

The Freethinker

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IN THE COURSE OF A RECENT VISIT to the Library of the British Museum, I had occasion to re-read the extremely interesting book on Christian origins written by a Lutheran pastor, Albert Kalthoff, which was translated into English by Joseph McCabe. While this German study of Christian origins must now be classed as an old book dating from an era much anterior to such modern discoveries as the Dead Sea Scrolls, certain of the author's original ideas

appear to be not only interesting, but still of permanent significance and importance for the fascinating problem upon which they seek to shed light. How came it about that an originally Jewish heresy, which began in almost complete obscurity

in a remote frontier district of the great slave Empire of Rome, somehow managed not only to become the official religion of that Empire to which it appears to have begun in silent opposition, but actually succeeded in surviving the world and Empire that saw its initial appearance and 2,000 years later still represents a world-wide power? Equally surprisingly, how did a movement which, according to all probable computations started amongst the outcasts and slaves of the Roman Empire, manage to become the age-long pillar of law, order and official conservatism that has been its major social role throughout the ages?

A Christian Mythicist

Such are the kind of problems to which the historian of Christian origins must address himself; and of course many learned pens and penetrating intellects have addressed themselves to such tasks. Albert Kalthoff's *The Rise of Christianity* however, had some highly original traits. For example, Kalthoff was, and apparently remained all his life, a working pastor of the Lutheran Church. Today, we are quite used to Christian Modernists of various shades, but apart from our German author, I have still never heard of one who was actually like this Lutheran pastor, a mythicist, viz. one who denied the existence of any historical Christ. Which prompts the surely pertinent question, how it is even possible to be a Christian without Christ? Further, Kalthoff was a sociologist; his reconstruction of Christian origins was primarily sociological, and not literary or theological, in character. This, I may relevantly add, is particularly interesting since I consider that the major weakness of the mythicist position is to be found precisely in the sociological domain. I do not recall any major movement founded in historical times that did not preserve some probably authentic traditions of some historic founder or founders. As a sociologist, Kalthoff gives a very original and interesting collective explanation of Christian origins by assuming that Jesus Christ represented a collective symbol created by the imagination of the outcast classes in the Roman social order. Jesus Christ, according to our Lutheran historian (with whom Luther most certainly would not have concurred), was not a man but was the symbol of a defeated and frustrated class; a class "without hope in this world" as an early Christian writer actually stated,

who had recovered their hope of emancipation in the next world through the symbolic agency of Jesus Christ and his liberating cross! Lastly, Kalthoff advanced the daring, but extremely interesting theory that Christianity actually began in Rome, the metropolis of the slave-empire, where our Synoptic Gospels appear to have been written (Mark and Luke in particular) and for which both Roman legal and historical evidence can be plausibly adduced (e.g. Christ's

pronouncement on divorce in Mark is based on Roman, not Jewish law). According to Kalthoff's Roman thesis, the Gospels transported Christian origins to Palestine, the Jewish Holy Land, to fit in with Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. After all,

the Old Testament, the sole Jewish Bible until the New Testament canon was first recognised about 180 AD, knew and said nothing about a Roman Messiah.

Christ had to be born, live and die in Palestine so that "the prophecies might be fulfilled".

Spartacus and Christian Origins

Since Albert Kalthoff's basic theory was that Christ represented a collective symbol of the frustrated classes in the Roman Empire—amongst which classes the slaves were *facile princeps*—the then recent and current fortunes of that class were obviously all-important to his conception of Christian origins. For the rapid and spectacular expansion of Roman Imperialism after its decisive victory in the Punic Wars in first the Western, then the Eastern Mediterranean, had uprooted the entire ancient civilisation and had created a huge slave-class out of the subjugated populations. It was, or so Kalthoff argues, the religious thinkers of this class who were later to create Christianity—and possibly other religions as well. But resignation to their fate in this world represented, not the beginning, but the end of the process. For, first the newly enslaved populations rose in armed revolt against Rome, not once but repeatedly, in Greece, Asia Minor and (several times) in Sicily during the 2nd century BC. These despairing revolts, which were only suppressed with difficulty by the Roman legions, culminated (73-71 BC) in the great Italian Servile insurrection, led by the great Thracian ex-gliadiator and undoubted military genius, Spartacus, which brought the Roman Republic to the verge of ruin. This little-known, but no doubt very important, event ended—though only after a fearful struggle—in the ruthless suppression of the slaves. According to Plutarch, the Roman General, Crassus, crucified alive the whole 6,000 survivors on the road from Capua (where the revolt had begun) to Rome. This white terror proved to be decisive; there were no more slave wars in classical society. Henceforth, the slaves "were without hope in this world" (my italics). From the resulting backwash, from the now hopeless despair of a finally doomed class, Christianity, our author contends, was born in the century after Spartacus had failed and along with him, the hopes of the ancient slaves.

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

Did Christianity Start in Rome?

By F. A. RIDLEY

Wishful Thinking

From which standpoint one might affirm the real founder of Christianity was the unknown propagandist of genius who hit on the really brilliant idea of transforming the cross which had finished off the slaves of Spartacus in this world, into their emblem of victory and salvation in the next—a piece of wishful thinking that was to pay big dividends. It was certainly a stroke of genius on the part of Paul (or whoever it was who was responsible). It was the easier to do since religious ideas had already been closely associated with the unsuccessful slave risings; in particular an egalitarian cult of the sun, the symbol of equality, is known to have played a certain part in these risings. The New Testament phrase about the sun "which shines equally upon the just and upon the unjust" may well have originated in some now lost writing of this egalitarian solar cult.

