

The Freethinker

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IN THE YEAR 394 of the present Christian era, the Roman Emperor Theodosius, issued a decree forbidding the reassembly of the Olympic Games in Greece due for that year. The Imperial Decree furthermore prohibited the reassembly of the Games altogether. Consequently the year 394 after the birth of the new Christian Deity, witnessed the definite termination of one of the longest and most glorious combinations of athletic and cultural traditions which in their totality made up what Edgar Allen Poe was aptly to term, "The Glory that was Greece". For the Olympic Games had continued uninterruptedly since the 8th century B.C. At the dawn of Greek culture in what was probably the age of

Homer himself (e.g. From certain historical allusions in the *Iliad*, its composition can be dated approximately about 900-800 B.C. The first Olympic Festival dates from 776 B.C.). Throughout this period of nearly twelve centuries, the successive Olympiads held every four years, had represented, along with the neighbouring Delphic Oracle, the totality of the Hellenic nation and culture as distinct from the many rival cities and warring states amongst which the classical Greek society was so frequently divided. One could even affirm with some approach to accuracy that, again along with the Delphic sanctuary of Apollo, the Olympic Games represented, for over a thousand years, the central and supreme embodiment of the classical Hellenic culture, beyond any reasonable question the greatest civilisation created by the human spirit.

Christianity Versus Classical Culture

The official suppression of the Olympics coincided with the final and permanent triumph of the still recent Oriental creed of Christianity. As has often been noted in these columns, the 4th century represented the decisive era in Christian annals. For, whereas 300 A.D. saw Christianity still a persecuted religion in a predominantly Pagan Empire, by 400 A.D. the tables had been completely turned, and it was now the Pagan cults of the Roman Empire that were henceforth to be harried to the point of extinction by the now victorious creed of the "jealous God". This decisive reversal of fortune was concluded finally in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius (surnamed "the Great" by a grateful ecclesiastical tradition)—a gloomy Spanish bigot and worthy predecessor of Torquemada and Loyola—who, between 378 and 395 set to work resolutely to extirpate every trace of the ancient cults of antique Paganism. It was, as a venerable and still revered relic of such cults, that the fanatical Theodosius undoubtedly suppressed the Olympic Games held since their foundation beneath the shadow of Mount Olympus, the terrestrial Greek heaven and themselves traditionally dedicated to the Olympian Zeus, the Pagan supreme deity. Whilst however, the suppression of the Games was in form and in the intention of their suppressors, an act of religious persecution, the suppression of

a cult dedicated immemorably to the gods of an older and rival creed, it actually represented the suppression by a Christian Emperor (and, no doubt, at the instigation of the Christian Church), of a complete way of life, of the traditional classical culture of the ancient Hellenes. A way of life, it may be added, which was totally incompatible in its basic principles with the radically divergent outlook that the Christian Church in the Age of Faith that was just then dawning, was to impose upon Europe by fire and sword and propaganda (a word first coined by the Catholic Church) for many centuries to come. For the classical Olympic Games, held regularly every four years from the very dawn of Hellenic

culture down to its dying moments, embodied and indeed epitomised that unique culture as did no other institution—its only possible competitor in this respect, being the neighbouring Oracle at Delphi, also a Pan-Hellenic institution which was suppressed by the Christian Empire at about the same time as the Olympic Games. (The term "Greek" was given to the classical Hellenes—as they always styled themselves—by their Roman conquerors. Hellenism represents the authentic self-chosen designation of Greek civilisation. The original Greeks were a tribe of ancient Albanian barbarians.)

