

The Freethinker

Volume LXXX—No. 2

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

THE NATIONAL SECRETARIAT of Information of Portugal publishes a 66 page booklet on this subject compiled by Canon Eurico Nogueira, of which I have the English version before me as I write. The information in it is, then, official and Catholic.

In 1143 the kingdom of Portugal was recognised as independent by the Pope, in return for which the new kingdom was to pay an annual tribute to the Vatican. For

five centuries this relation was maintained. In 1640 Philip IV of Spain, who ruled Portugal as a separate kingdom from Spain, was expelled and John of Braganza became King. For the 30 years following, the link with the Vatican was broken; moreover in 1663

Protestant England became the ally of Portugal when Charles II married Catherine of Braganza, with a dowry of half a million pounds and the ports of Bombay and Tangier. Spain consented, after a series of defeats, to accept the complete independence of Portugal and to recognise the Braganza dynasty. At the same time relations with the Vatican were renewed, though modified by the influence of England and by the latent hostility of Spain. King John V (1706-1750) was, however, a bigoted Catholic, who lent vast sums to the Vatican and joined a crusade instigated by Pope Clement XI against the Turks, for which he received the title of Fidelissimus; though it may be noted that even the Most Faithful King broke off relations with the Vatican for four years (1728-32). On his death his successor, Joseph, appointed as Secretary of State the (later) Marquis of Pombal, a man of foresight, courage and wisdom, who endeavoured to make his country independent economically and spiritually. In the first he fell foul of the Jesuits, particularly in Brazil; in the second, of the Vatican. He expelled the Jesuits in 1759 and the Apostolic Legate in 1760, and it was not until Pope Clement XIV condemned the Jesuits that the Papal Nuncio was readmitted to Lisbon in July 1773. However, King Joseph's daughter and successor, Maria, who later became a religious maniac, dismissed Pombal, and the Vatican resumed its sway in Portugal.

Hostility

The chaos of the Napoleonic wars was followed by a strong democratic movement, which might have succeeded but for the British; as a result the country was torn by confused internecine fighting until 1834. Then, save for a month of conflict with a British-Spanish combination in 1847, Portugal enjoyed relative peace for nearly 80 years. In 1834 the Apostolic Nunciature was once again expelled and not received back until 1842, and the Church did not regain its former powers. As Canon Nogueira writes: "Catholicism was considered to be the official religion of the kingdom and was thus guaranteed a certain protection embodied in the laws of the State . . . but these laws were often imbued with a royalist spirit which deprived the Church of real internal independence. And, if the laws were not always acceptable from a Catholic point of view,

practice aggravated the situation. The Church was often persecuted and publicly abused . . . The literature and politics of the XIXth century had created an environment of hostility to traditional beliefs that fought violently against any attempt at religious expansion, so that the religious situation of the country was not very flourishing . . ."

In 1908 King Carlos and his heir were assassinated, to be succeeded by King Manoel. Two years later the murder of the distinguished republican, Dr. Bombarda, precipitated a revolution which drove out King Manoel and established a republic under the presidency of Dr. Theophilo Braga, which was strongly anti-clerical. It early put into force de Pombal's decree of expulsion of the

Jesuits, and annulled later decrees contrary to this. Not only were the Jesuits forthwith banished from the country, but members of other religious brotherhoods were obliged to live a secular life, abandoning their religious communities. The property of such bodies was inventoried and declared to belong to the State.

Separation

The religious oath was abolished; then religious instruction in the schools; the faculty of theology in the University of Coimbra was suppressed, and the chair of Canon Law was done away with. Divorce became legal; and also civil marriage. Then civil registration of all births, christenings, marriages and deaths became obligatory. Finally, on April 20th, 1911, was enacted the Law of the Separation of the Church and the State. Henceforth Catholicism ceased to be a State religion; public worship was permitted only inside churches (worship included religious teaching). All ecclesiastical property became the property of the State, and all costs of religious worship were to be deleted from the public budget. A special bureau was instituted to deal with all religious problems. Pope Pius X condemned all these acts in an encyclical the following May.

Rebellion

Thus encouraged by the Vatican, the monarchists and clericals made repeated efforts to organise rebellion, taking full advantage of the world war conditions of 1914-1918. In December, 1917, a successful revolution was raised by Sidonio Pais, who, however, was shot the following December. This was followed by a series of short-lived governments and a crop of assassinations. The elections of November 1925 gave a clear majority to the Democrats and a hope of a settled government. This was not to be. A military coup the following year threw the country once more into turmoil, out of which General Carmona rose to be president and foreign minister.

As Canon Nogueira has it: "When the revolution of May 28th, 1926, triumphed and removed political parties from the government, the beginning of an understanding between the spiritual and temporal powers could be already discerned." One of the first acts of the new government was to recognise "the juridical status of the Church and her corporations." Nevertheless the State maintained the

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

Church and State in Portugal

—By C. BRADLAUGH BONNER—

regime of separation from the Catholic Church and any other religion; yet preserved diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Portugal. Religious teaching was once more permitted, and crucifixes were erected in primary schools in 1936, and in the syllabus, the teaching of Catholic morality was included. Moreover, all anti-clerical societies were suppressed, in particular the Masonic Lodges.

Concordat

These acts led up to a Concordat with the Vatican in 1940. By this the Church is assured "the free exercise of her authority and the right of organising herself freely in accordance with the norms of Canon Law"; she may possess property, receive offerings, and she has had restored to her much that had been confiscated in 1911. Churches are exempt from taxation. The Church may establish private schools parallel to those of the State; in these latter, the Catholic religion is to be taught, and all teaching is to be "guided by the principles of Christian doctrine and morality which are traditional to the country." The divorce laws were not repealed, but the civil courts were declared incompetent to decree a divorce in Catholic marriages.