Religious Messianism was, in fact, common amongst all these servile movements, Pagan and Jewish alike. Upon which theme, Kalthoff himself cites another German historian of this phase of antiquity, Professor Bucher:—"However much we may or may not be disposed to accept these religious influences, it is at least undeniable that they must be regarded as a mighty lever in these, as in numbers of later popular movements for redemption from human misery and degradation, just as the religious socialism of

the Anabaptists is not an isolated phenomenon but a link in a great chain so Eunus (Sicilian slave-leader) was not the last of his kind. The heroes of the second Sicilian slave-rising (104-99 BC) which seemed to follow the lines of the earlier one down to the smallest details, appeal also to the superstition of the masses. Even the strong figure of Spartacus was haloed in the eyes of his followers; by the dim light of religious superstition".

Christ and Rome

We do not think that we do our author's thesis any injustice if we indicate that in his opinion, Christianity was born from the defeat and frustration of the slaves, and that Jesus Christ represented an *ideal* figure, a sort of historical amalgamation of the various servile leaders and teachers who had speculated and agitated against Rome during the preceding centuries. As for Christianity's actual place of origin, the Roman historian Suetonius, appears to imply that it originated in the Roman ghetto, *sub impulsore chresto* (at the instigation of Christ) and the Roman associations of the new religion are certainly much older than, at any rate, the Gospels. The theory at least deserves a more serious investigation than it appears to have received, as indeed, does Albert Kalthoff's whole thesis. A reissue of his original stimulating, and still important book, would be most timely.

Points from Recent Books

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

IN THE SECOND VOLUME OF HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *The Roaring Twenties* (Bodley Head, 25s.), Jack Lindsay gives a rollicking picture of the bohemia of Sydney in the twenties. I think one can best get the flavour of this racy book with the following quotation:

"One day Ray and I were on the way to see Beutler. Ray had had more beer than I had. Suddenly there poured out of some hall in George Street a horde of parsons in dog collars; some church-meeting must have been held in the hall. Ray, amazed and delighted at such a congregation of clerical black, ran up and down the gutter, shouting with laughter and peering into the faces of the men, pointing them out to the rest of the world. The clergy shamefacedly dispersed as fast as they could, and no policeman interfered.

"We had another drink in an arcade, while Ray vociferated his tale. 'A marvellous sight. Thousands and thousands of bloody parsons like a plague of blackbeetles. There they were, crawling all over the place. And can you believe it? Nobody taking any notice, nobody rushing up with disinfectants and brooms . . . Thousands of blackbeetles dressed like men and nobody taking the least bit of notice. It's a mad world. Now, if it'd been a few thousand girls with no clothes on, everyone would have been horrified. Can you believe the world is mad?'"

J. A. Cuddon's *The Owl's Watchsong* (Barrie and Rockliff, 25s.) reveals the magic behind a name, the secrets of Istanbul. This exposure of harems and history can be read with sustained delight, but I think certain paragraphs will be of special interest to readers of THE FREETHINKER.

For instance: "In some Mohammedan countries even the praying mantis is supposed to turn reverently towards Mecca, and if this seems strange we must remember that St. Francis, finding one in the attitude of prayer, actually ordered it to utter praise of God. What is more—it did so. But, as the great Fabre wrote: 'These attitudes of prayer

conceal the most atrocious habits. These supplicating arms are lethal weapons; these fingers tell no rosaries but help to exterminate the passer-by'. He might have added that men hide similar habits with comparable piety".

And: "On the Orthodox Epiphany it was the custom, in the early morning, to celebrate the ceremony of Baptism of Waters (of the Tagus). The Bishop held a service and then showed a golden cross to the crowd. This was then flung into the water. Men plunged in to retrieve it. It was, of course, a great distinction to do so and it had the double advantage of a reward in cash as well as an increased reputation for piety".

Finally, there is plenty of local colour—love potions and exotic superstitions—in Emigdio Alvarex Enriquez's novel, *The Devil Flower* (Secker & Warburg, 15s.). The story shows how the people of the Philippines may use the Catholic faith as a veneer over their own beliefs. The native girl, who is the heroine, becomes a respectable school teacher; but she is haunted by desire when she meets a man who has seduced a nun. She hears that he would watch for the nuns "entering the church in a long line at cock's crow for the morning Mass, and when Sister Claribel came along, he would suddenly appear from behind the water font to annoy her. Then one morning they had dipped their fingers into the font at the same time, and their fingers had touched . . . Touching the fingers of the nun made him feel as if he had discovered a body under the statue's garments, and the feeling was unholy".

One realises that the attraction of the poor school teacher for the ravisher of nuns comes from her religious upbringing, from the powerful emotions of guilt which have been instilled into her in the convent school instead of the human lessons of compassion and forgiveness. One is not surprised that she dies finally of tuberculosis, "her dress of white voile all spotted and spattered with blood . . . like a bride who has been ravished by her impatient groom".