Mens Sana in In Corpore Sano

The classical summary of the ancient Greek culture was given (about 100 A.D.) by the Roman poet, Juvenal, as *Mens sana in corpore sano*—a sound mind in a sound body. It represented a most apt summary of the best balanced, best proportioned culture in human annals. For the classical Hellenic culture combined the ideals of bodily perfection and of cultural excellence so as to form an integrated human individual and hence, ultimately, a fully harmonious personality in a fully integrated human society. It is probably correct to add that nowhere so completely as in the recurring Olympic Festivals was this peculiarly classical Greek ideal harmonised and synthesised. In the classical Olympic Games, patronised and revered through the Greek-speaking world for twelve centuries, athletic pastimes of every kind alternated with literary and poetic exercises. The ideal of "a sound mind in a sound body" has perhaps, never been integrated so completely, or with so wide a degree of influence, as in the Olympic Games that began in the dawn of classical civilisation and were so abruptly terminated in the falling twilight of that self-same civilisation.

Rival Ideologies

As we have already had occasion to note, the ostensible reason for the suppression of the classic Olympics, was a religious one; the close and indeed inseparable connection between the Games and the cult of the Olympian Deities in the shade of whose physical terrain, Mount Olympus, they were actually held. But in reality, one must look deeper than this ostensible reason (or pretext) in order to realise the fundamental disharmony that existed between

VIEWS and OPINIONS

The Olympic Games v. Christianity

By F. A. RIDLEY

the Greek cultural ideals embodied in the Games and the new Christian ideology. The two ideologies were in the sharpest contrast and mutual antithesis. For, while Greek Paganism revered bodily, equally with mental and artistic perfection, Christianity, then inseparably associated with an extreme asceticism, loathed and despised the human body as a sink of corruption in man and of perpetual temptation in woman, "conceived between urine and dung" as a medieval Pope, Innocent III (13th Century), was later to summarise mankind's physical origins. In ancient Christian philosophy (if one can dignify it by such a term!) the human body was not, as in ancient Greece—and as in the Olympic Games in particular—something to be admired and cultivated, but rather something to be despised, starved and neglected. This was the very age of St. Simeon Stylites, macerating himself on his pillar, and of the blessed St. Sylvia of Antioch, whose constant boast it was that she had never washed any part of her body for forty years save the tips of her fingers at Mass! As for art and intellect, both pursued with equal fervour at the Olympic Games, this was the era of the holy St. Ambrose of Milan

(who was actually the chief ecclesiastical adviser of the persecuting Emperor Theodosius) who placed it on record that "it is not by the use of logic that God has chosen to save his people" and "the study of the motions of the heavenly bodies has no bearing upon our salvation". It was also the precise era in which Christian zealots went about mauling and beheading the most exquisite creations of Hellenic Pagan art. Can it be wondered that a religion inspired by such conceptions, promptly banned as soon as it had the power, the Olympic Games, the supreme embodiment of the culture based equally on mental and on physical perfection: *mens sana in corpore sana*?

A Defeat for Christianity

The modern revival of the Olympic Games in 1896, due to reopen this month at Rome, however much smeared over by official hypocrisy in a still nominally Christian society, yet actually represents both a notable revival of the old Hellenic spirit and, as such a crushing defeat for Christianity. The Pagan ideal in its highest embodiment returns after many centuries to fight against its former persecutors—to fight, and ultimately to prevail.

It is My Will and Pleasure

By ALAN O. SNOOK

MESSRS. PICKLES, W., DIMBLEBY, R., Nichols, B., Lady Lewisham and Cartland mère, Andrew Ray and Edward père, Dors Diana and Mrs. Dale, Colin Wilson and Arlott J., Billy Graham, Zsa Zsa Gabor, the Pope, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Licensing Laws and the Thirty-nine Articles, The Lord's Day Observance Society, the Hydrogen bomb and politicians in general—especially the U.S. variety—the *News of the World*, Mister Aristotle Onassis—and now—A. Armstrong hyphen Jones, Esq. (Note: the hyphen made its appearance in the first Court Circular announcing the engagement.)

As we are swept along in ever-increasing chaos and speed to the banks of the Styx, some of us will bid farewell to the world outlined above with little regret—especially when Royalty is added to the list of futilities we have to endure. That the archaic, meaningless and cloud-cuckooland institution of Monarchy is still not only tolerated, but boosted with ever increasing abandon in this sceptred isle, is a fact shrouded in mystery, at least to this writer—though it appears I have a soul-mate on the staff of *Tribune*, who recently referred to "the inane ritual" of Royalty.