It might be imagined that the almost complete reversal of the policy of the liberal governments of 20-30 years before would have satisfied the Church. Yet, "The Concordat did not create a favourable situation for the Church," declares Canon Nogueira. However, the Cardinal-Patriarch of Lisbon was able to say "With the Concordat Portugal found herself."

The present population of Portugal in Europe is about nine millions, of whom 95 per cent. are nominally Roman Catholics; consequence of the dictatorship of Carmona and Salazar. Not for 200 years has the Church held such power in Portugal.

Fatima

The above brief survey may indicate the place occupied by Fatima. You will remember that in July, 1917 — that is about the time the reactionary elements were organising the revolt which took place the following December — it was announced far and wide that the Blessed Virgin Mary was to appear for the third time to three peasant children, of whom two were under ten years of age (these, brother and sister, were to die within three years) and the eldest was ten. A crowd assembles (query; a rallying place) on the day announced. Only Lucia, the ten-year-old, sees the vision and speaks with it. Two months later, a bigger crowd, some of whom are in a very excited state, assembles and is very impressed by a variation in the sunlight. Lucia announces that the following months, on the 13th October, the Virgin will appear, accompanied by St. Joseph and the Child Jesus. And on that date a more numerous and more excited crowd than before comes to the Cova, the hollow field belonging to Lucia's father, where the "visions" occur under an evergreen oak. Among other declarations made by the Holy Virgin to Lucia on October 13th was that the war had ended on that very day. Our Lady was only 13 months premature; but it was a good bit of news that everyone wanted to hear, especially as she added that the soldiers could now be expected home.

Fatima, in fact, has been a tremendous commercial success, a remarkable religious success, and a very skilful political manoeuvre.

Lucia, the main — no, the sole — instrument, entered a house of the Dorothea Sisters when she was 14; taking perpetual vows when she attained the age of 21. In December, 1941, for the 25th anniversary of the visions, which was to be officially celebrated the following summer, she sent 60 pages of typed matter to Bishop da Silva, ending: "I think I have written, Monseigneur, all that your most Reverend Excellency ordered me to write."

Whose was the hand which engineered this highly remunerative manipulation of human credulity? Was it His Most Reverend Excellency the Bishop, who did not, however become Bishop till 1920? Was it Professor Canon Formigao?

It matters little now. What matters is the future. Under the apparently calm surface created by Prime Minister Salazar, there is movement.

The Catholic Gods of Haiti

The Living Gods of Haiti, by Maya Deren.
Thames & Hudson (1953).

ALTHOUGH GAZETTEERS usually describe the religious beliefs of some six million inhabitants of the island of Haiti as Roman Catholic, this is only partly true. Whilst the Dominican Republic, which occupies the Eastern side of the island is undoubtedly Catholic, the Republic of Haiti, occupying a somewhat smaller area to the West, cannot be classified so easily. The Church is indeed a power in this tiny West Indian Republic, supported as it is by the upper and middle classes, who comprise the Haitian ruling class; but it is the religion of the majority — the lower class mainly of Negro descent — that is so interesting to the student of comparative religion. It is a mixture of Roman Catholicism and Voodoo (or Voudoun).

Voodoo is primarily African in origin; there are two distinct schools, the benevolent (Rada) and the malevolent (Petro). The ceremonies are intensely emotional and the priesthood functions on similar lines to the Spiritist medium of the West. The spirits (or Loa) are invoked by the priest (in trance) and messages and advice are passed on from departed relatives. As might be expected, the Church does not take things lying down, and efforts are made from time to time to stamp out this 20th century heresy, but without much success to date.

In the first place, it is the Rada schools which are dispersed most easily, leaving the more dangerous Petro rites to flourish underground. The Petro deals mainly in black magic, which can be dangerous to an ignorant people. Another difficulty facing the "True Church" is the remarkable way in which so much of its own religion has been absorbed by the devotees of Voodoo. The native priest (or Serviteur) is equally at home with the Roman Catholic liturgy, which he can gabble by the yard; all Voodoo services start with prayers to the Christian gods (just to be on the safe side) and many of the Christian saints have been adopted into the Voodoo Pantheon. Roman Catholic holy pictures, statues and crucifixes thus decorate the voodoo altar in company with local deities. St. Patrick, casting out serpents, becomes Damballa, the serpent god; a picture of Lazarus in old age becomes Old Legba, the guardian of the Crossroads (the Crucifix); St. Ulrique, who is depicted holding a fish, becomes Agwe, the god of the waters; and St. Isidore, kneeling in the fields, becomes Azacca the god of agriculture. Nothing could please the serviteur more than the cheap and gaudy art so dear to the Roman Catholic soul, which is accepted gratefully as cheap and colourful reproductions of the local divinities.

Against the native priest, who insists that he believes in the trinity, baptises his children (and his drums!), places the saints upon his private altar, and is lavish in his use of the sign of the cross(roads), the Church is, in a sense, helpless; unable to convert the already converted. It seems ironic that the ignorant Haitian of today is so successfully using the same methods used by Christianity against Paganism so many centuries ago. The one characteristic of Catholicism which has not been taken over, however, is its intolerance. Here perhaps shines a ray of hope.

We've Got to Fight!

By P. G. ROY

OZING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, benevolence and tolerance from every pore, Mr. G. I. Bennett (THE FREETHINKER, No.48) considers that in their proselytising efforts, theists and atheists differ only insofar as the latter become mellow and "less clamant" with growing age, whilst the religionists remain militant and unrelenting. A poor testimonial, indeed!