—NEXT WEEK—

GOD AND MAMMON

By F. A. RIDLEY

Illegitimacy

By "EDMUND"

DR. EUSTACE CHESSE, who was in the news last year in connection with the banned *Getting Married* booklet, has described the unmarried mother and child as "two of the most tragic creatures known in Christian civilisation". The ostracism society accords these unfortunates can certainly have disastrous and far-reaching effects: one illegitimate child can cause no end of distress, affecting a whole family and bringing embarrassment to a wider circle. Adoption, even when the child can be "placed" successfully, is by no means a solution to the problem because the ramifications are many. How many middle-aged women are aware of the whereabouts of their (now grown up) adopted illegitimate sons and daughters? What do their minds go through when they see them in the street—not daring to speak to them for fear of unfortunate consequences? How many families have the occasional visit from a "cousin" who is in fact much closer related than some of the family suspect? No doubt there are many older women who would give everything to have their lives over again—and this time they would keep their luckless illegimates, and to hell with society!

Many families are affected, directly or indirectly, by this outrage against humanity. In the first place there are roughly 35,000 born out of wedlock every year (i.e. 5 per cent of all births), but to this figure must be added a long list of abortions, most of which are effected secretly. Some sociologists say that illegitimacy plays a big part in the delinquency problem. Mary Ellison, in her book *The Adopted Child*, writes: "It may not be too much to say that at least forty per cent of the street walkers of this country could have made something better of life had they been treated with gentleness, wisdom and consideration by their own families when the first pregnancy of an unmarried mother confronted them". Alex Comfort, in *Sexual Behaviour and Society* contends that there is "a striking incidence of delinquency in children subjected to bandying about in infancy at the time when they depend most upon stable emotional ties". Burbury, Balint and Yapp, in *An Introduction to Child Guidance*, observe: "Illegitimacy . . . is one of the most serious and frequent causes of maladjustment". Another investigator, Carr-Saunders, found that illegimates contributed to delinquency at four times the rate of non-illegimates. These researchers and others witness to the terrible effect the illegitimatising of babies has upon our society. We may well ask how such a terrible situation is perpetuated in this "enlightened" age.

In spite of their profession of Love and Forgiveness, the Christian Churches are largely to blame for the predicament of the unmarried mother and her bastard child. And in spite of all the modern young clergymen ("I enjoy sex, too, you know") has to say upon the matter *there is nothing the Churches can do about it*. Even the most progressive and liberal of these churchmen must perforce deem it a sin, to be repented of. Those clergymen who bemoan the fact that their pregnant unmarried communicants never go to them for help cannot really be surprised: perhaps these poor girls notice that the vicar isn't so quick to call upon financial, political and military offenders to repent their sins.

It matters not, to the Christian, whether two lovers are responsible people, whether more good than harm can come from the highly suspect "sublimation" process, whether a person is born so handicapped as to preclude the probability of acquiring a permanent partner—they must

not do that "sinful", if most natural and pleasurable thing. Outside marriage it becomes "lust".

The more progressive or insincere of our clergy are seemingly glad to turn a blind eye to the wholesale flouting of these severe codes by their faithful communicants (In one of every seven marriages in this country the bride is pregnant on her wedding day; about four out of every ten married people these days have had premarital intercourse) but the revealing of "sin" by the birth of an illegitimate, prevents them from dealing with the situation in a sane, humanitarian manner. The poor mother can hardly be accorded the usual church ceremonies (probably the baptism will take place in the secrecy of the mother's home or in an institution) and she must be made to feel repentant.

We know, and no doubt most clergymen know, that usually the unmarried mother is sinned against (if we may use such a phrase) and it is Christian society that plays the rôle of sinner.

Apart from the obvious necessity of bringing children up to be responsible adults, one essential contribution to the elimination of unwanted babies is available—birth control. But although the Established Church has belatedly decided that birth control within marriage is a "Christian duty", it denies this facility to the unmarried! We may be on the threshold of the production of a completely safe and very convenient method of birth control but Christians are up in arms. (Would that the Churches despised weapons of "defence" half as much: fornication would seem to be much more reproachable than mass extermination in a "just war." Fornication, apparently, can never be the lesser of two evils!) Probably it is generally agreed, by religious and non-religious authorities alike, that monogamy is the most satisfactory state for *most* people for *most* of their lives; but the Bible has ordained that monogamy may only be replaced by the higher state of celibacy. And so the Churches arrive at their ludicrous and cruel opposition to birth control for the unmarried.

Having withheld the information that would prevent bastard children, the Churches proceed to make abortion illegal; thereby creating a position where, according to Chesser, 90,000 illegal abortions take place annually. Again, the Roman Church displays the grossest inhumanity in that it prevents, where it can, the efficient limitation of family size to its married members, and causes a great deal of misery and suffering to them as well as to the unmarried.

There will always be children born to mothers who have parted from, or never attached themselves for any lengthy period to, their lovers. There need not be anything like so many, and of those that are born in that situation there should rarely be any question of adoption. That day will come when there are no priests to cajole young girls into disastrous marriages and to make them feel guilty. It is up to every parted unmarried mother and illegitimate child in the land to play an active, if anonymous, part in combating this evil. It is also up to every self-respecting Rationalist to realise that when they have their children baptised in church for convention's sake, or so as not to offend a mother-in-law, they are lending support to a cruel creed and hanging another millstone round another illegitimate baby's innocent neck.

A typical statement of "enlightened" Christianity, taken from *The Illegitimate Child: A Challenge to Society* (Published by the National Council for the Unmarried Mother
(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

We note in an article in the "News Chronicle"—not without a little amusement—that Mrs. Elaine Morgan, the writer of a popular serial on TV, telling us that though she is an Agnostic, she is "all for Christianity"; and to prove this, she is writing a play to be televised on December 28th, "destined for our enjoyment". The play is about Herod and the Massacre of the Innocents which she wrote "through tears". As a good "agnostic" she obviously believes every word of the Massacre, and her play will no doubt whatever do much to perpetuate the beautiful story. What about the Angels singing Hosannas at the Birth of the Babe of Nazareth? Couldn't we have a play about them too?