Ever since the days when Oliver got to horse and gave the *coup de grâce* to the Divine Right of Kings, the monarch has become of less and less significance—until now. The current uncritical devotion to and adulation of Royalty must make the Victorian republicans weep in their graves. The hysterical fervour of present day Royalty worship is, without doubt, in excess of anything obtaining in the days when kings ruled by divine right.

In a world largely Communist it is passing strange that the British Labour Party continues to accept and support an institution based on an effete aristocracy, class, wealth and privilege.

I was recently somewhat pained to read that the country's No. 1 Rationalist supports the institution of monarchy. What, I ask, is more irrational than a Coronation ceremony or a royal funeral? Or less civilised than the bowing and scraping still encouraged in Court circles?

The hysterical fervour mentioned above makes the impartial thinker despair of human progress based on reason. I cannot conceive of anything more irrational than hereditary monarchy. We have to take what comes. Intellectual

morons, bores and boors, supporters of the hunt and hotcha-cha: further back in history—traitors, assassins, murderers, lechers, robbers. During the last century or so how many occupants of the British throne have given the Arts any encouragement? To quote the *News Chronicle*—"the arts have always felt neglected as far as discerning patronage by the Royal Family is concerned". We could, perhaps, except Queen Victoria and her delight in Mr. Mendelssohn's music!

Let us glance at a few typical newspaper headlines.

"The little princess waved her hand . . . the crowd roared its delight."

"The schoolboy prince threw his cap in the air . . . the crowd went wild."

"The Queen smiled . . . the crowd cheered like mad."
Like mad! Ye gods.

And take a look at this one—

PRINCESS BORROWS AN UMBRELLA

Is it absolutely essential to inform the world at large that Princess Margaret is terrified of a few raindrops when treading a stately measure from the church-door to the Daimler? Time was when equestrian kings and queens of England led their troops into battle: Queen Boadicea is a notable example. Even that vile monarch Charles II. was not afraid to get his feet wet when it came to a scrap.

When listening to morons of the Dimpleby school describing a royal occasion one might suppose that visitors from Olympus were treading the earth: the bated breath, the reverent whisper, the hushed aside . . . Pah!

Some time ago the eminent rationalist mentioned above stated that Royalty worship has largely replaced the worship of God: he also implied that there was no harm in it. No positive harm, perhaps. But it is impossible to conceive of a more futile state of affairs than the fact of untold millions literally worshipping a small group of undistinguished fellow mortals, noted for nothing except the most commonplace and pedestrian interests and occupations—hunting, shooting, racing and light entertainment. *Vive la bagatelle!*

Though a left-wing socialist, this writer considers the state worship of politicians to be on a higher intellectual plane than the negative and witless worship of a few

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Paperback Paine

By CHRISTOPHER BRUNEL

THOMAS PAINE tells an anecdote of the American war of independence. A tavern-keeper at Amboy was standing at his door, holding the hand of his pretty young child. After speaking his mind "as freely as he thought was prudent", the tavern-keeper concluded with, "Well give me peace in my day". In writing his first of the *Crisis* papers, which extended from 1776 to 1783, Paine reminds his readers that independence from Britain must one day come about, and adds that a generous parent should have said, "If there must be trouble, let it be in my day that my child may have peace".

There we see the timeless sentiments in simple human terms of the fighter for colonial freedom—whether he be of eighteenth century America or twentieth century Cyprus, Kenya, Congo and many other lands. Paine's strong principles, coupled with his direct and homely style of writing, make him as valuable today in moving millions as when he lived. All sorts of tricks have been carried out, first to revile him, and then to draw a blanket of silence over his name and his books. Now, once more people are finding his worth and are beginning to honour him.

The greatest honour, of course, is to read his works, and the American publishing house of Doubleday is to be congratulated on the timeliness of the publication in one paper-backed volume of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* and *The Crisis*. (Obtainable in Britain from the Mayflower Publishing Co., Ltd., 41/43 Neal Street, London, W.C.2 at 8s.). Here are not only slices of history that are not so well known, but words to inspire.

