent us a letter he submitted to the *Nottingham Evening News* at the end of January, but which wasn't published. The play seems to have upset your critic, he wrote. "How different would have been the report if this had been a whodunit or a bedroom farce!" As it is, "the author is wrong, the players are wrong and the audience guffawed!" The critic said that the play was offensive, but Mr. Challand retorted that, "to some people who have been offended by some of the charades covered by the BBC, *The Making of Moo* comes as a refreshing breath of fresh air."

★

QUESTION: What would President Dwight D. Eisenhower regard as "a scholarly and responsible magazine" and Vice-President Nixon credit with "a balanced yet forward-looking appraisal of problems"? Answer: The Jesuit magazine, *America*, which has just celebrated its golden jubilee.

★

IN similar non-sectarian manner, Cardinal Cushing of Boston recently said that "no church should tell its members whom to vote for, or interfere in political campaigns, or suggest reasons of a purely personal kind for preferring one candidate over another." I cannot see, he added, "how anyone would vote for a candidate for public office merely because of his religion, even if the candidate was noted for his personal piety." All the same, Cardinal Cushing has declared himself strongly in favour of the prospective Democratic presidential candidate, Jack Kennedy, who is, coincidentally, a Catholic.

# “The World’s Most Beautiful Book”

By COLIN MCCALL

“NOTHING HAS BEEN SPARED”—I read on one of the many advertising leaflets—to make the Holy Catholic Bible the most beautiful in the world. “It is remarkable”—says an accompanying letter—“not only for the completeness of its text, but also for its *three hundred and thirty pictures beautifully produced in full colour* which vividly portray the stories of the Bible and will be most interesting and helpful to all,” but particularly to the younger generation. “The rich binding will last more than a lifetime” so, appropriately, 16 pages are included for entering births, baptisms, first communions, marriages, priesthoods, religious lives, last anointings and deaths.

What more could one ask? Well, if one’s aesthetic tastes are satisfied by the Cecil B. de Mille “super, colossal, gigantic, stupendous, ultra-gaudycolour” productions of the “great Bible stories,” the answer is quite definitely, nothing. Or nothing else after the many other special attractions not listed above are taken into consideration. Satisfaction, and more, is expressed in the many specimen testimonials reprinted. And I haven’t the slightest doubt that they are genuine; they are so true to type.

Unfortunately it is a very poor type. Much attention is given to the alleged lowering of literary standards through the reading of popular papers, magazines and paper-backs, but little or none is given to the effect of popular religious “art.” Mr. Richard Hoggart’s descriptions of popular publications as “only bloodless imitations of what they purport to be,” “pallid,” and “a considerable decline from the sinewy sensationalism of Elizabethan vernacular writers” (*The Uses of Literacy*, p. 281) may be easily adapted to describe this religious art. The Free-thinker is often told that Christianity has inspired the world’s greatest art. Even if this were true (and it certainly needs considerable qualification, to say the least) there is a lot to set against it. I have said lately (*THE FREETHINKER*, 23/1/59) that Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel ceiling is as much, if not more, a glorification of the human body as it is a glorification of God, but supposing, for argument’s sake, we treat it as Christian art; supposing we add the great paintings of Christian subjects by all the great masters; what effect do they have on the mass of Roman Catholics? How many Catholics in Britain go to see the El Grecos in the National Gallery? Comparatively few. More important, how many Catholic repositories sell reproductions of masterpieces? Very, very few.

What they do sell is an abundance of the insipid, slushy, sentimental rubbish that clutters up Catholic homes. Educated Papists (especially Graham Greene fans) often accuse Protestantism of sentimentalising Jesus. My God! they ought to look at their own popular art.

Let them look at the Holy Catholic Bible—or just at the advertising matter concerning it, for the book costs 10 guineas. One of the “magnificent” pages of illustrations is reproduced in an art-paper brochure, and it is sufficient to go by. It consists of three pictures: healing the dumb, feeding the 5,000, and summoning the twelve. Jesus appears in two of them, and Mr. Hoggart’s adjective, “pallid,” will serve as a starting point for description. “Bloodless” is apt, too. All life has been drained out of him. In each case he is posed, statuesque, with no semblance of movement and certainly not of any vitality, mental or physical. We are spared the halo, but not the blank, expressionless face with that ridiculous hair style and beard. The twelve—or the eleven of them that are

visible—are by no means the product of artistic inspiration, but they do at least look capable of movement. Without Jesus the painting might be a passable illustration, though nothing like up to the standard of, say, *Woman*. The dumb man who has had his devil cast out looks as silly as the story, but he has the edge on Jesus.

The feeding of the five thousand allows the artist scope for a little landscape painting, as well as relieving him from having to repeat his stock character. Artistically speaking, I can only say that I would expect very much better in a ten shilling book, let alone a ten guinea one. And in passing I might mention that, the way the 5,000 picnickers are spread over the hillside would necessitate the use of a microphone—or at least a megaphone—by their host.

