

The Freethinker

18

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THE CANONISATION OF Cardinal Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac has been seriously mooted. The *Simple Catholic Encyclopaedia* defines canonisation as "the public testimony of the Church to the sanctity and glory of one of the faithful departed. By this decree he is inscribed in the catalogue of the Saints and invoked in public prayers; churches are dedicated to God in memory of him, his feast is kept and public honours are paid to his relics. This judgment of the Church is infallible." Has Stepinac a right to be included in this holy category? Is he in the tradition of Catholic Saints? Let us look at a few of these pious persons.

In the year 444 A.D., Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, died, a man of immeasurable piety. Gibbon says of him:—

Ardent in the prosecution of heresy, Cyril auspiciously opened his reign by oppressing the Novations, the most innocent and harmless of the sectaries. The interdiction of their religious worship appeared in his eyes a just and meritorious act; and he confiscated their holy vessels, without apprehending the guilt of sacrilege. The toleration, and even the privileges of the Jews, who had multiplied to the number of forty thousand, were secured by the laws of the Caesars and Ptolemies and a long prescription of seven hundred years since the foundation of Alexandria. Without any legal sentence, without any royal mandate, the patriarch, at the dawn of day, led a seditious multitude to the attack of the synagogues. Unarmed and unprepared, the Jews were incapable of resistance; their houses of prayer were levelled with the ground, and the episcopal warrior, after rewarding his troops with the plunder of their goods, expelled from the city the remnant of the unbelieving nation.

Cyril persecuted Nestorius, that recalcitrant heretic, who held as an article of faith, that Christ had two natures, joined only by a moral union. It was this same Cyril who instigated the murder of the philosopher, Hypatia, in the Holy Season of Lent. The mob tore her from her chariot, stripped her naked, dragged her to the church, and inhumanly butchered her, scraping her flesh from her bones with oyster shells. Cyril received canonisation: St. Cyril.

In the 12th century, Peter Nolasco made his pious mark on the pages of history. Peter carried the cross and the sword for de Montfort, while the latter ruthlessly and utterly exterminated the Albigenses and devastated the fruitful countryside of Languedoc. So enchanted was he at the complete success of this form of heresy hunting, that he turned his orthodox eyes to Spain and to the fair Moorish civilisation there. Here, too, his work met with success. As Butler piously remarks (*Lives of the Saints*) "The city of Valencia was taken by the aid of the prayers of St. Peter, when the soldiers despaired of success, tired out by the obstinacy of the besieged and the strength of the place." Here, too, Peter Nolasco carried the cross of Christ at the extermination of heresy and the desolation of the lands. Peter expired in his 67th year, melting with tears of compunction and divine love. His relics are honoured by many miracles and he was, of course, canonised. Peter Arbues, the Dominican, used his office of Inquisitor with such fanatical cruelty that he was, at last,

murdered for his crimes. He became St. Peter Martyr.

Catholic saints are historically eminent both for their uncleanness of body (the "odour of sanctity" has been described by many a writer) and their uncleanness of mind. Witness the godly St. Alphonse Liguori. They are notable also for their advocacy of ignorance. "What happiness would it bring to me, to know where the Nile rises, or what the physicists think about the heavens?" asked Lactantius. "After Jesus Christ, all curiosity, after the Gospel, all inquiry are unnecessary." Thus Tertullian gave the lead to Catholic intolerance of science and pointed the holy path of mental sloth to the saints.

The female saints appear remarkable only as neurotic

psychopaths. Margaret Marie Alacoque was beatified and later canonised (in 1920) for her close association with the Sacred Heart and wounds of Jesus. After she had reposed on the bosom of Christ for a "very long time," Christ demanded her heart, put it in his own, where it was set on fire, and returned it glowing to her bosom.

A Worthy Successor?

Can Stepinac be acclaimed a worthy successor to these godly people? What are his credentials for canonisation? Alojzije Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb, conceived the nightmare of a Catholic Independent Croatia. Using the infiltrating and propoganda powers of Catholic Action and its affiliated organisations, Great Brotherhood of Crusaders, Catholic Student Association, Great Sisterhood of Crusaders and the like, he persuaded the faithful that it would be a good deed, and in the highest interests of Croatia and the Catholic Church, to kill or convert the Serbs, and to exterminate the Jews. In the words of Pavelich's Minister of Education, "We shall kill one part of the Serbs, we shall transport another, and the rest of them will be forced to embrace the Roman Catholic religion." How well these pious aims were accomplished is summed up by Monica Farrell (*Ravens Wolves*) in the statement that "nearly 70,000 of the 80,000 Jews in the entire country were killed or forced to flee, their property being confiscated. 240,000 Serbs became Byzantine Rite Roman Catholics through forced conversion on pain of death." Serbian church properties were seized and turned over to Roman Catholic converts, by authority of Stepinac.

An independent Croatia was to be sought with Nazi aid and Nazi methods. "Until now God spoke through Papal encyclicals . . . Now God has decided to use other methods . . . By army commanders, led by Hitler. The sermons will be well heard with the help of cannons, machine-guns, tanks and bombers." Such was the Catholic Croatian pro-Nazi propoganda; and Stepinac, serving as Military Vicar to the Ustashi armed forces, materialised the zeal and excesses of that bloodthirsty army. Within the Orthodox Church of Glina, about 3,000 Serbs were massacred and, at the very altar of the Church of Kladusha, Serbs were sledge-hammered to death by the Catholic Ustashi of the Croats. Verily, as the weekly official organ of the Catholic

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

For Stepinac— A Sainthood?