Their power was certainly great when they were written. Within a short time, there was one copy of *Common Sense* for every six Americans, and so impressed was General Washington with the persuasiveness of the first *Crisis* paper, that he gave orders for it to be read out to his low-spirited troops. It may sound incredible, but these two works of Paine's resulted in the Declaration of Independence by the victorious revolutionary colonists.

Was Paine's pen mightier than the sword? No! But Paine has shown that a sword without a united spirit among the people is not enough. During the course of arguing in *Common Sense* all the reasons for the American colonists to adopt the idea of separation from England, he details the need for them to have a navy for national defence—despite his father's Quaker influences, he is no pacifist, who would lay the nation open to attack. Indeed, a few pages further on he ticks off the American Quakers:

Alas! it seems by the particular tendency of some part of your testimony, and other parts of your conduct, as if, all sin was reduced to, and comprehended in, *the act of bearing arms*, and that by the *people only*. Ye appear to us, to have mistaken party for conscience; because, the general tenor of your actions wants uniformity. (Paine's italics).

The spirit of independence, argued Paine, was the bond that could unite America. "We shall then see our object, and our ears will be legally shut against the schemes of an intriguing, as well, as a cruel enemy."

Paine's common sense discussion of all the points gave the colonists a true moral armament, and this enabled them to win, as it will continue to help others to win against modern imperialism. In 1776 Thomas Paine writes in his *Common Sense*:

We have boasted the protection of Great-Britain, without considering, that her motive was *interest not attachment*; that she did not protect us from *our enemies on our account*, but

from *her enemies on her account*, from those who had no quarrel with us on any *other account*, and who will always be our enemies on the same account. (Paine's italics). Yet, that could have been written by a patriotic Cypriot of today!

Contrary to what has been said about him, Paine was not an atheist, though he did attack the hypocrisy and humbug of the Church most vigorously. Time and again in *Common Sense* and *The Crisis* he refers to God. In the former he states that "the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof, that the authority of the one, over the other, was never the design of Heaven".

The future author of *The Age of Reason* very early on in *The Crisis* writes:

I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupported to perish, who had so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent.

This faith is touching, and Paine probably learnt, as we have done, that if there was a god, he can leave people unsupported for many years, as, for instance, the Spanish people and many Negro communities have been in recent years—until by their own efforts they can throw off their chains. But Paine was writing in the difficult "times that try men's souls", and there had been enough defeatism without adding to it.

In passing I wrote earlier that the history of Paine's days is not very well known. One can see why a conspiracy of silence was directed against Paine and those who thought like him. The publication of this volume—so much more desirable than mere selections of his writings—is an important event, and great credit must be given to Colonel Richard Gimbel of Yale for its presentation. A tireless bibliographer as well as a great propagandist for Paine, Colonel Gimbel has ensured the correctness of this edition of the two books in one single volume.

IT IS MY WILL AND PLEASURE

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exceedingly commonplace people—the Royal family.

Morons of the Dimbleby school make some of us long for a broad-based monarchy on Scandinavian lines—if monarchy we must have. Even a republican—such as this writer—could tolerate—as a joke—kings and queens who go for a ride on their bicycles when they feel like it, without an escort of Household Cavalry.

That the sovereign of England, three centuries after the death of Old Oliver, still uses words and phrases like the title of this article, is a fact as meaningless as the latter-day speeches of Ramsey MacDonald.

Le roi est mort, vive le roi!

AKU-AKU

"The insane superstition of the intelligent people of Easter Island was hard to understand until I began to draw parallels with our own familiar world. I have heard of twenty-storey houses which have no thirteenth floor, and of aeroplanes in which the numbers of the seats jump from twelve to fourteen. Are there people who believe that an evil spirit watches over the number thirteen—a nameless spirit of disaster? All that is wanting to complete the parallel is that we should call it an evil *aku-aku*. I have heard of people who are afraid of spilling salt, of breaking a looking-glass, or who believe that a black cat crossing the road may affect your future. These people believe in an *aku-aku*, only they do not use the name."