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One of the most popular "hymns" ever written, and set to some very fine music, is William Blake's "Jerusalem", and the book critic of the *Daily Express* wonders "if the churchgoers who regularly belt it out . . . or the beldames at women's conferences who kick off proceedings with a spirited rendering, realise what they are giving vent to is an anti-clerical pean in praise of free love?"

★

At least this is the meaning given by the aforesaid critic; but it is difficult to see this in the poem itself. One thing is true, however, of Blake. As a friend of Thomas Paine, he certainly had little use for contemporary religion in spite of the way our TV tries to make the artist Blake a Christian because he drew Angels. He finishes his "Everlasting Gospel" with the couplet,

I'm sure this Jesus will not do,
Either for Englishman or Jew.

No Christian could have written that.

★

Some of the noble band who grace our House of Lords debated the Freedom of the Press the other day, and were in favour of curtailing that freedom. It will certainly be a sad day for Freethought if they ever succeeded. They would like nothing better than to clamp down on any criticism of Jesus or Christianity or the Bible—all done, of course, in the glorious name of Freedom. We must however congratulate the Archbishop of Canterbury, for he did say, "Never tamper with the freedom of the Press. This freedom remains the hallmark of a liberal and civilised society". But it is an historical fact that Christianity as such, and in spite of the Archbishop, has always hated any idea of "a liberal and civilised society".

★

We always give where possible accounts of remarkable miracles, especially those taking place abroad where it is quite impossible for us to test them. However, we duly note that of an Italian in Brazil "in 1920, at the height of his powers, miracle after miracle happened through him". His name is Mirabelli and, according to *Psychic News*, "at times there were more than 60 witnesses, including prominent Brazilian scientists". One of his miracles, and it almost beats anything Jesus ever did, is when he was waiting for a train he suddenly vanished, and *exactly* two minutes later, "he was reported to be 55 miles away".

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Another remarkable miracle—which however does not equal the Ascension of Jesus—is his levitation "above the pavement" where he stayed for three minutes. Alas, the prominent Brazilian scientists did not witness this, which is an awful pity. Still, he managed to make "bottles and glasses play a military march without human contact". Surely there were some prominent military men there as witnesses? Anyway he "was able to impress the image of Jesus on cement" by sheer thought. And of course the

usual committee of fully believing Spiritualists testified that not one of Mirabelli's miracles was due to fraud. Thank God all of them were done in Brazil!

★

Our biggest miracle however is this week reserved for the members of the Flat Earth Society who managed to get on to TV by one—though they are far from satisfied. The secretary is furious because they are not taken seriously. He is absolutely sure that the sun is merely a flat disc only 32 miles across; so is the moon though much smaller. And the world has a roof over it. At least he has the Bible behind him.

To the Freethinkers of Britain

By J. de VERA (Spain)

HUMAN LIBERTIES cannot be set out in a utopian declaration of principles devoid of concrete reality. Man is not a creature that can live on ideas alone, without their expression into the reality in which he exists, whereby the ideas become facts. To be satisfied with printing on paper the sacred name of liberty without its concrete application to men's lives is a cruel, inhuman masquerade. Unless men are really free, abstract liberty may mean just concrete slavery. For instance: The Declaration of the Rights of Man! What are man's rights in Spain?

Democracy is synonymous with factual freedom. The real man is free, the man of flesh and bone that we and our fellows all are; free to determine his own destiny and not to live as slave to a government sold to inhuman interests; free because each can have his say, be what it may; free since every man can vote for what pleases him most; free since none may take away these freedoms. On the contrary it is wrong to sustain a theory which claims to set limits on the destiny of another. Adolf Hitler was a "Superman" who believed himself appointed to save mankind, and to establish a New Order. Certain states today believe themselves to be guardians of this New Order and do not refrain from declaring so roundly when addressing a defenceless people.

Why is it that nations thought to be democratic treat with the agents of the most inhuman tyranny? The world believes that the English people endeavour to live democratically. The same world knows the meaning of Franco's government, which is that of a band of wayside mountebanks and assassins who, established by the bayonets of Hitler, Mussolini, tyrannise Spain in their own interests and those of the Vatican. English Freethinkers should know that Franco has a special law against Freethought and a ministry to enforce it. The Spanish people will remember. There will come a day when Spain will once more be free. In that moment of struggle the Freethinkers of Spain will invite and expect the help of the Freethinkers of the Free World.

Castiella was invited to visit England. The English should know that he is Franco's minister and not Spain's. Castiella's visit will not prejudice Spain. The Spanish people yearn for freedom. Sooner or later it will come; it will surely come.

ILLEGITIMACY (Concluded from page 219)

and her Child) by Dr. H. P. Newsholme reads: "The attitude of the helper towards the individual case has to include a recognition of the gravity of the failure to maintain the ideals and dignity of relation between man and woman". Would it not be a better world if they applied this harsh treatment to the more deserving cases mentioned earlier? Are there not 45 million refugees in the world who suffer at the hands of infinitely greater sinners?

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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, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London (Tower Hill).—Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.; Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

Marble Arch Branch N.S.S. (Marble Arch). — Meetings every Sunday, from 5 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD and D. TRIBE.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1). Sunday, July 10th, 11 a.m.: R. W. SORENSEN, M.P., "Democracy on Trial—Venezuela and the Carribean".