As I see it — and I have passed the three-score mark in age — the difference is that the theist goes out proselytising for the glory of his particular god and to save souls," whereas the atheist does it in order to reduce the foundation of religious oppression and arrogance. For us it is a matter of life and death.

Backed by the State of property-owners, the Churches claim our children for early indoctrination; we are allowed to contribute to the maintenance of schools and a mighty "opinion machinery"; we pay for Press, radio and television, but the main profit of it all goes to organised religion. Infamous blasphemy laws are still kept on the statute book; if for some decades they have not been used in this country, this is in itself no safeguard that they never will. On the other hand, can we sue for libel if some senile cleric asserts that all atheists are morally depraved, that violence and criminality are the outcome of loss of faith and that nothing offending fundamentalism ought to be allowed to be published?

Are we not, theists and atheists alike, irritated by medieval and puerile Sunday laws, despite the fact that nowhere in Scripture is there a single line which could be taken to mean that the Sunday is to be kept tabu and sacrosanct?

Why can this tyranny still be maintained? Is it that England is still a fundamentally Christian country; that the believers are in the majority? Not even the Churches pretend that. It is simply because the small band of fundamentalists are well-organised in pressure-groups, who raise an outcry when something does not conform to their order. Whilst we are too lazy, apathetic and restrained to do anything of that sort in order to protest against the preposterous dictates of their religion, they immediately threaten with withdrawal of advertisements and votes, with boycott of papers, books or films when anybody dares to step out of line.

In the face of this tyranny, our well-mannered gentlemen proudly admit that there are *some* religionists doing good and that many of them are utterly happy. Opium-smoking, too, is a source of utter bliss and happiness; but is it healthy and in the interest of the smoker, let alone society as a whole?

I for one mistrust any one who thinks himself responsible not to men but to an ultra-mundane being whose ethical standards can be changed at will and as circumstances require. There is only *one* single sect amongst Christians that is different: the Quakers, who consider it their religious duty to do good and to help other human beings. When people had to be saved from Fascist persecution, it was the Quakers who, without propaganda and self-righteousness, took care of those who had no other organisation to back them up. *Inter alia*, they helped the declared atheists without expecting their conversion. This is true humanism and deserves of admiration. Organised religion, on the other hand, does good only when and where there is profit and reward, though not necessarily material reward.

Let me quote a personal experience. One day I decided that my many articles could be collected and published as a book. I thereupon contacted over 40 publishers both in

this country and in the U.S.A. The majority did not even bother to answer, so scared were they of the idea of attacking the sacred cows! We have, it is true, the Rationalist Press Association (and I occasionally also contribute to *The Humanist*) but it caters for a restricted circle and quite a few of its members share Mr. Bennett's "moderate temperament" and think that "we should not be too pugnacious, too self-assertive." However, our opponents are, so why should any publisher dare the religious pressure gangs and ask for trouble?

Mr. Bennett hopes that "perhaps in time a new generation will arise that does not desire the age-old consolations of faith." Pious hope! And why should they? They get their indoctrination from the cradle to the grave, and they get, in between, their dose of escapism in thrillers, crime ration, tin-pan alley and Americanised tribal dances.

If I say what is wanted is more militancy, I mean not debating bouts, but action. It's no use debating with fundamentalists, because we and they talk different languages. As a dialectical materialist I know that arguments mean different things to different people, and that it is their social existence, their *material* being which moulds their mind and outlook. That also explains why otherwise intelligent people, scared of a social upheaval that might take away their prerogatives in the future, seek shelter in the folds of the Great Reaction of the Roman Church — even today, in the age of sputniks and luniks. But it is quite another thing to talk to waverers — those whose minds have already started ticking; who have doubts, and want help to decide which road to take.

We must be militant and active, to shake and awaken the apathetic mass, the waverers. In this respect we can learn from the Religious Commandos and even the Lord's Day Observance Society: we must forcefully react when they slander our cause. We must make ourselves heard and clamour even louder still. I am a great believer in a Turkish proverb which, freely translated, would run: "It is but the crying child that's got to be appeased." Those remaining apathetic, lazy or too well-behaved, enable the Christians to assert that they make their claims in the name of millions, including you and me.

Unless we are "pugnacious and self-assertive," prepared to make a nuisance of ourselves in pressing our claims, we deserve to be considered second-class citizens.

SPECIAL FRÉJUS FUND

The French National Federation of Freethinkers has established a special fund for Freethinkers who have suffered in the Fréjus disaster, and has opened it with a donation of 50,000 francs. The British Section of the World Union of Freethinkers has also given £10, and is appealing for further donations. Readers who would like to contribute may do so direct to the Treasurer of the Fund, M. Tomasi, 67 bis, Route de Brie, Brunoy, S. & O., France, stating that the money is for the Fréjus disaster and making cheques payable to the account: CCP Fédération Nationale de Libre Penseurs, Compte No. 12 449 59.

—NEXT WEEK—

JOHN OSBORNE'S TV PLAY

By H. CUTNER

This Believing World

What a pity that "Beachcomer" of the *Daily Express* does not stick to his humorous comments on the foibles of the world around him and leave theology alone. He is a Roman Catholic, and as such, tried to criticise in his journal "People who moan 'Why cling to Christmas?'" — a criticism quite in order but he would drag in theology . . . a subject about which he appears to know very little. He says: "The great Christmas story began in the stable in Bethlehem." But surely as a Roman Catholic, he must know that it began many years before that? It began with the "Immaculate Conception" of Mary — otherwise, God Almighty could not have been born of a sinless "Virgin" whether in a "house" according to Matthew, or in a "manger" according to Luke.