There are, though, as I said, many other attractive features about this tome. The imprimatur of the late Cardinal Stritch of Chicago and other “comforting assurances of Catholic authenticity”; a special pictorial section illustrating the use of the rosary (among the contributors being Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., “whose work for the cause of family prayer is nationally known”—though, alas, not to me); three encyclicals; maps; and the 14 stations of the cross. There is also a 256-page Catholic Dictionary with answers to such questions as “What books are Catholics forbidden to read and why?” and “How did the Fatima devotions begin?” What else there is room for in those 256 pages after only the first half of that first question has been answered, I must find out when I have ten guineas to throw away, for the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1948 edition) contains 508 pages, and there has since been one page of recent additions including all the works of Sartre and Moravia.

Oh, and in case you don’t know the meanings and can’t follow with understanding the gestures, movements and actions (some fine distinction between these escapes me) of the Priest in the Sacrifice of the Mass, the principal act of worship in the Catholic Church,” here they are “vividly portrayed and explained.” “This is My Body, this is My Blood” and all the other atavistic nonsense.

Which reminds me of a further special feature of the Holy Catholic Bible: the words spoken by Christ are in red. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you . . . For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” These must look suitably lurid. So, having drained the blood from his body in the pictures, they put it back into his words in the text. Well, this made it “very simple to follow” for one Liverpool reader, especially in conjunction with “the notes on the bottom of the pages interpreting Our Divine Lord’s words,” which is justification enough.

Yours for ten guineas (from Virtue & Co. Ltd., London). And if you still think it expensive, bear in mind that in Ruislip somebody was “terribly thrilled” with it; that somebody in Swindon thought it “the finest value I have ever had”; and that somebody else’s priest saw it and “he kept repeating over and over, ‘It’s beautiful, it’s beautiful’”—and that in Hove! The inhabitant of a rather different seaside resort, Blackpool, took it to a priest to be blessed and the latter’s voice “trembled with emotion when he saw it, and he said he had never seen anything

so beautiful." Which confirms the ignorance and limited experience of a great many priests. As for the citizen of York who declared, "Truly in all my life, I have never seen a more beautiful book," we may charitably assume that he had never been inside a library or non-Catholic bookshop.

These would be texts for my sermon on the lowering of public taste by popular religious art. "Knock on any (Catholic) door," and when it opens, this deplorable, devalued "art" confronts you. And the occupants *live* with it, look up to it, kneel before it. Sickly and sentimental Jesuses, gaudy Virgins, ghastly crucifixions, these provide the aesthetic nourishment of the Catholic child. What tastes do you expect from the adults? Precisely what you get from Arbroath, that the Holy Catholic Bible will be considered "a wonderful work of art."

## Religious Unity in Ceylon

By D. SHIPPER

CEYLON'S 806,000 Catholics comprise 9% of the island's population and the R.C.s control over 12% of Sinhalese schools.

Since Ceylon gained its independence the position of R.C.s has taken a turn for the worse and the ill-feeling of Buddhists and Hindus for the foreign-dominated Catholics has increased. The 18,000 Buddhist monks contain a percentage of fervent anti-Catholics and a group of influential Buddhists are pressing the Government to nationalise denominational schools.

Three hundred R.C. nursing sisters are employed in Sinhalese government-controlled hospitals (the government pay their salaries) in accordance with a governmental-hierarchical contract, but some non-Catholics, claiming that the sisters are abusing their positions by proselytising, are asking for the agreement to be terminated (a shortage of nurses may prove a deciding factor).

The traditionally-Buddhist six million Sinhalese, mostly living in the south, are at "daggers drawn" with the 1,700,000 mainly-Hindu Tamils of the north (more proof of the miraculous unifying power of religion!) and since the passing of the Sinhalese Language Law (making Sinhalese the *official* language and, therefore, the Dravidian Tamil tongue unofficial) relations between these differing racial and religious groups have steadily worsened.

The Sinhalese are hoping that the Language Law will lead to the Tamils losing their high proportion of influential positions (Sinhalese hold 60 out of 101 in the House of Representatives), but extremists among them have threatened mass deportation to India. (Some Tamils came from Southern India before the alleged birth of Christ!) Extremist elements among the Tamils retaliate by threatening a partitioned Tamil state—or war.

To add to the troubles of the new state, a continually-rising birth-rate is a further threat.

To sum up, the Sinhalese-Buddhists, in racing parlance, seem "hot favourites" to improve their position at the expense of the "second favourite"—the Tamil—while the prospects of the R.C.s (who, in an alliance with the Tamils would only constitute a third of Ceylon's population) seem exceedingly dim at the moment—they must be considered "rank outsiders."

