

The Freethinker

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WE HAVE on several previous occasions drawn attention to the ambiguous position occupied by our national Church, "The Church of England by Law Established," to which, by a peculiar historical anomaly, all baptised persons, from the "Royal Defender of the (Anglican) Faith" to the members of the National Secular Society, officially and legally belong. The Anglican Church, as any careful perusal of the English (16th Century) Reformation must demonstrate beyond question, was founded by the Tudor monarchy, with a limited, but precise, objective. In an age and continent scorched and devastated by the political and military conflicts between the rival camps of the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation, the Tudor monarchs, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, were resolved, come what may, to steer their island clear of the European inferno. They accordingly set to work with Machiavellian deliberation, using religion consciously as an instrument of statecraft, to create a national English Church which, in both temper and doctrine would avoid the Rome of the Jesuit leaders and the Geneva of Calvin. In which difficult but absolutely necessary task they met with quite remarkable success. It would be broadly accurate, in the general historical sense, to repeat, as I once stated in another connection, that "The Church of England has never known whether it is Catholic or Protestant; but it has always known that it is English."

The Via Media

For the past four centuries the Church of England has actually fulfilled the fundamental purpose for which it was founded by the sagacious Tudors. In Newman's later phrase, it has been a *via media*, a "middle way," identified neither with Rome and its Continental Catholicism nor with Continental Protestantism, whether Lutheran or Calvinist. But this — as one can define it — *political* success has inevitably been purchased at the expense of doctrinal ambiguity. Its probably, purposely vague theological formulas were finally summed up in that still extant masterpiece of theological "facing both ways," the Thirty-nine Articles, about which only one thing can be said for certain: that no one can really be certain what they *do* mean! And, it may be added, the current theological state of our "national" Church is on all fours with the "thirty-nine headed monster," as one of its Jesuit critics termed it. Anglo-Catholics, who are *plus royaliste que le roi* or rather, more papal than the Pope; Protestant Fundamentalists, who still defend every word of the Bible as verbally inspired; and Modernists, who sometimes (e.g. Dr. Barnes, a Bishop of the Establishment) go farther in critical exegesis than do our more "reverent" rationalists; all are to be found in the pulpits and pews of our national churches: a theological Tower of Babel!

Fifth Column Tactics

Such is the background to any rational comprehension of the recent clerical scandal, which became headline news in our daily Press: the case of Father Harris v. the

(Anglican) Bishop of Southwark, Dr. Mervyn Stockwood as a newly-appointed Bishop who obviously belongs to the Low Church or, at least, vociferously Protestant wing. From the fact that he recently made a radio appeal for the Family Planning Association, it would appear that he is something of a Modernist. However, when Dr. Stockwood duly arrived at his sector of the Lord's vineyard from a church in Cambridge, he found at least one parish in his South London diocese to be in the possession of the enemy, *viz.* the Church of Rome, the "Anti-Christ" of all good evangelical Protestants. To be more precise, it was run by a group of "spikes"—to quote current ecclesiastical jargon — *i.e.*, extreme High-Churchmen

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

The Reformation versus Father Harris

By F. A. RIDLEY

and Anglo-Catholics, who were willing to do everything for the Church of Rome, except join it! The most extreme of these was the priest-in-charge of St. Andrew's Church, Carshalton, Surrey, the Rev. Fr. R. A. Harris who, at the age of 72, and after about half-a-century's active ministry in the Church of England, regularly celebrated both the Roman mass and, apparently, all the Festivals of the Roman Catholic Church. On August 15th, he added insult to injury by solemnly celebrating the Feast of the (Corporeal) Assumption of the Virgin Mary, a festival not officially recognised by the Church of England and, in point of fact, only recently (1950) declared a dogma in the Church of Rome itself — perhaps with a view to her becoming the patron Saint of Space Travel! I may add that I believe I actually met Fr. Harris during the now remote period when I was a theological student; at least the descriptions appear to tally. If so, he has always been of his present persuasion though, I hasten to add, a delightful fellow personally, like many Roman and Anglican clerics in their non-ecclesiastical capacity.

There Was a Reformation!

August 15th marked apparently the end of the already overstrained patience of the Right Reverend Father-in-God, the Bishop of Southwark. For he, and the whole weight of ecclesiastical authority, moved into action. St. Andrews, Carshalton, was promptly closed down, and Fr. Harris, after a stormy meeting with his Bishop, was seemingly jockeyed into offering his resignation. When he later wished to withdraw it, a peremptory refusal met the belated request. (Father Harris who, as an Anglo-Catholic, must believe in the divine right of Bishops — one of the "articles of Faith" of his sect — appears, like some others of his kind, to be something of an anarchist where his own Father-in-Christ is concerned.) The upshot of the affair was that Southwark's Anglican Bishop delivered a sharp personal address to the church council, in which he accused Fr. Harris and Co. of trying to wreck the Church of England, and of behaving as if the Reformation had never occurred. One may, perhaps, be permitted to add that Fr. Harris has been holding these "disloyal" views to the age of 72, without any ecclesiastical censure. The Protestant sleuth-hounds in the Church of England took their time in getting on his tracks. But, while we have every

sympathy with the Bishop in his vigilant defence of the Reformation against fifth column Roman tactics, we are afraid, particularly in view of the present Pope's projected drive towards "reunion," that the Church of England has not heard the last of Father Harris and his kind.

Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat

By W. E. HUXLEY

(Member of the Iran Society)

NEW AND ORIGINAL ideas are as rare as blackberries in February, hence Edward Fitzgerald was in no way blame-worthy for getting his from other people. We all do the same; accepting some, rejecting others, thereby slowly forming our own. Fitzgerald's verses prove him to be a poet of no mean order. Their wide and still growing popularity prove it. The Rubaiyat was not the only work which came from his pen. He made other translations from Persian and Spanish, and also attempted original poetry. Alas

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

And, but for a remarkable chance, this would have been the fate of his Rubaiyat also.

There is no doubt that Fitzgerald thoroughly understood all the Rubaiyat which other people correctly explained to him. But he never visited the East, and it is doubtful if he could read the Persian without assistance. It is impossible to read the Rubaiyat without realising that many hands at different epochs wrote them; further, that the writers were of several different faiths and none. Whoso denies this either has not understood them, or has an axe to grind. Fitzgerald would hardly have regarded Khayam as a besotted libertine if he had been acquainted with the quatrains expressing piety; hence the inescapable conclusion is that they were Greek (nay, let's say "Chinese") to him.

There have been translations galore of the Rubaiyat, but many of the translators were dazzled by Fitzgerald's brilliance. They could not contemplate the possibility that Khayam was the collector, and publisher, not the author. Fitzgerald's phrase, "whether genuine or not," indicates that the germ of truth had entered his mind, but did not develop.

So highly were Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat esteemed after Rossetti had boosted them, that the demand was high. Other Persian poets also wrote rubaiyat, notably Hafiz. A few of his are also to be found in Omar, which shows that ancient Persian poets saw no wrong in using second-hand material if it suited them. Hafiz was such a skilful rhymester that one cannot believe him incapable of writing original ones. He was not conscious of wrong-doing.

Recently Professor Arberry has published translations of Khayam's Rubaiyat, said to be newly discovered. Everything which comes from Arberry's pen is excellent, and they who delight in rubaiyat should not miss them. The Professor is a master-craftsman in poetry, and his works will be read and enjoyed long after our day has pushed up lawns for the yet unborn.

Excellent though the verses be, the statement that they are ancient should be taken *cum grano salis*.

Twenty-five years among the Persians has taught me something about them. Their native intellect is at least as high as Europeans. The rich stores of graceful literature and vast vocabulary amply confirm this. In addition they have a keen sense of humour and thoroughly enjoy a leg-pull. And what better leg to pull than an English

University professor's, especially if a good sum of money is entailed. It is a joke they would enjoy immensely.

In 1947 Professor Arberry examined a Persian volume which had been offered for sale to Sir Chester Beatty. The examination was made one afternoon in that gentleman's drawing-room, and so could only have been cursory. The volume was dated A.H. 658 (A.D. 1259-60) and contained 172 quatrains. It simply shouted its authenticity to the Professor who advised purchase. The price is not divulged, but was no doubt considerable.

And about this time the Teheran review *Yadgar* (Keep-sake or Monument) announced the discovery of a copy of the Rubaiyat dated A.H. 604 (A.D. 1208). Professor Arberry, being a man of the Campus, never imagined this older copy would come to him. But a man of the world, especially one who knew the Iranis, would have expected it. And sure enough, turn up it did, and at the Professor's very earnest recommendation it was bought for the University Library. It might be all that is claimed for it, but the University authorities would be well advised to make laboratory tests similar to those used on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Professor Arberry's opinion never seems to have been challenged, suspicious though the circumstances. These limerick-like verses are not difficult to compose. Indeed the language might almost have been designed for them. Professor Arberry's *bona fides* are not questioned, but mistaken he well could be.

Mayhap at the material times, and not very far away, some Iranis were sitting with a book of verse beneath a bough, earnestly absorbed in this one.

The myriads of stars seen in the skies
Are a source of great wonder to the wise.
Beware of losing the thread of reason,
For reason from the learned oft times flies.

And readers might like to consider these three. There are others in the same vein.

I am not one who fears the Hand of Fate.
Methinks I would prefer the Future State.
Life I hold on loan from God, and I will
Resign it with cheer on His chosen date.

Unto thee a wondrous story I will tell,
And in a very few short words as well.
With His love, 'neath the sod I shall descend;
Then, by His good grace, from it rise I shall.

I'll give thee advice, if thou'lt lend an ear.
For God's sake no robe of deceit don here.
This world is brief; but a moment thy life.
For that, trade not Eternal Life, my dear.

After all that piety, Freethinkers will need a reviver, so we will end with a rubaiyi from the pen of that naughtily inattentive boy in the back row (vide No. 26).

My chum, why be so sad, doleful and glum?
Come and make glad with a bottle of rum.
Seek a pretty girl with whom to have fun.
Better sin with such than behave with Mum.

From Spain

I congratulate you on your article on Spain. Opus Dei is a secret organisation, and the people know little about it. Here in Spain, the Jesuits are the worst enemy of the people, and the people hate them. Franco can fall tomorrow, but it is necessary to ensure the Church's permanence. The Jesuits have, in Opus Dei, a good heir! But, as you know, the Vatican is the master of all. The Church is the ally of Franco. The regime murdered the Freethinkers, and the regime tortures the Freethinkers — with the blessing of the Church. This is all the truth, my friends.

SPANISH TEACHER.