Sussex Branch N.S.S. (Regency Square, Brighton), Sunday, July 10th, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.: Messrs. BARKER and EBURY.

Notes and News

TWO BATH MEN on remand in Horfield Prison wrote pleas to the magistrates, asking not to be sent to Borstal (Bristol *Evening Post*, 25/6/60). A 17 year old girl was expecting a baby by one of them, and he planned to marry her; the wife of the second was expecting their first child in October. Prospective fatherhood was no doubt taken into consideration in both cases with fines of £10 each and costs. But we must be forgiven for wondering what kind of fathers they will make, having thrown two children into a lake in Royal Victoria Park after going drinking, following a wages dispute with the firm by whom they were employed. Perhaps it will be all right, after all, though, at least in one case. "I am anxious to get married and to make a home of my own", he said. "I have started reading the Bible and saying a short prayer every day, hoping the Lord will forgive me. I shall not go into public houses again".

★

"THE TIME IS SHORT" warned the Archbishop of York recently in his monthly York Diocesan leaflet. Dr. Ramsey was speaking about Christianity in Africa and pointing out that it was more and more, being regarded as the white man's creed. He even envisaged the loss of all Africa to Christianity. Another Archbishop, Dr. Joost de Blank of Cape Town, agreed that the time was critical. The Christian Church was at the crossroads, he said (*Time*, 13/6/60) and "Unless it openly and publicly repudiates the doctrine and practice of compulsory segregation, it is condemning itself to extermination—and the whole of South

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

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Africa will be wide open to Secularism and non-Christian creeds".

★

Fundamentalist Premier Dr. Verwoerd also thought that Christianity was "threatened in Africa more than anywhere else", but looked to segregation as the answer.

Kennedy for Presidency?

WE SHALL SOON KNOW whether the American Democratic Party has decided to nominate a Roman Catholic for the Presidency

As the Convention nears, the problem gets no easier. Fair-minded commentators are agreed that Senator John F. Kennedy is honest, sincere, and liberal in outlook, as well as personally charming. If he weren't a Roman Catholic he would seem a very good choice for Presidential candidate. It is his Catholicism that raises doubts in many minds. Why?

Pure bigotry, is the usual Roman Catholic reply, and of course there are lots of Protestant and even Atheist bigots. But it is by no means as simple as that. To quote Senator Kennedy's Administrative Assistant, Theodore C. Sorensen, in an address to the Washington Ethical Society, D.C., on April 10th, 1960:

The issues of public education, an ambassador to the Vatican, our relations with such nations as Spain or Colombia, our own religious liberties and traditional separation of Church and State, even the use of our foreign aid for birth control—these are legitimate questions because they involve public policy. No one should feel bigoted about raising them, and no candidate should feel persecuted if he is asked them.

We may agree with Mr. Sorensen's addendum that, "It is unfortunate that all of our Presidential nominees have not answered these legitimate questions on religion with equal candour" to that of Senator Kennedy. The Senator's own sincerity is not, we repeat, in question. When he says he would not allow "ecclesiastical pressures or obligations of any kind" to interfere with his conduct as President; when he declares federal aid to parochial schools to be "clearly unconstitutional", we believe he speaks honestly.

The only question is, can he practise what he preaches? For he most definitely does *not* preach the official attitude of his Church. That official attitude was stated by Father Thomas Brummel, C.M.F., Secretary of Faculty at the Claretian House of Studies (affiliated with the Catholic University of America) in the *Washington Post*, April 28th, 1960, when he was rebuking Senator Kennedy for his public statement on birth control. Father Brummel said:

The Catholic Church teaches that a Catholic in public office should act like a Catholic, forming his judgments in public affairs according to Catholic morality.

In making his statement on birth control, Senator Kennedy must have known he would incur ecclesiastical rebuke; he showed himself prepared to flout "ecclesiastical pressures and obligations"; and he has frankly earned our admiration in his staunch upholding of the principle of separation of Church and State. We think that, if elected President, he could and would keep his word to put the obligations of that office before those of the Roman Catholic Church. We think, furthermore, that his tolerance and integrity would throw into relief the absence of these qualities in the American Roman Catholic hierarchy, which would be quite unable to resist condemning him for acting like a President and not a specifically Catholic President. C.McC.

Kingsley and Newman

By H. CUTNER

A NEW BIOGRAPHY OF Charles Kingsley by R. B. Martin entitled *The Dust of Combat* appeared last year, and it took me back to the days when, at school, at the age of ten, I was presented with *Westward Ho!* as a prize for "good conduct". What a wonderful romance is *Westward Ho!* I read and re-read it, quite sure that all the characters were real people, and almost cried when I later found out that the book was after all just fiction. Is *Westward Ho!* still read, I wonder? That a mere clergyman could possibly have written it still astonishes me. But Charles Kingsley was much more than a parson. He was a brilliant writer, poet, and novelist, and I hope Mr. Martin's book will send some readers at least back to *Alton Locke* and *Hypatia* and *The Water Babies*—to say nothing of *Westward Ho!*