By EVA EBURY

Diocese in Sarajevo stated: "The Catholic Church is the best educator and instigator of such movements . . . The fight against evil and rottenness shall not be waged with gloves, or in a fine or noble manner."

It was a Catholic, a Croat and a former minister of the government of Yugoslavia who wrote these terrible words to Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb: "I write this to you as man to man, as a Christian to a Christian. For fully 10 months now, the Serbs in Croatia are being exterminated in a most beastly manner . . . Since the first day of the Independent Croatian State, the Serbs have been massacred and this massacring has continued to this day. The Catholic Church has used all means to Catholicise forcefully the remaining Serbs . . . The friars and nuns carried Ustashi knives in one hand and a cross and a prayer book in the

other." He continues with details of atrocities too horrible to relate here, and ends poignantly with, "I write you this to save my soul, and I leave it to you to find a way to save your soul." Stepinac and Pius XII, the Pope of Peace, turned a deaf ear. Pius raised the cry of persecution at the trial and condemnation of Stepinac, and passed sentence of excommunication on every Roman Catholic connected with the trial.

Now Archbishop Stepinac has died branded as murderer and traitor by the Yugoslavia Court of Justice, and mourned by Pope and Hierarchy, and that faith-deluded flock who hear only the travesty of truth permitted by the Vatican. Stepinac, we write your epitaph, as worthy successor of your pious forerunners, and fit claimant for canonisation as saint of the Holy Catholic Church.

Delinquency and Religion

By Dr. J. V. DUHIG

IN THE REPORT TO THE QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT by the Committee on Delinquency of 1959, a statement at the end is to the effect that children from god-fearing homes very rarely committed anti-social acts. The inference desired to be drawn, apparently, is that delinquents should be given religious instruction. But there are two major fallacies in the statement. One is that "god-fearing," that is, presumably, religious homes have an exclusive claim to high ethical standards. But in China where the standard of home-life is amongst the highest in the world, the Christian religions have about 3 million adherents amongst the 600 million Chinese and judging from what I know first-hand of Chinese family life I would say that the delinquency rate amongst the 597 millions who have no religion would be lower than in Western Europe and USA and much lower than in Southern Europe and South America. The people referred to as "god-fearing" would be high-grade in any case, irrespective of religion; they were born with a high sense of moral responsibility. Most of my friends are either atheists or rationalists and their ethics are superior to that of most religionists I know.

The second fallacy is that Religion equates with high ethical standards. This is the exact reverse of the truth. The New Zealand Prisons Dept. released the following figures recently, covering a four-year period:—

Christian Sect	Proportion in general population (A)	Proportion in gaol (B)	B/A
Roman Catholic	13%	30%	2.3
Church of England	44%	42%	0.95
Presbyterian	26%	16%	0.6
Methodist	10%	3%	0.3

That is, the Roman Catholic Sect overfilled its quota of criminals by more than twice; the Church of England Sect just filled theirs while Presbyterians and Methodists were well below theirs. It is interesting that Roman Catholics and Anglicans — especially Roman Catholics — practise elaborate ritual and devout observances which direct attention away from common ethics, and it appears that the farther one gets away from ritual, etc., the better citizen one tends to be. In England, the Roman Catholics are 8% of the population, but contribute 25% of girl delinquents and 23% of boys. In 1958 there were 22,000 children before the Courts and Roman Catholicism would have filled its quota with 1,760, but with about 5,300 there must have been 3,700 children who would not have been in trouble but for having had religious instruction. Healy and Bronner, eminent American sociologists report that when invited by the Chicago Children's Court to investigate de-

linquency, they found over 90% had religious training, 50% being Roman Catholics; non-religious children were less than 1% of the total. They found the same in Massachusetts. S. and E. Glueck (*Predicting Delinquency and Crime*, 1959) say that in a series of Army Delinquents, 65% were Roman Catholics, 31% anti-R.C. and 4% non-Christian. There were no non-religionists in the group.

Obviously religious training has no relation whatever to conduct, except of course, that the Roman Catholic Sect seems to promote crime and delinquency, and therefore the statement in our opening sentence by the Queensland State Parliamentary Committee above is baseless, illogical and misleading in its implications. The implied suggestion that only children with religious training or living in a religious environment can be trusted to refrain from anti-social conduct is manifestly unfair to atheist and rationalist and other non-religious families and the exact reverse of the truth.

The Parliamentary Committee apparently forgot that delinquency is a world-wide phenomenon and is simply growing because of the natural increase in world population. Without discussing this extremely complex problem here, I would like to point out that New York State and New York City, where the position is dangerous and urgently in need of control, are prepared to spend and have spent millions of dollars without marked success. S. and E. Glueck singly and jointly have published 25 remarkably able books on the subject and an enormous amount of research goes on in USA where probably the best work in the world in this field is done, but delinquency still flourishes. For the Queensland Parliamentary Committee, after listening mostly to sentimental cranks in religiosity, to suggest that prayer and the shorter catechism and scripture lessons are going to do the slightest good is sheer idiocy.

The Christian religions either promote crime and delinquency or do nothing to prevent them by purely religious methods, or by religious education.

NO GOD — NO COMMISSION

AT WEST POINT, America's famous military academy, the cadets are allowed a choice of divine service to attend. They are, however, not allowed to abstain. He who does not believe in God is refused commission.