—NEXT WEEK—

PROGRESS IN ANIMAL WELFARE

By FLORENCE BARKER

England's Oldest Ally

By COLIN McCALL

AFTER SPAIN, PORTUGAL, with once again the American Roman Catholic paper, *The Commonwealth*, as our guide. This time, though, not a native writer, but Mr. Francis E. McMahon, author of *A Catholic Looks at the World* who, in "Salazar and the Church" (July 31st, 1959) reports on what he calls "a significant shift in Church-State relations in Portugal."

There has been tension for a year now, says Mr. McMahon, since the Bishop of Oporto, Monsignor Antonio Ferreira Gomes, wrote a personal letter to Prime Minister Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, "outlining his objections to conditions in Portugal": a personal letter, the contents of which became known in Portugal itself a few weeks later, but which is only partly known in America and, I think, in Britain. Mr. McMahon has apparently seen a "more complete text" which he says, "proves it to be one of the most forceful indictments of a dictatorial regime ever penned by a Catholic prelate."

Whether that is saying very much is, perhaps, a matter of opinion. But, apart from their denunciation of Communism, which I suspect they hate more because it is atheistic than because it is totalitarian, it can hardly be said that Catholic prelates have been conspicuous for indicting dictatorships. However, Mr. McMahon assures us that on this occasion the Bishop "spoke with the utmost frankness." Personally, I should like to have seen the actual letter printed in *The Commonwealth* (as long as it isn't private any more) then we could have judged for ourselves how strongly, and in what manner the Bishop attacked the Salazar regime. As it is, we still know only parts of it; we are dependent upon Mr. McMahon's selections and, in some cases, his interpretations. Even so, there is much of interest.

The main reason for the letter is perfectly clear: "The Bishop explained to Salazar that the Church's good name was suffering from its linkage with a regime which had provoked much opposition." In his own words: "The great and tragic reality is that the Church in Portugal is already losing the trust of her best sons"; its cause "is being lost in the soul of the people, of the workers, and of the youth." There is, as Mr. McMahon says — and as my own conversations with an English teacher resident in Portugal confirm—"a growing spirit of anti-clericalism." With the Church it has been jam yesterday and jam today, but there is a doubt about jam tomorrow. That, understandably enough, is the Bishop's main concern, and at least it has led him to criticise some points in a Salazar speech. The Prime Minister had said, "the strike is, among us, a crime"; the Bishop said that, according to Catholic doctrine, it was not; and "he rejected Salazar's view that the State is empowered to settle all disputes between management and labour." Nor did he think the regime was coping with rising social tension. Social peace, he said (in Mr. McMahon's paraphrase) "depends upon two factors: the just distribution of the fruits of labour, and the participation by all in the direction of common affairs." "I have always given the greatest attention to the words of Your Excellency," said the Bishop (*his* words this time), "but they have not given me satisfaction in the fields either of political philosophy or sociology." And again: "Portuguese corporativism was (and is) in reality a means of depriving the workers of the natural rights of association." Yet it is to this plan that "one seeks to attach the Holy Church."

While I can agree with much that the Bishop said, I

find this last phrase particularly puzzling. It isn't a question of *seeking* to attach the Holy Church: the Holy Church is already well and truly attached to the Salazar system — and the Portuguese people know it. Moreover, the Holy Church knows they know it. That is why the Church is afraid of the future; why some of the clergy are now calling for a "Christian democracy." The Christian dictatorship — "Fascism in the Name of Jesus," as Mr. Kingsley Martin termed it — shows signs of collapsing, and the Portuguese Church doesn't want to go with it. Mr. McMahon makes a classic understatement when he says "the *de facto* relations between the clergy and the government have been friendly and sympathetic." The fact is that Church and State have co-operated for mutual benefit and to the terrible detriment of the people. An English Roman Catholic writer, Mr. Paul Johnson, has told us (*New Statesman*, November 2nd, 1957) how elections were "cooked," viz. "Although, in theory, all literate ratepayers can vote, many of Portugal's most distinguished writers and lawyers, doctors and university professors, are not included on the roll. Instead it is padded out with those who can be marshalled into support of the regime: priests, nuns, seminarists, soldiers and members of women's Catholic organisations. In the 1953 elections, in the district of Moscavide, for instance, out of 866 names on the register, there were 250 priests, monks, nuns and lay-brothers, 100 members of the Women's Catholic Action, and 50 teachers and scholars from a religious college. In Campo Grande, 26 per cent. of women on the list were nuns; in Santo Amaro and Da Povia, out of a vote of 123, there were 94 women — mainly illiterate members of Catholic Action. In some areas, army units were marched to the poll and told how to vote by their officers; in one Lisbon district, 20 girls from the Juventude Catolica, aged 16-17, were allowed to vote by the authorities."

And, writing of course before the Bishop put pen to paper, Mr. Johnson contrasted the magnificent sports stadium, "the vast diocesan seminary" and, "highest of all, the grandiose 18th-century palace of the Bishop of Oporto," with 19 "satellite slums" scattered around Portugal's second largest city; and, in the port wine centre itself, "tenements no better, perhaps worse, for here even the sun never penetrates." If, then, I seem rather lukewarm about Bishop Ferreira Gomes's letter, it is because I can picture him living in palatial luxury with squalor around him, and not doing very much about it until the Church began to lose "the trust of her best sons." Then suddenly realising that "the Church's good name was suffering" from linkage with the regime!