★

Beachcomer adds that "the Christmas story has survived the attacks of its enemies, the sophistries of embittered critics, the mockery of the uninstructed, the doubts of the lukewarm and the unhappy." He is, of course, right — it has survived, but in what form? Do people — even Beachcomer — really believe the story of Christianity as heartily as their ancestors did? Is it not a fact that nobody, not even the best teachers in the Roman Church, has been able to reconcile the absurd and conflicting statements about the "birth" of God Almighty as a Babe, with which the Gospel story is littered?

★

Needless to add, Beachcomer is quite certain that "the message of the Christian religion" is intended for "all time, for all the days to the end of the world." What he really means is the message of Roman Catholicism — certainly not the message of the Christian religion as envisaged by, say, Jehovah's Witnesses, which is just as "true" as Romanism. He is also quite certain that at last people are "returning" to "the Manger in a stable, to a Cross upon a hill, and to an empty Tomb," all of which "is tidings of comfort and joy." We suspect that this time next year he won't be quite so sure.

★

Another gentleman, Mr. L. Easterbrook of *News Chronicle*, is just as certain about the reality of "miracles" as Beachcomer is about the Babe of Bethlehem. In his journal, he told his reader "of three off-hand." He began by expressing his opinion that "it was a trifle odd" that "science and faith should be regarded as inveterate enemies." Well, are they not? Is there any scientist in the world who can "prove" the Virgin Birth, or the Resurrection, by *Science*? Do not these stories belong to the "fairy mythology" of the world?

★

Mr. Easterbrook's three "miracles," which he "encountered at first hand," are "instances of people who have removed themselves from one place to another in less time than is physically possible. At one time they were in one spot, a moment later they were in another, and in every case they had no knowledge of what happened in between." Miracles of much the same kind with just as reliable evidence abound not only in Christian history but in the mythology of Spiritualism. Not being able to produce any evidence for his miracles, Mr. Easterbrook indulges in a slashing attack on Science, ending up with "second-rate scientists are as out of date as second-rate bishops" — which is about as wonderful as saying second-rate algebra problems are as much out of date as second-rate mince-pies. Still, anything goes at Christmas time.

According to Mr. Christopher Hollis, writing recently in the *Sunday Express*, "the arguments for and against survival are fairly evenly balanced." As a good Roman Catholic, he points out that Christianity "gives an assurance of survival," in which he is perfectly right. The only snag is that Christianity does not produce a particle of evidence. Mr. Hollis himself has to repeat more than once "if the Christian revelation can be accepted," but the real difficulty is that it is not accepted except by "believers." That is, you must first accept it, and then you can believe — as he does. As he so eloquently puts it, "if we can accept the Christian faith we have assurance." It is as if we said, "If you can accept the *Arabian Nights*, then the story of Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp is true."

From Portugal

A *Fado* IS A PORTUGUESE POPULAR SONG, the theme of which is usually love. The following two, though forbidden, are very much sung.

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Of the loves of the Redeemer, Sacred History is strangely silent, but there is a charming legend which shows that the Good Jesus suffered, as do must humans, from the pains of love.

Chorus: One sweltering afternoon, Jesus went to the Well of Jacob to quench his thirst; there he met a Samaritan woman, a native of Sicar. She smiled so invitingly at him that Jesus took her in his arms and passionately kissed her on the lips. She paled but Jesus blushed when he saw love irradiating from her black eyes. She sweetly murmured in his ear: "Oh Good Jesus, what good chance brought me to the well this afternoon!"

TALE OF A NUN

Here in her convent cell, where as a young girl she entered with never a sigh never a tear, she now lies dead on her pallet of straw. Amongst so many nuns she was the loveliest of all. Because of her life of chastity and her purity of thought, the community considered her a saint. They now said among themselves: "God to whom she so often prayed was her only love and now he has taken his bride to Himself!" The Abbess entered and said: "Put this medal back on her breast as she loved to kiss the image of Christ on it." The nun who took the medal gazed at it in horror and exclaimed, "Good heavens, this is not the image of Christ, it is the image of the man she loved here on earth!"

N. F.

[The above is interesting, we think, in the light of Mr. Bonner's front page article.—Ed.]

"SUNDAY POST" SYMPOSIUM

THE SCOTTISH *Sunday Post* asked its readers to write on the subject of life after death and on November 29th, 1959 printed a selection from believers, announcing at the same time that next week would present the views of the doubters and unbelievers. On December 6th, sure enough, these did appear, but they had been taken "to an expert on Christian theology" who gave "the Church of Scotland's answer to their doubts." So, "the turn of the unbelievers and doubters" became "The Church's Answer to the Doubters". Even so some good points were made, and we noticed FREETHINKER reader Mr. S. C. Merrifield's, "Spirits and souls miraculously divorced from corresponding brains are unthinkable" he said. And Mr. James Nimmo of Cambridge remarked that "The general behaviour of men suggests that in their hearts they doubt the Christian philosophy, more especially that part appertaining to the after life." The "expert on Christian theology" made no comment on these two points.

THE FREETHINKER

41 GRAY'S INN ROAD, LONDON, W.C.1.
TELEPHONE: HOLBORN 2601.

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: One year, £1 15s.; half-year, 17s. 6d.; three months, 8s. 9d. (In U.S.A. and Canada: One year, \$5.00; half-year, \$2.50; three months, \$1.25.)

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. Inquiries regarding Secular Funeral Services should also be made to the General Secretary, N.S.S.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

- Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN and MURRAY.
London (Tower Hill).—Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: Messrs. I. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.
Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, CORSAIR, SMITH, etc. Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS, SMITH, etc.
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.
West London Branch N.S.S. (Marble Arch).—Meetings every Sunday, from 4 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD and D. TRIBE.