Ceylon presents a touching picture of racial and religious unity, a fine example of brotherly love in operation, and it seems a pity that the now-defunct Rationalist Association of Ceylon was unable to take advantage of the situation.

## Bible Lesson

ALTHOUGH the Great Architect of the Universe does very little today to draw attention to himself, he used to act in quite a Hitlerite way in the days of Moses, the great Egyptian illusionist and leader of the desert tribes of the Middle East in 1496 B.C.

In those days, God had a great horror of other gods who were in competition for the job of becoming architects of the universe, and the Lord God was not quite satisfied with certain actions of Moses, for if you have time to read verses 37 to 41 of chapter 16 of the Book of Numbers, you will find that the Lord God has again spoken to Moses, the chief salesman of mansions in the sky, and has threatened him that unless he concentrates more on business and less on women, He (God) will have to take violent action.

Seemingly, the Lord God is a die-hard conservative, for he has instructed Moses to inform the children of Israel to make fringes on the borders of their garments, and in future to wear a blue ribbon. And look here Moses, you stick to me and I'll stick to you, and always remember to be holy to your God who has done much to get you into Easy Street. Now, as a final warning, do not forget that I am the one and only Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. I and I only am thy God, so get on with the job and see that I am returned at the general election. After this important interview, God then departed, and Moses immediately called a summit meeting of the party.

PAUL VARNEY.

## The Monks of the Screw

By JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN (1750-1817)

When St. Patrick this Order established,  
He called us the "Monks of the Screw";  
Good rules he revealed to our abbot  
To guide us in what we should do.  
But first he replenished our fountain  
With liquor the best from on high;  
And he said on the word of a saint,  
That the fountain would never run dry.

Each year, when your octaves approach,  
In full chapter convened let me find you;  
And when to the convent you come,  
Leave your favourite temptation behind you.  
And be not a glass in your convent—  
Unless on a festival found;  
And, this rule to enforce, I ordain it  
One festival all the year round.

My brethren, be chaste—till you're tempted;  
While sober, be grave and discreet;  
And humble your bodies with fasting,  
As oft as you've nothing to eat.  
Yet, in honour of fasting, one lean face  
Among you I'd always require;  
If the abbot may please he can wear it,  
If not, let it come to the prior.

Come, let each take his chalice, my brethren,  
And with due devotion prepare,  
With hands and with voice uplifted,  
Our hymn to conclude with a prayer.  
May this chapter oft joyously meet,  
And this gladsome libation renew,  
To the saint, the founder, and abbot,  
And prior and Monks of the Screw.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

I found myself in a similar dilemma to J. B. Pothecary when my son commenced school a year ago, but raised no objection to him attending classes for religious instruction. At the beginning I had doubts as to whether I was taking the correct cause of action. I was concerned as to how I would answer any religious questions he might ask without setting his mind at conflict with what he was being taught at school. I imagined that if I cast scepticism regarding one subject then it might have had a disastrous effect on the whole curriculum. My fears, however, have so far proved unjustified. I don't consider that, as yet, the danger is past by any means, but I think the first hurdle is always the most difficult and having overcome it other obstacles can be faced with confidence.

My advice to Mr. Pothecary is to allow his son to join the religious classes if only to end his feeling of isolation. His son will encounter religion at some time or another and although I feel that at such a young age the child is most vulnerable, there is a chance that by not allowing him to partake of religious instruction he may rebel and try all the harder and with more than usual interest to find out more of what he is missing. All parents know that a child always wants that something which he isn't allowed to have.

D. PENKETH.

### SECULAR FUNERAL

The matter raised by a Secularist in a recent issue I consider to be important, as I so well remember the burial of Atheist friends carried out in orthodox Christian manner, knowing as I did that such would be utterly opposed to their wishes.

I have made plans by appointing an Atheist friend in the legal profession as my executor.

My body I have donated to the Anatomy Department of Manchester University for experimental purposes, this being the nearest where such is carried out.

My cornea will be used by the Optical Department of the North Staffs Infirmary for grafting purposes, several of which in the country have been a success, and if I could be assured that my action would mean that some blind person would acquire or regain sight, I should be very elated.

Forms have to be signed by the nearest relatives, which have been readily done by my two daughters.

Cremation will follow and, if wanted, a secular service, but personally I think this better dispensed with when the body has been left to medicine.

W. MORRIS.

### SECULAR WILLS

In a recent issue you commented on my letter dealing with this matter—in which you stated that the next of kin could ignore the wishes of a testator's will.

May I suggest that those Secularists who instruct their executors to carry out their wishes are solicitors, and as it is most likely that the bulk of the estate is willed to the next of kin—that a provision is made to the effect that if the wishes are not carried out—that they will not receive the legacy?

This would, I think, be a safeguard in most cases—as they would be reluctant to lose the legacy, and the solicitors would deal with the conditions of the will.