Some leaders of Catholic youth have "abandoned their posts because of the harangues of pro-Salazar clergy," Mr. McMahon informs us, and some Catholics "retired from the churches when the priests began to speak of the elections." Well, surely the Church must bear the responsibility for this: surely it is reaping as it sowed. "The Church's concern for the humble and poor was emphasized" in a pastoral letter signed by all Portuguese bishops in January this year, says Mr. McMahon. Here again, the Church was devilish late in discovering its concern. Salazar once defended poverty by quoting "For ye have the poor always with you." Whether the Bishop was quite so frank, I can't say, but I can call in Mr. Johnson again to describe conditions in an Oporto suburb. "Then we saw the first group of huts: black little hovels, scarcely four feet high,

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This Believing World

So at last some of the Churches have come together—even the Roman Church is included—against the common enemy, a genuine Christian Church, in fact, “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” better known as the Mormon Church. Mormonism is, according to the *Sunday Express*, “making a hit at Crawley, Sussex.” Not far away is the £600,000 Mormon Temple, and as 50 converts have been made in Crawley, they now want a temple for themselves, much to the disgust of all the other good Christians in the district.

★

As could be expected, the Rev. G. Bridgman, vicar of St. Mary's, sternly warns people that “many of these Mormon teachings are heretical,” and he complains that the slick, door-to-door salesmen of Mormonism “confuse” people — even one of his own churchworkers was taken in. But why? Surely veritable Faith in Jesus could never be “confused” by blatant or rank heresy? Have Mr. Bridgman and his fellow priests so little of this Faith that they are actually *frightened* of Mormonism? Or is it that, after all, they cannot or dare not refute Mormon heresies with Mormons given the right to reply?

★

But personally we are delighted that campaigns are now strenuously being undertaken to convert *Christians* in our country. Too long have Christian missionaries been allowed to go to other people's countries to convert “pagans” to Christianity. Now we have Muslim mosques, Buddhist temples and Mormon temples in England vigorously attacking the one true religion in the name of other true religions. What a pity we cannot have the proceedings enlivened with a few genuine African witch doctors and their brand of another true religion!

★

How thoroughly confused pacifist and non-pacifist Christians can become when trying to discover what “our Lord” meant on the problem was cleverly shown on the I.T.V. “About Religion” discussion between two fervent Christians taking opposite views. One pious gentleman believed literally in the “turn the other cheek” and “love thine enemies” doctrines. The other wasn't so sure that these had to be taken so literally — though he would have strengthened his case had he quoted “our Lord” saying, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword”; and “he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”

★

Christians are always telling us that when Jesus said he came to send not peace on earth but a sword, he meant a *symbolic* sword — but they have never been able to explain away the wondrous teaching about selling one's clothes and *buying* a sword! And, of course, the pacifist Christian in the discussion kept away from these and similar texts of our peace-loving “Saviour.” What about chasing the “money-changers” from the temple with a whip? Was that also pure, unadulterated pacifism? The truth is that on this problem the Gospels are a mass of ludicrous contradictions.

★

At a Press Conference on the Fr. Harris case (*vide* our leading article) the Bishop of Stockwood, when asked if “many people had been converted to Roman Catholicism” at Carshalton, said, “Perverted not converted.” We wonder whether any more of our “Protestant” bishops would have the courage to talk of Roman Catholicism in this way . . . ? *Perverted* — ye gods!

Secularism on Radio and TV

A Summary of the report by Maître Robert Hamaïde (a distinguished Belgian Barrister) to the International Congress of Freethinkers at Brussels University, 1959.

In 1954 there was allotted on the Belgian Radio, ten minutes weekly to a “Tribune of Lay Ethics,” for which the broadcasters were chosen by the I.N.R. (National Institute of Radio, equivalent to our B.B.C.) Maître Hamaïde suggested in December of that year to the I.N.R. that these broadcasts should be managed by a Committee chosen from the secularist organisations of the country. In March, 1955, this proposal was adopted, insofar as a Consultative Committee of Four was constituted. The Committee asked for, and, with some trouble, obtained a longer allocation of time at a better hour in the day; now, it may be noted, there is half-an-hour in French weekly in sound, and half-an-hour fortnightly on Television, and 18 half-hours in the year in Flemish on the radio.

Maître Hamaïde, in the first broadcast, made clear the principles which were to inspire the series. “As none can,” he said, “claim to know and teach the Truth (with a capital T) we shall not attempt to give final answers to the controversial questions which have haunted mankind since prehistoric days; we are opposed to all arbitrary discrimination, to gratuitous affirmations and prefabricated ideologies. Our emission will be of no Church, no school of thought, no political party; we demand in the name of tolerance and of liberty, the right of saying all that we think, for as Henri Poincaré said, ‘Thinking must never be submitted to a dogma, nor to a political doctrine, nor to any preconceived idea, for, if it so submitted, it ceases to be Thinking.’”

In the four years which have passed since the Committee engaged in this task, a remarkable range of subjects has been broadcast, e.g., on the origins of life, on the bases of morality, on feminism, on sacred books, on miracles, on para-normal phenomena, on the social origins of Christianity, on the ethics of primitive societies. In these we have had the help of eminent professors of the Universities of Brussels, Liege and Elisabethville, e.g., Mlle. de Brouckère and M. Zenon Bacq (to mention two supporting the present Congress).