NEXT WEEK

ROME AND THE RACIAL QUESTION

By F. A. RIDLEY

The Great Religious Orders—4

The Jesuits

By F. A. RIDLEY

THE YEAR 1492 MUST BE REGARDED as a red-letter date in the annals of European and world history. Columbus, flying the flag of Castille, discovered the New World, and the Eight Hundred Years War which had begun in 711 when the Arab Muslims had invaded and conquered Spain ended with the capture of Granada, the last Moorish stronghold in Spain, and with the final downfall of the Muslim power there. In (or about) the same year, there occurred an event of comparable importance in ecclesiastical annals for, at Loyola, in the Castillian province of Biscay, was born a Spanish nobleman, Ignatius, destined to become the Founder and inspirer of the most famous and powerful of all religious Orders in (and probably out of) the Roman Catholic Church: the Company, or Society, of Jesus. To obtain a correct perspective it is relevant to link up the origins and rapid rise to world power of the Jesuits with the two simultaneous political transformations already mentioned, the discovery of America and the expulsion of the Moors. For the ensuing 16th century was to be the "age of gold," of Spanish Imperialism; and the Jesuits were to become the supreme and permanent representative of Spanish Imperialism in the religious sphere, which has now long outlived the crusading Empire of "the most Catholic Kings" in which it originated. From that day to this, the Jesuits have continued the work of the Spanish Crusades and have waged an unceasing war against heretics, infidels and other enemies of Rome.

The dramatic circumstances in which the greatest of Catholic Orders originated, are so well-known that it is hardly necessary to repeat them. How Ignatius, the brave but still illiterate Knight was wounded in a skirmish with the French in the Pyrenees and how, when as a result, permanently unfitted for a military career, he became the classic example of the ex-soldier turned religious fanatic. Naturally in the Spain of the Age of Faith, the conversion of a Spanish Knight into a Christian Crusader was accompanied by celestial visions of both the Holy Trinity and the Virgin Mary. On a more mundane plane, Loyola is held, on apparently good grounds, to have studied the technical organisations of the Muslim religious Orders (still then domiciled in Spain from which the Moors were not finally expelled until the 17th century) against which it was the primary intention of Loyola and his first disciples to fight. For there does not seem to be much doubt that the original intention of founding a new and militant religious Order came to Loyola after the pilgrimage to Jerusalem with which he began his religious career. As a writer of the Ernest Renan Cercle has aptly demonstrated, Ignatius's famous book, *The Spiritual Exercises*, was originally conceived as a practical exhortation to inaugurate a new crusade to recover Jerusalem from the Turkish Infidels. Loyola, in his own opinion at least, was the last of the Crusaders. However, the Founder's initial strategic plan for his Order, was not destined to be realised. The Reformation intervened and, in any case, Spain had too much on her hands in both the Americas and Europe to spare time and energy in the reconquest of the Holy Land from its potent Turkish masters. When Loyola eventually succeeded in founding his own Order — in Paris in 1533-1540 — he found other more immediately urgent tasks than pursuing what had by now become the quixotic will-o'-the-wisp of a new crusade to recover Jerusalem from the In-

fidel. The Protestant Reformation had by now come to a head after several centuries of incubation, and Rome and the Papacy, with their backs to the wall, were fighting for their lives. It was in this battle against the Protestant heretics, whom they may well have regarded as proverbially worse than the Muslim Infidels, that Loyola and his newly founded Order were destined to win their spurs.

The Company of Jesus was organised from the start on military lines which were based, probably consciously, on the earlier semi-military religious Orders, both Christian and Muslim, and the famous motto of the Jesuits, *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* ("to the greater glory of God"), is stated to be a direct translation from the Arabic. The Jesuit Order quickly came to the front in the stormy era of the Reformation, where it has been described (possibly with some exaggeration) as the actual saviour of the Roman Church. Here, as with the earlier religious Orders of the 13th century, the Jesuits supplied the demagoguery, while the Inquisition supplied the concurrent terror. Rome, in the age of the Reformation, owed the ultimate success of her Counter-Reformation to a judicious combination of terror (chiefly supplied by the Dominican Inquisition, plus such secular horrors as St. Bartholomew's Eve and the Spanish massacres in the Netherlands) and of demagoguery which the Jesuits practised with such success that they have added a new word, "Jesuitical," to the ethical vocabulary of mankind. In the fields of education and missionary work, they quickly took the lead, as also in the dubious "science" of casuistry; the art of equivocation with which murky, but at times, undeniably useful, art, they largely succeeded in identifying themselves, though it must be added that the reverend equivocators have actually been the objects of a good deal of misrepresentation. They did not (at least flatly, as is sometimes suggested) teach that the end justified the means — a doctrine which as L. D. Trotsky has aptly commented, is, when construed literally, "psychologically contradictory and logically absurd." But the early Jesuits were unquestionably masters of the art of patching up, of "adapting," the old to meet the requirements of the new. When the biologist Lamarck — like Voltaire, one of their former pupils — advanced the famous theory that the giraffe *consciously* grew his long neck in order to survive, all Lamarck did was to generalise from the recorded history of his Jesuit masters who have done just that. The rapid and startling success of the Spanish Order which for long completely dominated the Catholic Church, and still probably remains today its most powerful Order, also indicates the survival of the fittest in the Darwinian sense of the famous phrase. In broad historical perspectives, the Jesuits owe both their rapid initial success and their permanent historic role to that basic characteristic of theirs, which was forcibly described by the French freethinking historian, Jules Michelet. "For," said he, "take the man in the street, the first passer-by, and ask him 'What are the Jesuits?' and he will reply without hesitation, 'The Counter-Revolution'."