INDOOR

- Central London Branch N.S.S. ("The City of Hereford" Blandford Place, W.1.) Sunday, January 10th, 7.15 p.m.: AVRO MANHATTAN, "Astrology."
Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) Tuesday, January 12th, 7.15 p.m.: V. G. SALDJI, "Over Population and Poverty."
Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate,) Sunday, January 10th, 6.30 p.m.: Dr. J. R. S. FINCHAM, "Genetics and Human Affairs."
Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Education Centre, Broad Street,) Sunday, January 10th, 2.30 p.m.: A MEETING.
Orpington Humanist Group (Sherry's Restaurant) Sunday, January 10th, 5.30 p.m.: BASIL BONNER, "Abortion Law Reform."
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.) Sunday, January 10th, 11 a.m.: Rev R. W. SORENSEN, M.P., "The Old Religions in a New Era."

Notes and News

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH of the National Secular Society has recently had its lectures noted in the civic publication, "What's On in Birmingham." But, when Secretary Mr. W. Morris supplied details of the December 20th meeting to the Information Department, he was told it couldn't be inserted because "it might cause bad feeling." The title of the lecture was "The Christmas Myth," and the speaker, Mr. A. R. Williams of Worcester.

MR. JOHN A. WILSON of Philadelphia, U.S.A., sends us a cutting from the correspondence column of the Philadelphia *Bulletin* (23/12/59) which, he says, he is going "to try to believe is merely a subtle satirisation" so that he may "avoid having screaming Orwellian nightmares." For, believe it or not, a Philadelphia "Citizen" (that is how the correspondent signs himself) maintains that the *Bulletin* should have "supported a law requiring that ten verses of the Bible be read aloud daily in every home"; that families should "be required to sign an affidavit that no member of the family including the children [our italics] is a mem-

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged £5 1s. 3d.; Mrs. M. Quinton, £1 1s.: E.C.R., 2s. 6d.: K. Graham, 5s.: A. Addison, £1: C. Holmes, £1: R. Hartley, £1 1s.: R. V. Ross, (U.S.A.) £3 9s. 4d.: R. H. Scott, (U.S.A.) £5 5s.: R. Reader, 2s. 6d.: A. L. Schué, 10s. Total to date January 4th, 1960, £18 17s. 7d.

ber of the Communist Party or any other subversive organisation" and that the names of all dissenters should "be prominently placarded on their doorways or advertised regularly in the *Bulletin*."

★

"WE ARE SOMETIMES ASKED why we make such great sacrifices at such enormous expense to provide Catholic schools when Government schools are available," said the Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth, Mgr. Cyril Restieaux (*Western Evening Herald*, 11/12/59). And he explained that it was because "we feel sincerely and keenly the utmost importance for the children or Catholic parents to be trained and educated in Catholic schools . . . when in many schools all over the country all thought of God is put in the background . . ." When it appears in THE FREETHINKER very shortly we will send the Bishop a copy of Professor Lucia de Brouckère's Brussels address which urges that God should be dismissed from the schools for the children's sake. In Belgium, too, as Professor de Brouckère reminds us, there is a struggle for the schools. And, since she delivered her address at Brussels, the de Gaullist government in France has made concessions to the Church on this vital issue.

★

BETTER NEWS FROM FRANCE was that M. Jean Rostand, a member of the Committee of Honour of the World Union of Freethinkers had been elected a member of the French Academy. M. Rostand, son of the great dramatist Edmond Rostand (*Cyrano de Bergerac*, etc.) and the distinguished poetess, Rosemonde Gérard, has distinguished himself as a scientist and a writer. And his speech of tribute to his predecessor, Edouard Herriot, sparked off the latest argument about that alleged death-bed confession.

★

East Grinstead Observer (27/11/59) carried a good report of a speech by National Secular Society member, Councillor W. V. Wray, to the local Discussion Group. Criticising the BBC, Mr. Wray said that it "directed the preponderant weight of its programmes towards Christian propaganda, from full-scale church services right down to interviews by Wilfred Pickles." Should a nonconformist note be introduced into a discussion, he went on, "it was invariably drowned in a chorus of orthodoxy." There ought to be impartiality to all forms of belief and unbelief, and religion ought to be treated as objectively as any other controversial subject. Opposing, Mr. F. C. C. Wood, "said uncomprisingly that in his opinion no time at all should be permitted by the BBC for unorthodox views."

★

A NUMBER OF READERS said they agreed with Mr. Colin McCall's "Merry Christmas" article. It had one strong critic, however: Mr. J. W. T. Anderson of Cardiff, who thought there was "no hope for real freethought, now or in the future" as long as such people continue "to support 'the Christmas spirit'." Though neither a vegetarian nor a teetotaler, Mr. Anderson "nevertheless had bread, cheese, onions and cold water for every meal on so-called Christmas Day," leaving the turkeys, port, plum pudding "and all the rest of the rubbish . . . to be consumed by Christian gluttons and their freethought followers." Well, we hope he enjoyed his Christmas dinner as much as we did ours!

The Need for Independent Thinking

By Dr. RONALD FLETCHER
(Concluded from page 2)

(2) *The Application of Science to the Study of Man and Society.*

We are all aware that the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries have seen the extension of scientific method into the study of Man and Society. I, personally, and I imagine all rationalists, will favour this development, and—although these sciences are young and it would be silly to claim too much for them—I believe that they have already radically transformed our knowledge of human nature, and have established far more than their (usually ill-informed) opponents even begin to realise. Even so, we must, again, be on our guard against certain dangers.