We have given talks on Erasmus, Vesalius, Comte, Renan, Darwin, Albert Camus, Ferrer, Socrates, Gandhi and Breughel, among others. We have discussed nuclear fission, racism, rationalism, birth control, slavery, suicide and the moral responsibility of motorists. We have examined texts dealing with tolerance, faith, scientific research and liberty. We have asked for, and obtained, for the broadcasters complete freedom of expression, subject alone to what may be termed the unwritten code of broadcasting good behaviour.

What results have we obtained? This is most important, and please note them. The I.N.R. estimates that each letter on the subject of a recent broadcast indicates 1,000 listeners. We have received commonly 250-350 letters per broadcast, occasionally 400. We can claim for our small country at least a quarter of a million listeners. How does this compare with the religious broadcasts? The I.N.R. figures are clear. As FIVE to THREE, *five* for us and *three* for the religious broadcasts.

The language and arguments of the religious Press confirm these figures. Our talks, cause great pain to the faithful. As we talk today, the Belgian government is evolving in silence new statutes for radio and television. Of what they propose we have as yet no indication. We shall, I assure you, defend our position with all the power at our command, and we ask the help of all who believe in tolerance and freedom.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

- Bradford Branch N.S.S. (rear of Morley Street Car Park).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Messrs. CORINA and DAY.
Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: L. Ebury.
London (Finsbury Square, E.C.2).—Every Wednesday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY and C. MCCALL.
London (Marble Arch).—Meetings every Saturday from 6 p.m. and every Sunday from 5 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD and D. TRIBE.
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.
Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7.30 p.m.: Various speakers.
North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.
Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Friday, 1 p.m.; Sunday, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Notes and News

WE DRAW READERS' ATTENTION to the increased subscription charges shown at the top of this column. With this issue, too, of course, the price of individual copies has had to be increased to sixpence.

THE PUBLICATION OF THIS ISSUE OF THE FREETHINKER will coincide with the start of the International Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers at Brussels University. We have already printed several papers that will be read at the Congress and, during the coming weeks, we hope to print more. There will also be a report of the Congress and of the commemoration of the centenary of the birth of Francisco Ferrer. Ferrer's daughter will be present, and it is good to know that one of the tributes will be from a fellow Spaniard. The latter, alas, cannot be there in person and (the Franco regime being what it is) must indeed remain anonymous. But there is happily reason to think that he will be speaking for many of his countrymen, and perhaps the time is nearer than we once dared hope, when Francisco Ferrer will be officially honoured in his native land as Freethinkers throughout the world have honoured him through the years.

THE SUNDAY TIMES' profile of J. B. Phillips (16/8/59) presents a sincere clergyman who believes that the New Testament has relevance today and who, consequently, translated it into Modern English. This is, no doubt, a true picture. Prebendary Phillips genuinely hopes "to assuage the spiritual hunger of our times" and "feels that there are many today, particularly young people, who are turning away from Christianity largely because the language

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

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of the Bible seems to them archaic and discouraging." We believe that he is wrong: it is not just the language of Christianity that is outdated, it is the religion itself.

THE LOVE AFFAIRS and divorces of film stars do not, as a rule, occupy our attention. But we shall follow with interest the case of Carlo Ponti and Sophia Loren, whose marriage is held to be bigamous according to Italian law. The Milan courts — we read in the *Evening News* (11/8/59) — are obliged to take action because of a charge of bigamy brought "by a woman from Milan, leader of a Catholic organisation." Perhaps the case will draw attention to the Italian matrimonial law "which is full of contradictions" and if it lessens the influence of interfering busybodies and "guardians of morals" like the leaders of Catholic organisations, so much the better.

OXFORD PROFESSOR H. R. TREVOR-ROPER, reviewing the recent edition of *The Jewish War* (*New Statesman*, 15/8/59) was not uncritical of Josephus's latest editor, Mr. G. A. Williamson. Perhaps, along with Josephus's scepticism towards some Jewish superstitions "there was also credulity," said the Professor, "but what of Mr. Williamson, who will swallow everything provided it is in the Gospels?"

WE LIVE in an age of gimmicks, so we were not too surprised to read, in an undated cutting sent to us, that Mr. Jack Leonard, minister at Lindfield Methodist Church, Sydney, intended to use a ventriloquist's doll in a sermon. The doll, by name Cedric, would be on the minister's lap and would answer questions on Christianity "sometimes seriously and sometimes cheekily," but no more intelligently, we presume, than any other Christian.

England's Oldest Ally

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made of old packing cases and wooden boards, strips of corrugated iron, even cardboard. The floor was mud: in the winter, these people, like the wild tribes of the Euphrates Delta, live literally in a swamp. Small children, almost naked, their stomachs distended by the potato soup which is their staple diet, scuffled and urinated along the track . . . Here were perhaps 200 huts . . . inhabited by 1,000 of Salazar's subjects. Inside one of them, peering through the darkness and the flies, I saw a room, 12 ft. by 6 ft., half divided by a wooden partition; there were two packing-case beds — no blankets — and a dresser made of planks; the entire worldly goods of eight human beings. The father of the family made 3s. a day, out of which he had to pay his social insurance, his 'union' dues, and a ground rent to Oporto City Council for the right to live in his hovel."

Salazar's subjects, yes; but the Bishop of Oporto's diocesans! Concern for the humble and poor, indeed!