Incidentally, congratulations on the most interesting and informative articles that you publish each week—perhaps better than ever.

SECULARIST.

### EXPLANATION WANTED

Re Miss May A. Watson's remarks that most church steeples have lightning conductors, thus showing a strange lack of faith in God Almighty, when I queried a priest on this fact, he replied that "God helps those who help themselves." What explanation can Miss Watson offer to this reply?

M. BYRN.

### SCHOPENHAUER

Nicholas Toon, in his article on "Freedom and the Will," quotes from Schopenhauer in order to support his deterministic view of the will, but he fails to realise that according to Schopenhauerian teaching the "will" is free, causeless, and groundless. Schopenhauer writes in his *World as Will and Idea* the following words: "The will is free, the will is almighty. The will appears in everything, just as it determines itself in itself and outside time. The world is only the mirror of this willing; and all finitude, all suffering, all miseries, which it contains, belong to the expression of that which the will wills, are as they are because the will wills." The purpose of the intellect, according to Schopenhauer,

was not to free the will, but rather, on the contrary, to suppress it. He who does not understand this does not understand Schopenhauer's philosophy.

R. SMITH.

### "BATTLE FOR THE MIND"

Two eminent psychiatrists (unnamed) demonstrated high-power propaganda methods on BBC TV (12/3/59), commencing with a film of Hitler's mass rallies, rousing frenzied enthusiasm and shouting of slogans. Then the psychiatrists turned to Christian revival meetings of Negroes in the Southern States of America, participants winding poisonous snakes round their necks, in fulfilment of the Bible "they shall take up serpents and it shall not hurt them." We saw one man killed, whereupon it was explained that he lacked faith or was a sinner. Thence to savage witch doctor dances, where bodies were slashed with knives. The next shot was Billy Graham at Harringay, rousing sinners to conversion. Lastly, we had a historical account of Charles Wesley's revivals, with a print by Hogarth lampooning them. The speakers were very cautious, and denied being in any way controversial. Nevertheless, the implication, even if only indirectly expressed, was that Christian revivalism embodied the same elements as the most brutal savagery. It was surprising indeed to see Devil dances coupled with Christian practices. It will be interesting to see if Christians will protest or take the above lying down.

J. R. DUNCANSON.

### "LOUD MUSIC FAR OFF"

SELECTED ESSAYS by JOHN O'HARE

2/9 POST FREE, from

*Brilliant and Stimulating*

I.L.P. BOOKSHOP, 6 Endsleigh Street, W.C.1

### IS SPIRITUALISM TRUE? By C. E. Ratcliffe.

Price 1/-; postage 2d.

(Proceeds to THE FREETHINKER Sustentation Fund)

### THE WORLD MENACE OF CATHOLIC ACTION.

By A. Stewart.

Price 1/-; postage 2d.

### THE POPES AND THEIR CHURCH.

By Joseph McCabe.

Price 2/-; postage 4d.

### CAN MATERIALISM EXPLAIN MIND? By G. H.

Taylor.

Price 3/6; postage 6d.

### THE PAPACY IN POLITICS TODAY.

By Joseph McCabe.

Price 2/6; postage 5d.

### A SHORT HISTORY OF SEX WORSHIP.

By H. Cutner.

Price 2/6; postage 6d.

### FREEDOM'S FOE—THE VATICAN.

By Adrian Pigott.

A collection of Danger Signals for those who value liberty. 128 pages. Price 2/6; postage 6d.

### THE DOLLAR AND THE VATICAN: Its Character, Methods and Aims.

By Avro Manhattan.

3rd Edition—Revised and Enlarged.

### ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING.

By Chapman Cohen.

Price 21/-; postage 1/3.

### Series 1, 2, 3, 4. Cloth bound.

Price 7/6 each series; postage 7d. each.

### PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN THOUGHT.

By Chapman Cohen.

Price 3/- (specially reduced price); postage 5d.

### MATERIALISM RESTATED (Third edition).

By Chapman Cohen.

Price 5/6; postage 7d.

### PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE.

18 of Chapman Cohen's celebrated pamphlets bound in one volume. Indispensable for the Freethinker.

Price 5/6; postage 8d.

### WHAT IS THE SABBATH DAY? By H. Cutner.

Price 1/3; postage 4d.

### AGE OF REASON.

Thomas Paine's masterpiece with 40-pages introduction by Chapman Cohen.

Cloth 4/-; postage 7d.

### HOW THE CHURCHES BETRAY THEIR CHRIST.

British Christianity critically examined. By C. G. L. Du Cann.

Price 1/-; postage 3d.

### THE BIBLE HANDBOOK (10th Edition).

By G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball.

Price 4/6; postage 6d.

### A CHRONOLOGY OF BRITISH SECULARISM.

By G. H. Taylor.

Price 1/-; post 2d.