Considered historically, the Jesuits were consciously founded and have always, at least wherever active, since remained a highly trained *corps d'élite* of professional revolutionaries — or rather, counter-revolutionaries, the SS men, the Praetorian Guard of Rome. As such, and
(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

The news that a simple pill might in future destroy God's plan to populate the earth to its utmost limit — or more, if that were possible — has upset our Roman Catholics almost to fury. The *Daily Express* leader writer is solidly behind the Roman Church, and pompously tells us that the population "experts" have so far been proved wrong . . . that they deserve "not to be heeded." Of course, food and work in *this* country have never been better, but what about the "underdeveloped" countries? What is happening to them?

★

The great authority on these matters is Sir Charles Darwin, and he considers that while it may be possible to avoid "a nuclear explosion" which could bring "catastrophe to the human race in a matter of 24 hours," the "population explosion seems unavoidable." In the *Daily Mail* he provides us with a diagram giving comparative numbers of the populations of five continents in 1959 and in 2000 A.D. His figures are illuminating. In 1750, one baby was born every four minutes. In 1950, the number was twenty born every minute, while in the year 2000, it will be seventy babies every minute. There is no doubt that God in his wisdom "doeth all things well." But — and it is a big "but" — how will this terrific increase be fed?

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The truth is — nobody knows. At the moment, the world population is increasing at the rate of 100,000 every 24 hours; in China, it is 15 millions every year. And however well fed we may be in England, every economist and sociologist knows that half the population of the world is always under-nourished and must remain so. In any case, what solution has religion — Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, or the other 1,093 which we have to suffer — to offer? Prayers to God Almighty? While people are starving?

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The burning of incense is one of the high features of Roman and Anglo-Catholic ritual, so it is not surprising to find that "genuine" Protestants, who loathe their Catholic brothers in Christ, also object to incense in their churches and chapels. But the Rev. G. Saunders of Ascension Church in Plumstead vigorously defends his use of it by declaring that it is in "accordance with an order from God. If you criticise incense, you are criticising God." And no doubt this is true. But why was incense introduced at all?

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The answer is a purely materialistic and sanitary one. Leaving aside the way human beings were at one time regularly sacrificed to pacify an angry God, it is an historical fact that animals were subsequently substituted, and their slaughter made the average church or temple literally stink. Something had to be done to clear the atmosphere, and some bright priests discovered it could be done by burning various substances — herbs, etc. God had as much to do with it as he had to do with substituting the modern "toilets" for the old buckets.

★

The stories of the old monks, hermits, and priests, giving up everything to wallow in filth and eat as little as possible in their caves and deserts have always added to the gaiety of nations — but it would be a mistake to imagine that similar people do not exist these days. But they are rarely called hermits. Most of them, if not all, prefer to be known as "Yogis" — but what's in a name? — and one of the latest is graced by the appellation, "His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh, Yogi of the Himalayas and Life Celibate," and,

thank God, he is recruiting disciples in London "to follow him to the Himalayas to meditate in caves."

★

A team headed by a "Sunday Dispatch" doctor has investigated his claims to cure disease by "meditation," and concluded that Yogi, while "completely genuine," wouldn't be worth following "to the end of the street." In a less credulous age, this verdict might have followed even the claims of "our Lord" to be a "Divine Healer." Still, even such a complete ignoramus and fraud as dear old Mother Eddy managed to rake in millions of dollars from just the kind of people who are following Yogi to the Himalayas. There appears no end to the procession of religious fools.

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In the BBC's programme "The Bible Comes Alive" — this suggests that up to now the Bible was dead — Mr. J. B. Phillips was interviewed about his recent translation of the New Testament. He made two startling admissions. He told us that he began his translation of the Epistles of Paul because he found these were completely unintelligible to his students, and he tried to make them intelligible. Later, someone read out, very reverently, passages of the new translation — and all we can say is that they seemed even more unintelligible than ever.

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The second startling admission was that in translating the Gospels, he did not find a "gentle Jesus, meek and mild." He found that Jesus was certainly "aggressive," and it was a pity that the interviewer did not lead Mr. Phillips to declare that Jesus was the greatest aggressive God who ever lived!

THE GREAT RELIGIOUS ORDERS

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confronted with what has been pretty continuously now since the Reformation, a world in revolt against their Church, they have made themselves necessary to the Church. And as a corps of specialists in fighting revolutionary movements in both the religious and (often enough) in the political sphere. They owe their origins to one such period of revolution, the 16th century Reformation and their later revival (after a short period of suppression in the rationalistic 18th century — 1771-1814) to another, the French Revolution, which compelled the Vatican to re-establish what it then described as "these expert mariners of the Barque of Peter." Nowadays, in our age of Communism and Atheism, they still apparently lead the Church in its counter-revolution against human progress. In brief, the stormy and chequered history of the famous Company of Jesus illustrated the prophetic dictum of its Founder Ignatius of Loyola: "No tempest is so deadly as a perfect calm, and the enemy most to be dreaded is the absence of all enemies."

[Note: A fuller demonstration of this thesis is given in Mr. Ridley's book, *The Jesuits — a Study in Counter-Revolution*, now unfortunately out of print.—Ed.]