In truth, as in the case of Spain, the Roman Catholic Church — or part of it — is afraid. As in Spain, it has fattened on a totalitarian regime at the expense of the people. But the people can't be fooled — or criminally exploited — for ever, by Church or State. The longer-sighted among the clergy can see the storm ahead. Now the time has come, perhaps, to cut adrift: to avoid foundering with the ship of State. It is a stinking ship, to be sure, and under tyrannical command, but the stench never entered the nostrils of the Church before.

Christian Harmony

By ERNIE CROSSWELL

IF THE Christian Church is the Body of Christ, one thing is certain: their Saviour Jesus must be aching and racked with pain! Even the threat of Communism has failed to heal the breaches—and if that cannot close the ranks nothing will. Some Christians, apparently, had been hoping and praying that the Pope's "invitation to unite" at the forthcoming Ecumenical Council promised concessions on the part of the Roman Catholic Church, but they have been sorely disappointed: the non-Roman Churches are, it seems, to remain out on a limb.

The truth of the matter is that Christians, being brought up in segregation and dogmatism, are suspicious of one another and despise one another. The very existence of many sectarian places of worship demonstrates, quite adequately, what a huge farce it all is—but brainwashed believers are stubborn and require a concentrated broadside of "home truths" to shake their blind and childish faith. Here then is just a small part of the story of the amazing Christian circus. It is a story told by its own clowns. They speak for themselves and tear each other to shreds in the process.

The most obvious example of intolerance is provided by the Catholics versus the Rest, a contest now less bloody than it used to be—complicated by the determination of the latter to call themselves Catholics too. Last year, Bishops from both sides came into the open and squabbled publicly over the right to the description "Catholic", their numbers of converts and the right to freedom of worship and co-operation. Anglican Bishop Ellison of Chester, criticising "aggressive" R.C. attacks, deplored the refusal of the Romans even to say the Lord's Prayer with them (this kind of behaviour causes a commotion when Romans are elected as Mayors—as the citizens of Llan-dover, in Wales, well know). Roman Catholic Archbishop Godfrey dismissed the Anglican complaints by asserting that there could be no "trafficking with truth." There, it would seem, was an end to an argument which even caused the Archbishop of Canterbury to accuse the R.C.s of waging open war upon Anglicans. And Bishop Bardsley of Coventry, an Anglican, said "I would say we are the only true Catholic Church of this land. It is reformed Catholicism." Bishop Barry of Southwell claimed that the "Roman hierarchy" were marking down and setting upon certain Anglicans "to try and seduce them from their Anglican allegiance." "I could quote you names," he said, and: "what they are offered by the priest is something they can put into a bag and take home—something like they are offered by the Communist Party."

That's not all that was said, by a long way. We may wonder what was said privately! But these are only words, after all, and cannot compare with some of the deeds that are done in the name of contending religions. The Glasgow Rangers v. Celtic football match has been exciting for reasons other than soccer and very often makes sensational news. Last year Roman Catholic Archbishop Heenan of Liverpool was the unfortunate recipient of stones, bricks, pieces of wood, etc., when he dared to visit a sick woman who lived in the Orange quarter of that God-ridden city. Across the sea, in Ireland, things are even hotter: the Protestant church at Bruree went up in flames recently—and we may be excused for not feeling reassured by the R.C. firebug's solicitor that there was "no religious unpleasantness" in that town. Another fairly recent incident, at Limerick, was the assaulting of three Jehovah's Witnesses

who dared to challenge the R.C. conception of God by publicly proclaiming their "only true" Jehovah type deity. One of them had two teeth knocked out.

Not many months ago a Derry Corporation meeting was the scene of physical assault, the result of disagreement between Catholics and Protestants over the appointment of Corporation officers: discrimination in favour of Protestants was alleged. It was the other way round at Newry, N. Ireland, according to Senator Joseph Fisher (Unionist) who claimed that discrimination in favour of Catholics operated in the appointment of the Gas Works manager, a technical school principal, doctors at the Bessbrook and Crossmaglen dispensaries, nurses at Daisy Hill Hospital, and the District Council clerical workers. Mr. Fisher contended, also, that Council houses in Newry went preferentially to Catholics.

Protestants, of course, fight amongst themselves—sometimes like vultures after the scanty pickings. In Taunton, the Anglicans, Free Churches and even the Salvation Army Officer combined to urge their townspeople to shun the Jehovah's Witnesses organisation, who were "perverting and twisting the gospel." Methodist minister Donald Soper condemned the "bibliolatry" of the Billy Graham mob as "pestiferous" nonsense. The Lord's Day Observance Society frequently spoils the fun for its more tolerant Christian brothers, while Methodists, Baptists, Latter Day Saints and Pentecostals canvass their common areas, sometimes with such an appetite that their quarrels make news. Their feeble attempts at unity should deceive no one.

Again, the sects are rent with dissension within themselves. In the Church of England, for example, are Anglo-Catholics, Modern Churchmen, etc., pacifists and non-pacifists, pro-divorcers and anti-divorcers. And it is no uncommon thing to find that brothers and sisters who worship under the same cross do not even speak to one another. What a farce!

Prophet of the 20th Century

By PETER F. MOORE

(Concluded from page 275)

NIETZSCHE foresaw the triumph of respectability, but also, that it would divide man against himself. The results of this have now become apparent: a general chaos, with psychologists making good livings and, what is more, wielding immense power, striving to convince people that deprivation of their natural outlets is a good thing. The trauma caused by this amputation of their natural inheritance is subsequently cured by the pretence that they are whole but maladjusted.