I once worked on a provincial newspaper under a Roman Catholic editor, and he was quite angry when I praised up this adventure story with its uncompromising Elizabethan background of anti-Catholicism, and its terrifying exposure of the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition. Naturally he claimed it was all either untrue or grossly exaggerated; but all my subsequent reading has placed me firmly on the side of Kingsley. He certainly had no love at all for Roman Catholicism, and I for one am glad that he had the temerity to attack the greatest Roman Catholic of his day in England. That is what J. H. Newman was when he left the Church of England for Rome, after helping to flood the country with what he called *Tracts for the Times*. These *Tracts*, mostly the result of the meeting between three grave Churchmen, Newman, R. H. Froude, and John Keble, were based on the hope that England would come back to the primitive Christianity of the early Church, not necessarily of the Church of Rome, but of the universal Catholic Church which was supposed to be the ideal of the Church of England even if it had in the meantime lost its tremendous reforming zeal. They reiterated to quote one critic (W. G. Hutchinson), "High Anglican Doctrines, grown atrophied by disuse, such as the Apostolic Succession, practically discarded by the Low Church . . . They implicitly condemned the opinions of many in the Church, no doubt, but that was because, rightly or wrongly, these latter had departed from the Anglican positions"; and Newman of course "enjoyed writing them". In fact, as he himself said in *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864) "I thought that the Apostolic form of doctrine was essential, and its grounds of evidence impregnable". Besides the *Tracts*, Newman preached a number of remarkable sermons—that is, remarkable for Christian believers—and his hearers, says Hutchinson, thus submitted "to the spell of one of the greatest preachers the world has ever known". Newman did not get his great reputation for nothing.

It is necessary to stress all this because when Kingsley stood up to him after his conversion, Newman was considered to be almost superhuman—in certain circles of course—and it was a bitter blow to find that, after defending the Church of England with his brilliant pen and voice, and in so doing attacking the Church of Rome, he went right over to the "enemy". The Oxford Movement (as it was called) makes fascinating religious history, for it shows how so many good, earnest, Christians can quarrel and hate and accuse each other of stark dishonesty or infidelity or inability to understand the plain teachings of the Fathers. But it would take a book to describe all the side issues engendered by the famous *Tracts*, and the

Oxford Movement in general.

Not for Charles Kingsley were all the subtle arguments and keen criticisms of Newman. Kingsley was a Christian Socialist—at least in the early part of his career—and the awful misery of the poor, during the early part of the 19th century, whether in industry or on the land, left him white-hot with indignation—as readers of *Yeast* and *Alton Locke* saw clearly. He had no use, or at least very little use, for the "back to the Fathers" philosophy of Newman and Pusey when people were dying in suffering and poverty and misery. And one day, trusting to his memory, he wrote an article in which he said,

Truth for its own sake, had never been a virtue with the Roman clergy. Father Newman informs us that it need not, and on the whole ought not to be; that cunning is the weapon which heaven has given to the Saints wherewith to withstand the brute male force of the wicked world which marries and is given in marriage. Whether his notion be doctrinally correct or not, it is at least historically so.

However true all this may be of some Catholic writers, Newman himself was far too clever to make it possible for any one to attack him this way—as Kingsley soon found out. In truth, he could not say where Newman had "informed" the world that truth was not a particular virtue of the Roman clergy, and in the end, he had, rather lamely, to apologise. But, as Mr. Martin points out, Newman was not going to allow Kingsley this easy way out of his unlucky blunder, and pressed him very hard as much to vindicate the Roman Church as himself. Kingsley was stung to the quick, and made matters still worse by producing a pamphlet, *What, Then, Does Fr. Newman Mean?* which Mr. Martin characterises as "a disastrous failure". Kingsley admitted that he had to withdraw his "charge of conscious dishonesty", but he hoped to make the illustrious convert and his admirers "sorry that they did not leave" him alone. The net result of this was Newman's famous *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*—a magnificently written autobiography in which the author did his utmost to justify himself in everything he did, though humbly admitting making some mistakes. But Mr. Martin himself finally wondered, whether if the issue between Newman and Kingsley involved Truth—"how much was it served by either Newman or Kingsley?"

Very nearly everything I have read about the *Apologia* goes into raptures about its wonderful English and dead-end argument; poor Kingsley in fact simply had no chance with the amazing Newman. But there is one book not well known these days, the author of which was a Roman Catholic priest, and who went right over to Protestantism, who did not mince matters about Newman. This is *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* by Pastor Chiniquy.

Chiniquy (when in the Roman Church) and his fellow priests gladly welcomed *Tracts for the Times* but some of them all the same were not at all sure of Newman's sincerity.

His contradictions were so numerous, his sudden transitions from one side to the other extreme . . . his expressions of love and respect for his own Church in one tract, so suddenly followed by the condemnation of her dearest doctrines and practices in the next, caused many others, as well as myself, to suspect that he had no settled principles, or faith in any religion.

In other words, Chiniquy could see that Newman (like Pascal) was only a believer through emotion or sentiment; and the fact that the Church of Rome almost ignored him for many years after his conversion is proof that the Vatican always suspected their brilliant convert of heresy.

of some kind.