AERIAL PILGRIMAGE

MANY SOUTHWARK ROMAN CATHOLICS are tired of going to Lourdes by train, reports the *South London Press* (26/2/60) and they "will be descending on Lourdes this Summer for their annual pilgrimage in six 36-seater aircraft." The managing director of the airline is not a Catholic, "but by way of thanks for his survival in an air crash, he sent a plane-load of sick pilgrims to Lourdes and Rome at Christmas." The price of the plane trip this summer, however, will be 33 guineas inclusive. Still, the "old-fashioned or poorer members of the congregation have not been forgotten." They will be able to travel by rail.

THE FREETHINKER

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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 J. 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.
- Marble Arch 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.
- 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.

INDOOR

- Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute Cinema, Paradise Street.) Sunday, March 27th, 6.45 p.m.: T. D. SMITH, "George Borrow — 'The Man in Black'."
- Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics Institute) Lecture every Sunday, 7 p.m.
- Central London Branch N.S.S. ("The City of Hereford" Blandford Place, W.1.) Sunday, March 27th, 7.15 p.m.: A Lecture.
- Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.) Tuesday, March 29th, 7.15 p.m.: J. MURUMBI and V. V. ALEXANDER, "African — Asian Aspirations."
- Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate,) Sunday, March 27th, 6.30 p.m.: F. MAITLAND, "The Faith of an Atheist."
- Marble Arch Branch N.S.S. (formerly West London Branch) (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, off Edgware Road, 3 mins. Marble Arch Station) Sunday, March 27th, 7.30 p.m.: Rev. WENDA OUGH, "What is the Bible Worth?"
- Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Education Centre, Broad Street.) Sunday, March 27th, 2.30 p.m.: J. PECK, "Which Way Labour."
- South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.) Sunday, March 27th, 11 a.m.: R. CLEMENTS, "George Gissing, a Neglected Man of Letters."

Notes and News

EVERY ATTEMPT "to present the Gospel to modern youth" seems to merit notice in our popular Press. And "Thirty teenagers jiving to a rock 'n' roll beat in a church hall" with a Judas Iscariot with "ample hair curling over the collar of his knee-length jacket" and "contorting legs in the black drainpipes" making him "look like a drunken spider" earned special mention in the *News Chronicle* (11/3/60). While other churches in Bristol are half empty, St. James's, Rockleaze, is crowded, we are informed. And one-third of the Sunday night congregation are young people. Mind you, as the Rev. Ernest Marvin said, "Most of them are quite oblivious to the meaning of Christianity." "Teaching them what it is all about is difficult. So we do it the only way they understand." He also said that "When they come to church, we take the cigarettes from their mouths as they reach the door." Is it hard to teach them to do that for themselves, too?

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IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE of the South African *Rationalist*,

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Readers are asked to note the new address of: -

THE FREETHINKER,
THE PIONEER PRESS (G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd.)
THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY and
SECULAR SOCIETY LIMITED will be

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1.

We regret that no telephone number will be available for several weeks.

Mr. Malcolm G. Clarke points out a fallacy in the Pascal's "Wager" argument. "If the Christian idea of God, Immortality and Hell is false, you lose nothing by accepting it," the argument runs. But in fact you *do*, says Mr. Clarke. "You lose all sense of dependence on reason, on the analytic study of history and morality . . . you lose everything which stands for honesty, decency and goodness."

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The Rationalist, BY THE BY, has become bilingual, as a result of a gratifying increase in the number of its Afrikaans-speaking readers.

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"IS THIS NOT A CASE of offensive literature being sent through the post?" asked Mr. John W. Paris of Coventry, in *The Universe*, week ending March 12th. It seems he had announced the birth of his eleventh child "in a recent issue" and "within a few days" he received "matter through the post from a firm of contraceptive manufacturers." "It may be of interest to the clergy and Catholics in general," he said, "that a birth announcement is likely to be followed by this foul propaganda" and he wondered "if one or more of our Catholic societies, say the doctors or lawyers, may not be able to frame a suitable protest." Quick action is called for, we suggest, to prevent Mr. Paris being disgusted again when he tops the dozen!

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A PICTURE FROM *The Times of Malta* (25/2/60) shows the blessing of a new Sales and Service Centre of the Industrial Motor Co. at Blata Il-Bajda, by His Grace Mgr. Gonzi, with attendant clerical water-sprinklers and the Chairman of the Company standing by in appropriately prayerful pose. Whether His Grace called on the Lord to grant better sales and/or services or (in a variant of our own monarchy's ship-launching style) wished God's blessing to the Centre and all who work in it, we can't say.

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WELL WE (which means The Pioneer Press, National Secular Society and Secular Society Ltd., as well as THE FREETHINKER) are in our new premises, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1, complete with shop, and on the site of the Queen's Head Inn owned by the family of John Harvard, founder of the University. It will take us some time to get properly settled, and we hope customers and correspondents will make allowance for any little delays that may occur, but we feel sure the change will be for the good. Visitors should note that we are near to London Bridge, and that that is the nearest Underground station. The old coaching inn, the George, is an historic nearby landmark, too. And Dickens lovers will find plenty to interest them. For the moment, though, we turn to the reminiscences of a New Zealand reader, Mrs. Constance Tarling. Mrs. Tarling recalls the last time she saw the Borough High Street, soon after an air raid in the last war. "It certainly was a mess," she says, "but it must look very different now." Yes, we are glad to say it does, and we hope it will never have that messy appearance again. One of Mrs. Tarling's other memories is more picturesque. She recalls the horse trams, drawn by what seemed to her as a child, "gigantic" horses.

What a Hope!