In his earlier days, Nietzsche had thought there might be a hope for the revival of Dionysos in the works and person of Richard Wagner. And admiration for Wagner is indicative of this philosopher's whole outlook. The vast scope and emotional force of the Music Drama held him enthralled; it was a power capable of sweeping away the formalness and timidness of its predecessors. Here he erred. Wagner lacks the descriptive and technical insight, without which the most Dionysian music palls after a time. As I have stated earlier, Beethoven would have provided a fitter demonstration. In all Beethoven's music there is a struggle between the wild orgiastic impulse and cold technical mastery, with an eventual

American Satellite

synthesis. There, too, is the private life full of trouble and despair, but the great destiny fulfilled against impossible odds. Wagner on the other hand, never grasped any concept outside his own version of grand opera, which he eventually used only to express his own messianic inclinations. Nietzsche saw the limitations of Wagner as he became more advanced: outgrew him as a child outgrows Cowboys and Indians.

Thus *Spake Zarathustra*, written between 1881 and 1884, marks Nietzsche off from his contemporaries. It presents its thesis in the style of an epic and, like all epics, its argument was really simple. Man must evolve higher or perish. He resembles the baby finding gunpower and matches without realising their danger in combination. Nietzsche was among the first to grasp the moral implications of evolutionary theory: it gave an orientation to his moral outlook. Not for him the optimism of John Stuart Mill or the predestined march of Karl Marx, but man, a puny little animal, knowing not where he was going, nor yet hardly perceiving whence he had come. "It is not the laws which make matter move but movement which makes the laws." (A singular statement for the 1880's seen in the light of developments in modern physics). Natural Selection was held to be predictable; Nietzsche saw that it wasn't, and that no man could see the end of the story though some had made shrewd guesses. With T. H. Huxley, he saw that struggle alone would decide the issue, and the best fitted would come to the top. Huxley held it would be the predators, but it is now seen that the predators are too dependent on the stability of those beneath them to have the best chance. Nietzsche saw that the artist, the thinker and the poet were the best fitted among men, they alone are able to transcend the struggle for mere survival while the predators eventually became contaminated by their prey and sink back having advanced scarce a step.

Despite his plans for the whole world and society, Nietzsche remains essentially the voice of the individual. No one can tell what lies beyond good and evil, each must find his own standard of judgment. There is no Universal Absolute to which we can appeal; good and evil do not exist outside what a man makes of them; many do not make any judgment about anything, and so they stagnate. To make any sort of calculation presupposes an expansion of experience: experience moving into hitherto uncharted country. If it were not for those able to explore, society would stagnate like the individual. But Nietzsche foresaw other dangers as well. "Look not too long into the abyss, lest the abyss should look back into thee." No one can construct his own system of morals without regard to the world outside, himself, and a very long period of training and discipline was recommended before casting off from the shore of convention.

This article does not start to do justice to a Protean mind. Like, all prophets, Nietzsche was neglected. As the truth of his prophecies became apparent he was hailed, but only in so far as each group saw itself mirrored. He altered and developed under the impact of his own inner drive. Like Zarathustra's summing up of Christ, "He had a great soul, but he died young. Had he lived he would have seen his error. He was great enough." Nietzsche lived and had the courage to repudiate what he considered to be his mistakes. Finally he summed up the whole of organised religion in the mouth of Zarathustra: "I conjure you my brethren, remain faithful to earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of superterrestrial hopes! Poisoners they are, whether they know or not."

WRITING IN THE *Sunday Express* (23/8/59) Mr. Peter Vane described some of the exhaustive tests that seven young Americans are undergoing in preparation for a journey into space—and back: a trip that it is hoped will be made within the next two years, and before the Russians. In a sane world, of course, the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. would pool their resources instead of competing for "national prestige": there is undoubtedly much that each could tell the other that is at present top secret. The public, too, would learn more about a subject that has great fascination. But, for the present, we have to be content with smaller offerings.

In fact, however, these are not so small, and are certainly enormously interesting. Whatever our views on the desirability of space travel, we can hardly fail to be thrilled by the human ingenuity that has gone into developing the American Explorer VI satellite, launched early in August this year. Its most spectacular features, *Time* (17/8/59) informs us, are rigid arms, like paddle wheels, "designed to test the possibility of capturing enough energy from the sun to send messages across millions of miles." This is obviously a vital matter, there being little point in sending out space probes if they don't send back information.

When launched, the two aluminium arms were folded against the sides of the satellite but, as the solid-fuelled third stage was about to fire some 150 miles above the earth, they snapped into position. Each arm branched in two directions, and each branch carried a flat paddle about the size of a chessboard. "covered with 2,000 silicon-based solar cells mounted on a thin plastic honeycomb . . ." At 22,000 miles per hour, the 142 lb. satellite went into orbit, rotating 171 times a minute, and the cells began to convert sunlight into electricity.

Explorer VI has an "eccentric" orbit, with an apogee of 26,400 miles and a perigee of 157 miles, deliberately planned so that it can pierce the now famous Van Allen radiation belts and supply enough data to map these in some detail. The belts present a formidable barrier to space flight, and previous satellites have not gone high enough to examine their enormous breadth. Pioneer IV obtained valuable information, but fell into orbit round the sun after only one trip through the belts. It is hoped that the new satellite will stay in its present orbit for at least a year.