For Chiniquy, the *Apologia* proved that Newman was "nothing else than one of those free-thinkers who had no real faith in any of the sacred dogmas he was preaching, and on which he was writing so eloquently". Chiniquay calls Newman's Tract 90 "perfidious", and he adds,

No one can read that book (the *Apologia*) written with almost superhuman skill, ability, and finesse, without a feeling of unspeakable sadness at the sight of such bright talents, such eloquence, such extensive studies employed by the author to deceive himself and deceive his readers . . . but no one can read the book without feeling a sense of terror also . . . Among the mass of "beliefs" with which the *Apologia* is crowded, I came across this—"I said the Catholic Church

holds it better for the sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail, and for all the many millions on it to die of starvation in extremest agony, as far as temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say, should be lost but should commit one single venial sin, should tell one wilful untruth, or should steal one poor farthing without excuse". I prefer Kingsley's manly "Christian Socialism" a hundred times to this kind of religious drivel even though we find it in the famous *Apologia*. But of course as an exercise in the writing of English the *Apologia* deserves all the eulogies showered upon it. But not at all in my opinion for its "religious opinions". I prefer *Westward Ho!*

Tolpuddle—Yesterday and Today

By ALAN O. SNOOK

(Continued from page 216)

In 1836, Sir William Molesworth, Radical M.P. for East Cornwall, seconded a motion for the suppression of Orange Lodges, on the grounds of their being illegal. He declared that the Tolpuddle Unionists had been sentenced for an act of comparative innocuousness, and his reference to the Orangemen and their illegal oaths was clear. Molesworth was strongly opposed to transportation, and in 1837 he obtained the appointment of a Commission on the subject.

As the result of what was nothing less than a vile conspiracy between Home Secretary Melbourne and the Magistrates, the half dozen simple men of Tolpuddle were arrested, given a mockery of a trial, and sentenced to seven years transportation. Nobody disputed that all six were good men, good husbands and fathers, clean livers, strict Christians and conscientious workers. At the conclusion of the so-called trial at Dorchester the Judge made no attempt to disguise the fact that the six men were being sentenced as an example to other potential Trade Unionists, and not for any crime they themselves had committed.

James Frampton, of Moreton, a local magistrate and Lieutenant-Colonel, Dorset Yeomanry, was the man chiefly responsible for the persecution, prosecution and transportation of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. A loyal supporter of the Establishment, his brutal, heartless and vicious attitude to the labourers is clearly illustrated by an event which took place in 1830. A crowd of destitute labourers and their families had gathered together to beg for a wage increase, "advancing rather respectfully with their hats in their hands". Frampton, at the head of the police, charged the crowd, and with the help of his son arrested three men and took them to Dorchester Gaol.

In 1934 letters which passed between Frampton and the Home Secretary were published for the first time. The contents of these letters prove beyond all doubt that Frampton, with the help of the Home Secretary, was determined, by hook or crook, to unearth some law or other, relevant or otherwise, to ensure the conviction and transportation of the men of Tolpuddle. After the trial Frampton wrote to Melbourne, "The conviction and prompt execution of the sentence of transportation has given the greatest satisfaction to all the Higher classes . . ."

Not content with achieving his objective, Frampton then distinguished himself by refusing parochial relief to the wives and families of the convicted men. The petty nastiness of this wealthy and arrogant man is fully illustrated in a letter he wrote in May, 1834. "Our object in doing this was to prove to the labourers that the leaders of the Unions had deceived them if they did not support their

families; and if they did maintain them to lessen the funds of the Union at the same time that it relieved the Parish." Mrs. Standfield, mother of five, was actually summoned by the Parish Overseer for poor rates, and had to appear on two occasions at Dorchester.

Two years passed by, and such was the indignation in the country at the brutal sentences passed on the six labourers that eventually they were "pardoned". However, many weary months dragged by before they returned from the ends of the earth. Thanks to the efforts of loyal friends, several of the martyrs were presented with farms of their own, far from Tolpuddle. It was feared that a return to their native village would invite further persecution. George and James Loveless, with James Brine, took a farm at Greensted Green, Essex. Even here, however, Holy Church reared its nasty head, the village parson, the Rev. Philip Ray, publicly protesting at the invasion of the parish by a lot of convicts. It appears to have escaped his reverence's memory that his Saviour was a political convict. Eventually Canada became the home of all the martyrs except James Hammett: the latter lies in the village churchyard at Tolpuddle. All these men were Dissenters, staunch Methodists: one unbeliever at least pays his humble tribute to them and the chapel from which they undoubtedly drew their moral strength.

(To be concluded)

For Miss Helen Keller

(blind and deaf American author)
On her 80th birthday, 27th June, 1960

You, unreachable through stone-deaf ears,
Although a poet's lines should come through sound;
Nor through an eyesight that you never found,
But know my lines by courage which endears;
You, by your brave defeat of guardians' fears
That you from song and colour were quite bound;
You, Helen Keller, who your friends astound—
We wish you birthday happiness and cheers!

Man comes from darkness and to darkness goes,
And the first sound he hears is his first cry
When he makes entry in our world of woes,
Which men and women must endure, then die.
Yet courage shown, as that which you life gave,
Has its rewards, and mankind still can save.

—BAYARD SIMMONS.

CORRESPONDENCE

CORRECTION

Reference your statement in your issue of June 17th:
"The 1959 Act will give Roman Catholic Schools about £22 million."

In the interest of accuracy on this important point, permit me to remark that the figure should read £27 (twenty-seven) million.

THE RT. HON. LORD JUSTICE WILMER.

[We thank Lord Justice Wilmer for his correction. Our figure was taken from the Rev. H. D. Longbottom's pamphlet *Creed and Juvenile Crime*—Ed.]