By COLIN McCALL

FOURTEEN MONTHS ago (January 1959) *The British Homeopathic Journal* published an article by Dr. Richard Hope entitled, "Healing and the Miraculous." Miss M. Kennedy of Leeds has kindly sent me a reprint and asked me to comment on it. I intend to do so, but I must begin with a warning. Don't let the author's doctorship fool you! Anyone expecting a scientific treatise will be sadly disappointed. Don't pin your hopes of Dr. Hope, is my advice to would-be readers.

He considers himself "privileged" to speak "on behalf of Luke the beloved physician," and takes as his text, Luke 6.22/23, "because I believe that if Luke were to return to earth today nothing would depress him so much as our attitude towards those Divine Acts of Healing by which Christ illustrated for us the nature of His Mission to us, acts which we miscall 'miracles,' thereby playing into the hands of scientific scepticism, and leading Science, as well as ourselves, astray into miracle-mongering." Long though that sentence is. I thought it useful in conveying the tone of the article. Candidly, that is about its only use.

However, the doctor's theme is, he tells us, "that Christ is the Great Physician who calls us to be physicians, and to collaborate with Him in the Christian Healing Process"; that there is "nothing miraculous" in this, and that it should "constitute the creative core of normal Christian living." He then makes what he calls a "vital" distinction between the marvellous and the miraculous. The former is "that which fills us with wonder, and for which we have a rational explanation": the latter, "that which fills us with wonder but for which we have no rational explanation." Every physician, he then states, will admit that he can give no rational explanation for healing; therefore, healing is, for him, miraculous. Every scientist, he adds, "will admit that he is in the same quandary towards Nature." No rational explanation here, either, so Nature is miraculous.

All of which turns on what is meant by "rational explanation." It is the old "how: why" problem. If you ask for an explanation of how, say, the poison mechanism of a viper operates, a herpetologist can tell you in considerable detail. The effects of the venom on the viper's prey can also be explained; and these effects can actually be countered by administration of anti-toxin by a hypodermic syringe very similar to the snake's fangs. These explanations will be perfectly rational. But if you ask *why* a viper should have such a highly-developed apparatus for killing (hinged fangs, venom glands, etc.) the herpetologist, as such, cannot answer. You are asking what purpose, what plan there is behind this particular natural phenomenon and, by inference, what plan there is behind the whole of natural phenomena. The herpetologist, as a herpetologist, knows none. If he also happens to be a Christian, he may try to find one to fit in with his professional knowledge, but it is outside his professional range. He might, incidentally, find it easier to reconcile the phenomenon with a belief in Satanism, or at least Manicheanism.

But Dr. Hope's view of "Nature" (for which he always uses a capital), is of a "majestic, harmoniously independent Whole [capital again; you will notice many others] which is based upon the unfree but healthy Atom (whose behaviour is controlled by the laws of Physics) . . . which, progressing towards freedom by a process of steadily increasing disease and healing, culminates in unhealthy, but somehow free, Man . . ." And if you think "healthy"

atoms "controlled" by the laws of Physics is bad enough (which it is) I must prepare you for worse. The "paradoxical marvel" which Dr. Hope makes of disease and healing, precisely because he tries to see a plan behind it, is then put before "Science," which "naïvely offers us the explanation of a mechanical process of Evolution by Natural Selection." This "does not accord with experience and must therefore be classed as miraculous." We have not yet reached rock-bottom, though. "Experience tells us that a Healing Process cannot emerge automatically out of a machine. It never occurs to a machine to heal itself." Therefore, "if Healing and Ethics emerge automatically out of a machine, we are confronted with a miracle."

From this and about equally inane palaver (I cannot accurately assess relative merits on such a low level) Dr. Hope concludes that you are "on perfectly safe ground if you tease your scientific friends for being irrational miracle-mongers" — "you" being, of course, a Christian. There are lots of points, he concedes, "on which scientists can safely tease Christians; but Christ's Divine Acts of Healing is not one of them, nor is the marvellous in Nature . . . Because the Christian "explanation" of these marvels is, he claims, "entirely rational and in accordance with human experience." "Broadly," this is: "That God is in process of creating Man in His own Image; that the earth is His garden or workshop," etc., etc.; "that Disease is due to the clash between God's Will and man's will; and that Healing is due to God's sustaining Love, working through Christ." And if that is new to you, I'm afraid you must be naïve.

But, to do Dr. Hope justice — which isn't easy for anyone as polite as I — he doesn't claim novelty for the idea. He only claims that it "makes sense" and is "supported by the testimony of many Christians who claim to know God." That's all! Whether Dr. Hope has such direct contact with his deity, I don't know. He doesn't need it anyway, with the Bible on hand. His scientific friends, he realises — again to his credit — will tease him for being anthropomorphic. But he doesn't mind that. The alternative as he sees it, is "mechanomorphism." And, "If we are, as we believe, made in Image of God, we are entitled to be anthropomorphic . . ." For, "We have plenty of experience of men who create machines, but we have no experience of machines that create men." To which the best retaliation would seem to be: we have plenty of experience of men who create gods, but we have no experience of gods who create men.

But Dr. Hope moves on, not perhaps so steadily, but with apparently firm conviction, via marriage ("on every wedding day the voice of bride and groom represent that Voice — the Voice of God"; which I am interested to know, as a bridegroom to be) and the Trinity (because we have three "necessities — Creation, Education and Healing" likened respectively to Father, Holy Ghost and Son) to the conclusion that, although Christianity is "full of marvels, it contains nothing miraculous"; that "on the contrary, it is an entirely rational Healing Process presided over by Christ." Such a healing process consists, not in swallowing "wonder drugs," but in "a close collaboration between priest, physician and patient in the Hospital of the Great Physician, whose medicine is the Eucharist — Himself." In the "Power of Christ," we can all "go through life with healing in our wings."