Thor Heyerdahl: *Aku-Aku*, p. 166/7.

This Believing World

The religious treat given us by B.B.C.'s T.V. recently was called "The Battle of Oxford", a reconstruction of the famous "debate" between Prof. T. H. Huxley and Bishop Wilberforce on Evolution, just about 100 years ago. Unfortunately, the devastating reply made by Huxley to Wilberforce's sneer about Huxley's grandfather being an ape was never accurately recorded, but it was sufficiently remembered almost to destroy the Bishop's reputation both as a Christian and a gentleman for ever.

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Canon Raven who (with James Fisher and Sir Julian Huxley) was asked to comment on the encounter, called Wilberforce's performance "tragic"; but what he immediately added, if not quite as tragic, was almost as silly. He said that the Bishop ought to have pointed out to Huxley that some of the teachings of Jesus were essentially like those of Darwin, and we expected to hear the inevitable implication—that Jesus was actually the Greatest Evolutionist who ever lived. In any case, we are sure that if Canon Raven believes in Evolution, it must be because God meant to create the World that way.

★

For the rest, Mr. Fisher declared himself an Agnostic, and though Sir Julian loves to play with the word "religion", his own religion is at least a galaxy away from that of the Canon. But we cannot help wondering whether the crushing victory of an Agnostic like Huxley over a Canon of the Church of England, described as such on a B.B.C. religious programme will fix the Faith firmer than ever with our all-believing viewers? And there are in general at least 4,000,000 of them! We fervently hope similar good B.B.C. shows will go on.

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Whatever would the great Leonardo da Vinci think of the attempt to emulate him in painting "A Last Supper" in more or less the modern manner, but using as models famous stars of stage and screen and footballers? It is possible that da Vinci, was not at all a believer; but at least his wonderful picture was as "reverent" as he could make it. The modern painting is by Andrew Vicari, and naturally all the models feel that his is also very "reverent". One of them is the Jewish comedian, Bresslaw, who thought that the three Jewish models in the picture added "authenticity" because Jesus and all his disciples were Jews!

★

Mr. Vicari chose his models because "they were visually and spiritually satisfying" to him—as, for example, a curate from Stepney—according to the *Sunday Pictorial*—who said that for him the painting was "the best publicity the Church could have" for "it stimulates discussion about religion". But does it? Is not any discussion about it really about the models? The *Sunday Pictorial* asks "Is the painting a commercialisation of God?" Well supposing it is—what then?

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Now that the forcible teaching of religion in all our schools has had a good long innings, it is most intriguing to look back and consider some of the results. We get the facts from the *Sunday Pictorial* which heads its comments, "Thieves, liars, at top school"—the school being the famous one at Highgate. Its Headmaster, Mr. Doulton, in a speech shocked parents by telling them that some of the boys "stole from each other, ganged up to lie to the masters, and when caught, lied endlessly"; and added that, "You will find them at every school in the country". These boys are very rarely, if ever, the products of non-

religious homes and in any case they are all compulsorily taught religion. What a pity that our valiant and very Christian Ministry of Education will never provide us with an answer!

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Nor will we get an answer from the Rev. D. Sheppard, once a distinguished cricketer, but now writing articles for that excellent journal for women, *Woman's Own*—why exactly, we cannot fathom. These articles, breathing a Fundamentalist attitude we thought could only emanate from the U.S.A. Middle West's most ignorant sects are full of "our Saviour", as well as "real whips, real nails, real sweaty, swearing soldiers, real blood"—why is it that the more Fundamentalist a Christian is the more he dwells on "blood"?—with which he associates Jesus in so many articles. How many of the teen-age readers of *Woman's Own* has he brought to Christ with this weird brand of religious nonsense?

FATHER PARIS REPLIES TO MRS. EBURY

Dear Mrs. Ebury,

I thank you for your "Open Letter" (THE FREETHINKER, July 15th), in reply to my private letter some months ago.