MILITANCY

Some sentimental souls, motivated by the desire to increase THE FREETHINKER'S popularity, suggest a change in its policy: the adoption of gentle manners and a cessation of the forthright attacks against any Church in particular or any religion in general. No more ridiculing of gods, saints or Christian superstitions. Respect for Christian rituals. To be a reverently acceptable paper THE FREETHINKER must abandon its principles. As such it will be welcomed by all Christian circles as a final triumph of the spirit of tolerance and brotherhood. THE FREETHINKER according to our would-be advisers, should play the role of a woman who lacks individuality and personality but wants to be loved, to be wanted, to be respected, to be accepted and finally to be attached to someone for the sake of security and protection. Failing openly and fearlessly to declare its independence, and therefore failing to exhibit the most important characteristic of free inquiry, which implies rational investigation of all religions, THE FREETHINKER may as well not exist.

J.G. (Australia).

M.R.A.

Further to the remarks on M.R.A. in your Notes and News, July 1st. In the broadcast mentioned in your notes there appeared—in a printed version of it—reference to *The Times of India*. This paper, it was asserted, carried "full pages with the double banner headline 'Moral Re-Armament—the next step for communists and non-communists alike.'" Alas for M.R.A., India may be quite some way from Britain but that did not stop Mr. N. J. Nanporia, Editor of *The Times of India*, writing to *The Times* (27/6/60), and pointing out that the full page reports and banner headlines were paid advertisements inserted in his paper by M.R.A. Mr. Nanporia seemed to take a very dim view of M.R.A. tactics, for he concluded his letter with these words: "At no time have we expressed any approval in our editorial columns of the role and objectives of Moral Re-Armament. It is remarkable to say the least that the contents of a paid advertisement should by implication be ascribed to a newspaper as its considered opinion". I may also add that the *Hibbert Journal* for January 1960, contains an article on M.R.A. in which the author, writing from Nigeria, brings forward another example of M.R.A. dishonesty, in this case it is about a story circulated by Moral Re-Armament claiming credit for bringing together two prominent Nigerians. The writer states in no uncertain terms that this claim is fiction.

R. W. MORRELL.

DON'T LET'S BE BEASTLY...

Mr. F. A. Ridley quotes Mr. Archibald Robertson (June 10th), to the effect that it would be "idealism" to put the struggle against religion before that against capitalism; if the Churches or, more likely, individual Christians are prepared to co-operate in the struggle against war or for socialism, their help must be accepted and their religious views must not be unnecessarily antagonised. But this is a most selective argument. Should not the help of Tories be enlisted, where possible, in the struggle against war? Does this mean, then, that Mr. Robertson should cease his socialist propaganda for fear of antagonising his would-be Tory supporters against war?

C. H. CLEAVER.

REPAID

I should like to point out (re Notes and News, July 1st), that the 70-year-old minister, Rev. de Lingen, who turned Roman Catholic, gave back the £100 cheque received from his former congregation.

W. L. SCARLETT (Jnr.).

CIVILISATION AND DECAY

In the FREETHINKER, June 17th, 1960, in an interesting speculative style, Mr. F. A. Ridley, whose erudition and fairness I admire, raises the problem of the law of civilisation and decay, but I am rather surprised that though he covers a great deal of ground he leaves the question open. Am I right in assuming that Mr. Ridley has not read the classic *Progress and Poverty*? If so, I would suggest that he will find the answer to the problem in this work.

In any case, I should be very pleased to read his comments, or the comments of any other reader, of Book X of *Progress and Poverty* where Henry George deals with:

- The insufficiency of the current theory of human progress;
- To what the differences in civilisation are due;
- The law of human progress; and
- How modern civilisation may decline.

W. HARTLEY BOLTON

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, June 22nd, 1960. Mrs. E. Venton (Vice-President) Chair, Messrs. Arthur, Barker, Cleaver, Corstorphine, Ebury, Hornibrook, Johnson, McIlroy, Mrs. Ebury, the Treasurer (Mr. Griffiths) and the Secretary. Apologies Mr. Ridley, Mr. Corina, Mrs. Trask. New members admitted to Glasgow, Manchester, Marble Arch and Sussex Branches which with individual members made 10 in all. Messrs. Barker and Ebury would speak at Brighton on July 10th for Sussex Branch. Subscriptions to Central Bd. for C.O.s and Nat. Council for Civil Liberties approved, but opposition to Sir Leslie Plummer's bill to be reiterated to latter body. Building and re-decorating estimate for premises accepted. Posters and Press advertising agreed. Bradford, Dagenham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leicester, San Juan and Wales and Western Branch matters attended to. Outstanding Conference motions considered and various letters to the Prime Minister (re Government acquisition of land for nuclear warfare projects and Irish horses), the Home Secretary (re withholding statistics on religious beliefs of criminals and opposing new legislation to deal with anti-semitism, etc.) and the Minister of Education (condemning grants to RC schools and advocating secular education) authorised. Suggestion from Mr. C. Brunel re formation of Thomas Paine Society deferred to next meeting. Next meeting fixed for Wednesday, July 27th.

OBITUARY

The passing of an old and distinguished member of South Place Ethical Society took place when Mrs. Agnes Pollard died at the age of 92. She was the widow of Edward Pollard. Mr. and Mrs. Pollard first met when they were members of the National Secular Society and thus it can be seen that they were life-long freethinkers. A director of the well-known firm of shopfitters, Mr. Pollard was a member of the General Committee of South Place Ethical Society, his business acumen being consequently of great benefit to that Society. He was concerned in the sale of South Place Chapel and in the subsequent purchase of Conway Hall.

Mrs. Pollard's kindly nature had endeared her to all whom she met; she was a life-member of S.P.E.S.

(Reprinted from *The Monthly Record* of South Place Ethical Society, July 1st, 1960.)

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