The first of these is the all-pervading problem of specialisation. In psychology, for example, it is necessary to conduct specialised research to establish testable knowledge about specific questions. No one would wish to quarrel with this—but we should exercise continual care in realising the limitations of these bits of highly specialised knowledge for building up a reliable body of knowledge of human experience and behaviour as a whole. There is a danger that the ardent pursuit of these bits of testable knowledge may lead us to lose sight of the whole man; to lose a realistic awareness of the complexity, the subtlety, the richness of the actual human situation, and may lead us to accept far too naive “explanations” of all this complex experience. Salivation in dogs, the eye-blink and knee-jerk in man, may be explained in terms of reflexes; but to explain the composition and appreciation of Bach’s “Mass in B Minor”, the Evacuation of Dunkirk, and the rise to power of Bismarck, in terms of chain-reflexes is going a little too far.

A further danger is that psychologists and social scientists—like the physical scientists—may come to have an unwarranted degree of authority in what they have to say about human affairs, when their actual range of experience of these affairs may be considerably narrower than that of the man in the street. If a psychologist has spent five years studying the behaviour of rats in a maze—he is likely to have far *less* knowledge of the problems confronting his society than local government officers, business executives, or even newspaper sellers. There is no reason to suppose that his judgment on these matters will be superior. Science was applied to the study of man to establish a body of knowledge which could serve as a reliable basis for the improvement of human life, but—though this may be something of an exaggeration—the tables are now in danger of being turned, and the concern of many psychologists and social scientists seems to be with being “scientific” as an end in itself rather than with the establishment of knowledge for the resolution of human problems. Another danger attendant upon this narrow “scientific” tendency is that it involves a strong inclination to confine attention to *quantitative* questions, and to ignore *qualitative* matters which cannot be tested with scientific rigour. In so doing, sources of value other than the strictly scientific may be sadly ignored. To give a brief example—it seems to me unquestionable that many works of literature are invaluable in providing insight into and knowledge of various aspects of the human situation; and it is sometimes forgotten that many of the great novelists conceived themselves (more or less) as sociologists. Thus, Tolstoy’s “War and Peace” is a conscientiously undertaken piece of sociological analysis, exploring the

question as to whether the leaders of human affairs determine the direction of these affairs or whether they are, in fact, determined by aggregate social forces which no one clearly understands and which positively force decisions of certain kinds upon the leaders. Similarly, Balzac, in undertaking his series of novels about French Society, explicitly conceives himself as a student of society, attempting a full descriptive analysis of the various aspects of the civilisation of his day. Many other examples could be given—the work of Tolstoy, Tchekov, Gorki for an understanding of Russian society before the revolution is another instance—and, if it is not too much of a confession, I must say that I still gain far more knowledge and insight into human affairs by reading literature of this kind than by reading a considerable proportion of the scientific monographs of the present day.

There are two further points I would like simply to mention. Firstly, in the modern “Welfare State”, whether of a liberal or a totalitarian kind, there is a danger that practitioners of social work will enjoy a new degree of power in interfering with the lives and values of their fellows on the basis of a claim to expertise which, as yet, is simply not there. All the “adjusting” of “maladjusted” personalities which is becoming the stock-in-trade of social work must be suspect in the present state of our knowledge. And I need not emphasise the fact that this is one aspect only of the great pressures towards conformity in modern society. The tendency to equate “personality types” with “patterns of culture”; to claim that the “normal” individual must be “in harmony with”, or “adjusted to”, the community; these and similar ideas cover facile assumptions which need much critical consideration, and can easily lead to the conclusion that the individual who is different from the rest is mentally ill (abnormal) and needs to be cured. This emphasis upon conformity leads me to my final point which is that our new knowledge of mental processes, coupled with the easily centralised means of mass-communications in modern society, presents us with a new and tremendous potentiality of power over the minds of men. We are all too well aware of the present utilisation of propaganda for it to be necessary to expand this point, and the dangers—though in a rather gloomy and fantastic form—have been forcefully presented in books such as Orwell’s *1984* and Huxley’s *Brave New World Re-Visited*.

The development of the human sciences, then, is not without its social dangers, and this leads me to my third section:—

(3) *The Dangers of Totalitarianism.*

This question has been much discussed, and we know that, in the context of large-scale social organisation, and with the modern network of mass-communications, it is possible for a single political party to gain an almost total control over every aspect of social life. There is one central point which I want to stress here. In the past, secular thinkers have had to oppose the totalitarian power of religions which rested upon claims of revealed truth, the authority of supernatural beings, and the like. In the modern age we are confronted with *new* totalitarian religions which differ from the old in that they are *secular* (although they employ the word “sacred” with astonishing frequency) and their authority rests upon their claim to be *scientific*. Their ideologies hold the key to the correct

interpretation of history and human destiny, to the correct clarification of the historical task of whatever people they govern, and—with religious zeal—they bend the wills of decadent, weak, unhealthy individual dissenters to conformity with their scientifically validated social and political policies. In a word, those who believe in the value of individuality and independent thought, have now to struggle against pseudo-secular and pseudo-scientific movements which are, in fact, old type, retrogressive religious enemies decked out in twentieth century dress. Humanist thinkers have therefore to undertake a much more subtle assessment of the several movements of power in the modern world than was necessary in the past.

Having paraded these features of the modern scientific world which are problematic and demonstrate the urgent need for independent thought at the present juncture in human affairs—what can be said, briefly, about the ways in which these problems might be met?