The equipment carried is amazingly intricate. Micro-metric impacts are registered; high-energy particles are measured and (by use of tiny gas-filled cylinders, in which the gas is ionised and electrical impulses of varying strength caused) the results transmitted to the earth; a small mirror receives impressions of cloud layers over the earth and an electronic counter turns them into radio signals which become, in turn, crude photographs of the earth's weather patterns; two magnetometers study the earth's magnetic

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field. But, as the satellite uses electricity much faster than the paddle wheels can provide it, signals from the earth periodically shut off the largest of the satellite's three radio transmitters. To ensure that information is not lost during these periods, the "Telebit", a memory device, takes over, storing up 4½ hours' data and reporting it in code form in a few seconds when the transmitter is turned on again.

After a week, the paddle wheel was reported to be doing well, and the valuable information was being received loudly and clearly. So does man take steps towards understanding of space and eventual travel through it. Marine Lieut.-Colonel John Glenn junior, senior member of the seven-man American team being prepared for that journey, remarked to Mr. Vane that "It's probably the nearest to Heaven I will ever get." Casting no reflections upon him, we agree.

CORRESPONDENCE

MR. ASHE

Mr. Geoffrey Ashe assumed that an anti-Christian case did exist, until he received only half-a-dozen critical letters out of 100 following his recent articles, "Are the Gospels True?" Then he began to wonder: "Was this the best they could do?"

Certainly not, Mr. Ashe; but do you not know that an anti-Christian letter to the Press is very often an absolute waste of time? I have been writing such letters (often very mild ones at that) for the past ten years, and have never had one published yet. Sometimes the editor thanks me and tells me that my letter is receiving attention, but this attention seems to be, in every case, consignment to the waste paper basket.

No doubt others get similarly discouraged. To have six replies, then, was pretty good. I am glad that some Freethinkers keep on trying. It will be noticed, though, that Mr. Ashe's letter was printed in full in THE FREETHINKER — a full column of our very limited space devoted to it. If the national Press were similarly generous to anti-religionists, what an outcry there would be! And Mr. Ashe and the whole country would know with a vengeance that there is, indeed, an anti-Christian case.

E. MILLS,

Secretary, Kingston Branch, N.S.S.

Mr. Geoffrey Ashe, in his reply to Mr. Cutner (21/8/59) seems to be taking an over-optimistic and over-complacent view of the orthodox position with regard to the reliability of New Testament documents. He is "not sure" that the Apocryphal Gospels purport to bridge the gap in the life of Jesus. The so-called "Gospel of Infancy" does just this.

He is quite sure that the "anti-Christian case" is done for and has been pulverised by modern scholarship. The *Christian* authors of *The Riddle of the New Testament* (Sir Edwyn Hoskyns and Noel Darcy) published their work in 1958 (Faber & Faber). They are by no means so cocksure. They admit that the Gospels and the Books of Acts "are anonymous" and that "the venerable names" of their reputed authors were "attached" about "the end of the second century." With regard to the dating of these documents they conclude that "there is no clear evidence at all; accurate dating is simply impossible." They go on, rubbing it in as it were: "All this is very unsatisfactory, and there seems to be no reason to expect that it will remain otherwise than very unsatisfactory." They are inclined to accept most of the Pauline epistles as the work of Paul, but qualify this with doubts and reservations. Hebrews, though, is boldly stated to be "anonymous," and "there are great difficulties in accepting the first Epistle of Peter as the work of the apostle." This investigation into "Problems of Authorship and Dating" is an appendix to the main body of the book, which wrestles manfully with the "theological difficulties" of the New Testament.

In their conclusion to this main part of the book, the authors state: "There are no 'assured results' of New Testament criticism. The New Testament critic has far too often constituted himself the arbiter of faith and claimed a peculiar ability to deal out to the modern world what it may believe and what it may not. This is, however, wholly unjustifiable." These words find an echo in the summing-up at the end of the appendix on documentary evidence. "There are no 'assured results,' nor indeed can there

be. The evidence is far too slender." These avowedly Christian authors thus have to admit complete *agnosticism* concerning the origins and fundamentals of their religion!

S. W. BROOKS.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

The argument which P. G. Roy (June 19th, 1959) uses to maintain his disagreement with Mr. F. A. Ridley on the Marwood case is entirely authoritarian, and as far as I can see has nothing to do with rationalism or free thinking. If it is not so, then striving for a more rational society, for a relatively free society is senseless, and Mr. Roy can justify willy-nilly the attitude adopted by the Catholic Church, by Fascism, by Nazism, or even Communism in their persecution of free thought or rationalism.

What is the position of freethinkers or rationalists if they lack a humanistic approach to the problems of society, and base their thought on logic such as that of Lenin as quoted by Mr. Roy, namely: "If in a group of twelve one of them must be a traitor, it is better to shoot all the twelve comrades rather than to endanger the party"? By the irony of history, the minority (including freethinkers and rationalists, even if by accident) is always a traitor in relation to conventionalism, and to State and Church obscurantism. So shoot them down to save the State and the Church. In other words, shoot down in the name of the party everyone who disagrees with me, because my name is Lenin, Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, or a vicar of Christ, and I am the supreme judge.

Surely rationalists and freethinkers have a different background, different aims and different ethical standards from this. If it is not so, then so much the worse for us all.

J. GRANCHAROFF (Australia)

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