So now you have some idea — at least as much as if

you had read his article — of what Dr. Richard Hope thinks, or likes to think, about "Healing and the Miraculous." And I add the qualification, not merely because "I like to think" is one of Dr. Hope's expressions, but because I think, or like to think, that Dr. Hope doesn't really believe the twaddle he writes. I don't mean that he is insincere. I don't think that. I think he is indulging in the time-honoured religious practice of trying to convince oneself. Hope springs eternal!

A Dangerous Bill

WE PRINT BELOW a copy of a letter sent by the Secretary of the National Secular Society to prominent politicians, religionists, newspapers, etc. We urge readers to address similar letter to their M.P.s and local newspapers.

Dear Sir or Madam,

We want to draw your attention to the very serious dangers inherent in Sir Leslie Plummer's "Racial and Religious Insults" Bill, whereby "Any person who insults publicly by speech or by writing or by illustration or advisedly incites another person publicly to insult any person or persons because of their race or religion shall be guilty of an offence under this Act," as shall be "Any person who prints, publishes, distributes or circulates any written matter or illustration insulting to any person or persons because of their race or religion . . ."

Sir Leslie's and his supporters' intentions are without doubt laudable, but the passing of such a Bill might, we think, have very grave consequences on the important civil liberties of freedom of speech and publication, particularly in the field of religious criticism.

Consider, for example, one of our own National Secular Society speakers who, in Voltairean fashion, ridicules an aspect of Christianity that a believer holds dear. May not a Christian feel "insulted"? May not the same apply to the publication of a religious satire? It does seem to us that, in order to meet a specific problem, anti-Semitism, too little thought has been given to the way in which the proposed Bill could be interpreted or, if you like, misinterpreted. For years we have been trying to abolish the Blasphemy laws: now, in effect, they are being extended.

We feel sure that special new legislation is not the way to meet such problems as anti-Semitism. Rather should existing laws be applied with firmness and common sense. We urge you, therefore, to do all you can to prevent the passing of this misguided Bill.

Yours faithfully,

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

COLIN MCCALL, *Secretary.*

Star of Bethlehem

By H. CUTNER

WHILE THANKING the many correspondents who have dealt with the Most Famous Star the world has ever known, and who agree that the story is quite mythical. I hope they will not be offended if I express surprise that they appear to me to want to save the story if at all possible, or at least to rationalise it.

Of course, it has some basis in something or other — even some of the stories in the *Arabian Nights* were set in the reign of an historical Caliph. The way some people talk about the Star amazes me. Matthew says clearly that the Magi followed the Star until "it came and stood over where the young child was." This is surely pure, unadulterated nonsense. Mr. Fishall tells us that "Biela's Comet"

entered somewhere or other at the time and "was reported by various contemporary historians such as Sulpicius." I always make a point of consulting authorities when given, but the only Sulpicius mentioned in the Century Cyclopaedia of Names is an orator who died in 88 BC. Would Mr. Fishall be good enough to tell me where I can read about Sulpicius, the *contemporary* historian, and his account of Biela's Comet — and what they have to do with the Star of Bethlehem?

Mr. Bandon "is not satisfied that the object (the Star?) is a pure fairy-story." He tells us that "several astronomical phenomena were recorded at that epoch," and mentions Sulpicius and Lucullus. In the above Cyclopaedia, Lucullus is named as a Roman general who died in 57 BC, and I can find nothing about his other authority, "Theak-bury" who is conspicuous by his absence everywhere. However, Mr. Bandon does add eventually that the "phenomenon" they or some people vouch for was converted into a "fairy-tale." In fact, this argument could be used for Aladdin — an ordinary lamp was "converted" into a Wonderful Lamp.

As for the *Chronology of Christian Origins* — a valuable compendium — which Mr. Ridley quotes, I fail to see what light it sheds on "the fairy-story." Supposing Tiri-dates and his magi did visit Nero and returned "by another route?" But what were the words in the *original* Latin or Greek or Armenian or whatever it was? Where can they be found? Who wrote them? And is it a fact that the writer of Matthew was such a fool that he could not write "another route" or "another way" off his own bat, so to speak? But what light this throws on the Star is quite beyond me. As for "the veil of the Temple" being rent by Titus, and Roman Christians seeing it decided to make it part of the story of the Crucifixion — really, words fail me. There was *no* Crucifixion.

CORRESPONDENCE

FROM SIR STANLEY UNWIN

The Afrikaans translation of Bertrand Russell's *Why I am not a Christian* has indeed beaten the ban imposed on the import of the pamphlet into South Africa. But you are quite wrong in thinking that this essay is out of print in English; it is part of the volume *Why I am not a Christian*, published by us, which is readily available.

STANLEY UNWIN, *Chairman,*
George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

[We thank Sir Stanley Unwin for his reminder that the book containing the essay is still available. We have indeed recommended the volume on several occasions and do so again now. Our note referred to the pamphlet only.—Ed.]

CARDINAL GASQUET

I enjoyed your interesting and informative article on the Benedictines in a recent issue. But I was rather surprised to see Cardinal Gasquet referred to as one of the "scholars of eminence" produced by them, considering his shattering exposure at the hands of that distinguished Medievalist, the late Dr. G. G. Coulton, who convicted Gasquet of *deliberate* mendacity in his whitewashing of the monasteries under Henry VIII.