I have time to say two things only. The first is that we must struggle during the next few decades to retain democratic institutions where they exist, and to bring them into being where they do not. There can be no effective freedom of thought excepting in the context of constitutionally guarded free institutions. To achieve the continuation and the extension of effective democracy in the modern world of large-scale organisation and the detailed structures of power to which this gives rise, is going to require all our wit, wisdom, and effort. But institutions do not function of their own accord. They require individual citizens who are convinced of their value, and who possess the will, the desire, the character and the information to make them work. And this is my second point—that our great hope, ultimately, must still be placed in education; in the achievement and maintenance of an education which is as broadly based and as free from the intervention of the contending factions of the state as is possible. It is sometimes said, nowadays, that education has failed; that if you educate an evil individual he is only the more effective in his evil. But this is conceiving education too narrowly, indeed, falsely. It would be better said—if you stuff an evil man with information, he will be better able to employ his evil to his own advantage. But education is not a matter of stuffing minds with information. It provides, too, the basis for the development of qualities of character, and if this cannot be achieved by education—in the fullest sense—through the child's experience in the family, in schools and colleges, and in participation in other institutions, then there is, indeed, no alternative. I believe powerfully that improved education can bring about—not by any means a perfect—but a better and happier world; a world in which justice, kindness, and tolerance can be to an extensive degree established. And that *everyone* still believes, in fact, in the crucial importance of education is demonstrated by the way in which all social movements which wish to bind to themselves the minds of the young seize upon education and control it towards their own ends. No one demonstrates the power of free education more effectively than its opponents.

We must persist, then, in our faith in education. And we must persist in our efforts—in whatever spheres we have influence—to liberate education from those power-loving movements which would like to fasten themselves upon it. In this, needless to say, we shall be continuing the work of Ferrer, and it is because we are conscious of this fact that, at this time, we remember with gratitude and admiration this man who—with initiative, with gentleness, with patience and fortitude, and at the greatest possible personal sacrifice—effectively pioneered this way.

The Devils of Loudon

By F. A. RIDLEY

(Concluded from page 6)

WHERE THERE IS SORCERY, there must also be a sorcerer. That was the logic of diabolical manifestations. *Someone* must have started the devils on the infernal trail which led finally to the devil-haunted Convent of the Ursulines. That "someone" was soon found; it was Grandier, the scandalous priest whose amours were the talk of the town. It is not clear whether it was the "possessed" and would-be mistress of the priest, Jeanne "of the Angels" (or rather by this time, devils) who first mentioned his name in the course of one of her diabolical outbursts, or whether it was due to the auto-suggestion of the exorcists. Grandier had made many enemies in Loudon, both by his amours and his arrogance, and the strict Church of the Counter-Reformation, by this time, probably wanted to get rid of the lecherous rector whose conduct was becoming a liability to it, particularly in a half-Protestant town like Loudon.

The Edict of Nantes, which guaranteed religious toleration to the Protestant minority, was still in force. The upshot was, that Urbain Grandier was arrested and charged with sorcery, a capital crime punishable by death at the stake after a preliminary examination characterised by the most grotesque and horrible tortures. However, even legally, Grandier was bound to be acquitted, since the only "evidence" against him was that of the devils themselves, speaking of course, through the mouths of the possessed nuns; otherwise there was no possession and the whole charge of sorcery must have collapsed. Now the testimony of demons was not admissible in any Christian law court, since by definition the Devil is the Father of Lies and, as such, cannot ever be trusted to speak the truth. (The theological authorities, including St. Thomas Aquinas himself, were unanimous on this crucial point.) Outside ecclesiastical circles, the educated public of the day seem to have regarded Grandier as innocent, as is now generally admitted by modern Catholic writers on this subject.

Hence, legally, there was and could be no valid case against Urbain Grandier despite his known moral irregularities. (His *Treatise on Celibacy*, admitting and justifying his sexual orgies was in the hands of the prosecution.) However, in 17th century France, even Thomas Aquinas did not always have the last word. This belonged to the King, or in this case, to his all-powerful Minister, Cardinal Richelieu, then King in all but name. Now Richelieu, for some reason which does not emerge at all clearly from Mr. Huxley's narrative, supported the prosecution throughout, and actually permitted it to discard all the recognised authorities on the availability of diabolical evidence on a trial for sorcery. If, as Huxley suggests, Grandier had long previously insulted Richelieu, the all-powerful Cardinal had surely plenty of legal ways of getting his own back without resorting to the help of devils. It appears to be very unlikely that the Macchiavellian French dictator really believed that Grandier was responsible. Anyway, Grandier was convicted of bringing up a whole battalion of devils from Hell in order to corrupt the nuns and town of Loudon; as a convicted sorcerer (convicted solely on the testimony of his own devils), he died at the stake after enduring the most frightful tortures.

The final macabre scene is depicted by our author with grim intensity. It was unutterably horrible, and certainly these Christian "smellers-out" of devils did their best to imitate the devils they sought. Though, as the French historian Michelet has commented on the affair of Loudon, while Urbain Grandier certainly did not deserve to be burned alive, he was not any particular ornament of Chris-

tian, or any other virtue. His horrible end did not, however, put an end to the diabolical invasion of Loudon. The demons, Behemoth, Beelzebub, Leviathan and the picturesquely-named Dog's Tail, hung on grimly to their strategic base under the ribs, intestines and other unmentionable parts of the possessed nuns, and the last one (Behemoth) did not finally go back to Hell until 1638 — four years after Grandier, who had allegedly invited him, had passed from the fires of Loudon to the fires of Hell.

During this whole period, the exorcisms continued with their now familiar quorum of outcries and obscenities, and visitors (including a future Prime Minister of Scotland) came even from Protestant countries to see and to be duly edified by the non-stop struggle between the demons and the one True Church. The Church Militant, however, did not have matters all its own way; the two leading exorcists of the Grandier period both died in paroxysms raving mad — their end by most unpoetic justice was nearly as terrible as had been their victim's at the stake. Diabolical auto-suggestion was a boomerang, and even the ultimate conqueror, Fr. Surin (of the Society of Jesus) was so exhausted by the mental and physical labours of casting out Behemoth, Dog's Tail and so on, that he became a physical wreck for the next 25 years. Later, both he and the principal ex-possessed, Jeanne of the Angels, wrote accounts of their infernal adventures, which have become classical source documents in the now vast literature of diabolical possession, and as such are quoted at length by Michelet, Osterreich, etc., in their classic works on this absorbing theme. In 1638, Behemoth the last of the devils of Loudon, set off for Hell, and the whole episode, at once tragic, grotesque and comic, concluded.

It is pleasant to end this horrible chapter on human cruelty and gullibility on a happier note. In 1672, Louis XIV, on the advice of his enlightened Minister, the great Colbert, repealed all further criminal proceedings for this, henceforth imaginary crime. We may perhaps hope that the horrible ribaldry of the Loudon affair did much to create the change in public opinion which prepared the way for this notable victory for reason and humanity over one of humanity's most horrible and immemorial superstitions.

CORRESPONDENCE

THOMAS PAINE — AND IMMORTALITY

May I add some comments to your reply to "Anonymous Writer," who enquired where Thomas Paine's remains now lie? There are many stories about what happened to them after William Cobbett brought them to London — and it is even possible that more than one of these several versions may be true, as there is evidence that they were divided. There is a certain amount of published material, the best known being the articles by "An Old Daylighter" in *Daylight* (published in Norwich on 5th and 12th December, 1908) and at the Thomas Paine Commemorative Exhibition at the Marx Memorial Library in Clerkenwell Green this Summer some of Paine's hair was on view; this appears to have been that preserved by Benjamin Tilly, who had been a close friend of and secretary to Cobbett, and who is believed also to have removed some of Paine's brain from the box that Cobbett dug up in New Rochelle, U.S.A.

My father, Adrian Brunel, came across some clues during his study of Paine's life, and I believe that some of these have never been published. But I emphasise that they are only *clues* — there is nothing startling about them, though if any reader wants to follow them up, I should be happy to make them available.

To make amends for his earlier bitter hostility towards Paine, Cobbett generously planned to have a great tomb built to him; he never achieved this, and I should like to suggest that General Andrew Jackson really hit upon a more positive note when he declared:—

"Thomas Paine needs no monument made by hands; he has erected a monument in the hearts of all lovers of liberty. *The Rights of Man* will be more enduring than all the piles of marble and granite that man can erect."

Napoleon declared in one of his more democratic moments that a statue of gold should be erected to Paine in every capital of the world. Taking his cue from this, the American freethinker Joseph Lewis has worked hard to have statues built, and I cer-

tainly know of the fine one he was largely responsible for in Morristown (New Jersey) and the gilt one in Paris. Those like the National Secular Society and the several other bodies who have this year organised meetings and exhibitions to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Paine's death have all, I feel, done much to erect a monument in the hearts and minds of men. Anyone who knows Paine's character will know he would have regarded this of far greater importance. CHRISTOPHER BRUNEL.

N.S.S. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30TH, 1959. Present: F. A. Ridley (Chairman), Messrs. Alexander, Barker, Cleaver, Corstorphine, Ebury, Hornbrook, Johnson, Mrs. Ebury, Mrs. Trask, the Treasurer (Mr. Griffiths,) the Secretary and, by invitation, Mr. W. J. McIlroy. Apologies from Messrs. Arthur, Gordon and Manhattan. New members were admitted to Birmingham and West Ham Branches which with individual members made 5 in all. Letters from the Secretary to the B.M.A. (over the rejection of a family planning advert) and to the Home Secretary (re the imprisonment of Nuclear Disarmament Direct Actionists) were approved. Correspondence from Central London, Leicester and Manchester Branches was dealt with. North London Branch report was read and congratulations were expressed. Report of meeting between sub-committee and members of Central London Branch would be reconsidered at next meeting. Mr. G. Plume's resignation from the Society (and hence from the Executive) was reported. No reason was given. N.C.C.L. report on Colour Bar Conference was presented. Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws transfer of assets to Humanist Council was noted. Annual Dinner (March 26th) items were dealt with. The next meeting was fixed for Wednesday, January 20th, 1960.

THE YEAR'S FREETHOUGHT

The Freethinker for 1959

AVAILABLE SHORTLY PLEASE RESERVE
BOUND VOLUME 32/- (Post free)

Limited number only

THE PIONEER PRESS

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

CATHOLIC IMPERIALISM AND WORLD FREEDOM.

By Avro Manhattan, 528 pages, paper cover

Price 20/-; postage 1/3d.

LECTURES AND ESSAYS. BY R. G. INGERSOLL.

Paper covers, 5/-; Cloth bound, 8/6; postage 10d.

FAMILY PROBLEMS AND THE LAW.

By Robert S. W. Pollard. Price 2/6; postage 6d.

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE. By Chapman Cohen.

Price 4/3; postage 6d.

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.

THE DOLLAR AND THE VATICAN: Its Character,

Methods and Aims. By Avro Manhattan.

3rd Edition—Revised and Enlarged.

Price 21/-; postage 1/3

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING. By Chapman Cohen.

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.

AGE OF REASON. Thomas Paine's masterpiece with

40-pages introduction by Chapman Cohen.

Cloth 4/-; postage 7d.

BRADLAUGH AND INGERSOLL. By Chapman

Cohen. Well illustrated. Now again available.

Price 6/-; postage 8d.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK (10th Edition). By G. W.

Footo and W. P. Ball. Price 4/6; postage 6d.