It was largely owing to his services to Roman Catholic historiography that Gasquet was eventually raised to the Cardinalate, and despite Coulton's withering attacks upon his literary honesty he never dared to meet the accusations. In this, of course, he was ably aided by the Roman Catholic Press and Belloc (among others) who waged the usual campaign of smear and vilification on the redoubtable Coulton, but never attempted to meet his charges. Gasquet's book *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* which was the subject of Coulton's attack was even re-issued a few years later with the same lies retained. Coulton even offered Gasquet space in one of his pamphlets on the subject at his (Coulton's) expense to rebut the charges, but Gasquet refused. He could not attempt to defend the indefensible, even for the Faith. There were honourable exceptions on the Catholic side, even among the clergy; notably Dr. J. V. Simcox, who was so disgusted with the whole affair that I believe he left the Church shortly after.

All these facts can be found in Coulton's pamphlets *The Scandal*

of Cardinal Gasquet, *Sectarian History* and *A Premium upon Falsehood* which will well repay reading. I wish your readers were informed of all this regarding Gasquet.

A. ALMOND.

[Mr. Ridley writes: *I was aware that Cardinal Gasquet was worsted in controversy by that redoubtable Protestant scholar, the late Prof. Coulton, though I have not actually read the pamphlets in which, as Mr. Almond states, Gasquet seems to have resorted to methods more reminiscent of the Jesuit rather than the Benedictine Order. However, if he did have a bad case on that occasion, the Benedictine Cardinal was a learned man, a former librarian of the Vatican and author of many works. I consider it reasonable to describe him as an eminent scholar, at least in comparison with the general run of ecclesiastical writers. In any case the Benedictines have produced many notable scholars in recent centuries, such as the (anonymous) authors of The Art of Verifying Dates, the first attempt at a scientific critique of current Christian chronology. Dr. J. V. Simcox did leave the Church. There is a pleasant story that when subsequently he "signed on" at his local Labour Exchange, he gave his last job as "Professor of Canon Law at St. Edmund's Seminary, Ware." This, as might be imagined, caused much consternation behind the counter!—Ed.]*

DARWIN AND LADY HOPE

I am investigating the source of the myth that Charles Darwin renounced the theory of evolution in favour of Christianity when nearing his death. This myth has cropped up in the Press at least twice last year alone.

So far I have collected a fairly complete history of the myth, but the earliest dated reference is to a Bombay paper in 1916, allegedly quoted from the Boston Watchman Examiner (date so far unobtainable). The story is here stated to have been told to a meeting of young Christians near Boston.

There are, of course, no contemporary accounts whatever of such a conversion. The story is categorically denied by the Darwin family. But I am very interested in the Lady Hope who, apparently 30 years later, started to spread the conversion story. Especially as some of our contemporary divines seem to think that if a "Lady Hope said so, then, of course, it *must* be true."

Any information about Lady Hope and her alleged Boston story of circa 1916 concerning Darwin some 30 years earlier will be most warmly welcomed.

PAT SLOAN (40 Melody Road, Biggin Hill, Kent.)

"FATHER ABRAHAM"

Mr. Cutner is dogmatically arrogant and incapable of fairness when his prejudices are aroused.

I did not say that Paul's allegorising of Abraham and Sarah "does not alter its literal truth." I pointed out that Paul, like the Jewish Philo of Alexandria, St. Augustine and other Christian Fathers and medieval theologians, did allegorise figures they deemed historical, however absurd we may think this.

I fail to see what piety and "reverent Humanism"—Mr. Cutner's swear-words to shock the secularist believers—have to do with denial of the alleged Latin source of "Terah," the traditional father of Abraham. Even if the Pentateuch did not reach its present form before about 300 B.C., its lore about the Hebrew patriarchs must be much older than that. Latin was then the tongue of an illiterate people of whom the Palestinians (Hebrews or their predecessors) are most unlikely to have known anything. To turn the Latin "terra" into the Hebrew "Terah" is as probable an event as for the Pope to draw on Tibetan literature for suitable terms to be embodied in a bull or an encyclical.

A. D. HOWELL SMITH.

CATHOLICS AND LOWER ANIMALS

The attitude of the Pope towards the terrible sufferings, which recently horrified the public, of the Irish horses shipped in the City of Waterford, is not out of keeping with the declared policy

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which one reads in the directive of the official Catholic Dictionary. I quote from an article on the "lower animals":—

"As the lower animals have no duties... they have no rights... The brutes are made for man, who has the same right over them as he has over plants and stones. He may kill them for his food; and if it is lawful to destroy them for food, and this without strict necessity, it must also be lawful to put them to death, or to inflict pain upon them, for any good or reasonable end, such as the promotion of man's knowledge, his health, etc., or even for the purpose of recreation."

One is glad to think that this is not the attitude of all religions towards the creatures to whom has now been granted by science a common origin with ourselves. We rejoice that Freethinkers extend their morals to include animals, as was exemplified some time ago in a Charter for Scientific Humanism, which contained the following clause:—

"Our love and kindness must embrace the animal kingdom to the extent that we cause them no unnecessary pain. We cannot accept, for instance, the tradition of Christian love at Christmas with the ritual murder of thousands of animals for a Christmas feast. Cruelty in all forms finds no place in our charter; and if this leads to a vegetarian outlook, then the conscience of the coming man may make this essential."

FLORENCE BARKER, Hon. Secretary,
International Cultural Forum, U.K. Branch.

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