As you suggest, the article on "Science and Philosophy On The Existence of God" would, I suppose, be read with interest by Freethinkers in good faith (and manners).

The question on the eternity of matter is not new. It had been dealt with by Aristotle, St. Thomas, etc. God could have created matter from eternity had He willed so. But both modern science and general common sense are very much inclined to affirm that the "universe of matter" had a beginning. In this they agree with Holy Scripture.

The most important thing to observe in this question is that matter is *indifferent*, in itself, to be (exist) or not to be. It has nothing intrinsically which makes it necessarily exist: it could have never existed. This is what mankind and science have discovered in matter: hence the word "creation" which is admitted and used by all. The existence of matter, therefore, once it is not from matter itself, it must be from somewhere else. That Something else, or Somebody else must have been an Infinite Power: above all matter, most intelligent and of a most powerful will. "He uttered the word, and the things were done", says Holy Writ.

We admit philosophically that Power to be Personal, a "subsisting and infinite Intelligence". All-Act (*Actus Purus*) we say scholastically. Why? Because all perfections that are found in all creatures (effects) must *a priori* and *a fortiori* exist in this Power (cause); whose essence is His existence, and therefore necessarily exists and is eternal. These perfections are, in their Universal Cause, in an infinite eminent state and in so far as they are compatible with It/ or Him. Among these perfections, indeed, the first of all these perfections is Human Personality. Therefore He must be eminently personal. (Revelation has revealed Him Three Persons in One God). His intelligence and wisdom, His power and order, are manifest in all creatures, from the electrons and protons to the immense universe of galaxies. Man's "inventions" are nothing but "discoveries" of this tremendous intelligence and wisdom. This is the kind of God that "Science and Philosophy *can* (nay, *must*) lead us to". Difficulties should not discourage us: they need explanation, but should not be adopted to demolish these sound principles of natural philosophy.

As to your objection: "First cause and eternity are irreconcilable", I answer that First Cause (*Primum Mogens Immobile!*) is eternal in itself; even if it does not cause anything. It is called "First Cause" relatively to other causes, called "Secondary Causes".

The questions you mentioned on Virgin Birth, etc., belong to theology, and must not be dealt with when arguing with materialists. A full course of Catholic Doctrine may however be obtained free of charge from the Central Bureau of Information, The Catholic Missionary Society, 114 West Heath Road, London, N.W.3.

We shall be glad to send specimen copies of THE FAITH to readers of THE FREETHINKER, who, like all other men on earth, are considered by us as "children of God". In this life it is much better to love than to argue. It often happens that through love we arrive to know God in some way. Truth is essential, but Charity is the bond of perfection.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

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Notes and News

ON OUR ARRIVAL at the office the other morning we found a sealed envelope addressed to "The Propieter" (*sic.*). It contained a Bible tract. A few weeks ago a crazy dame stormed into the Pioneer Press shop demanding: "Why don't you put 'Communist' in the door?" "I know your sort," she added. Readers will no doubt know *her* sort.

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The *Guardian* (3/8/60) contained an article on Malta by Geoffrey Moorhouse entitled "Mr. Mintoff and the Church". It is possible, says Mr. Moorhouse, "that if and when elections are held in Malta the crucial engagement will be not between Mr. Mintoff and Dr. Borg Oliver (leader of the Nationalists) but between Mr. Mintoff and the Church". Only six months ago the ecclesiastical authority circulated a leaflet in which it said, "we cannot but condemn publicly and on every occasion possible various measures it (the Malta Labour Party) has adopted which are in the real sense of the word against the teaching of the Catholic Church and papal encyclicals". Chief among the measures was the party's adoption of "not only the name but also the doctrine and policy of socialism as condemned in the encyclicals". All in all, Mr. Moorhouse sees the future of Malta as "bleak". So do we. If the British Government had gone halfway to meet Mr. Mintoff at the time of the Referendum, as we advocated, things might now have been much brighter. He had defied the

Church and won. He may not win next time. He may not be the easiest of men to get on with, but he offers Malta a better future than the Church does and he is the only man who stands a chance against the Most Rev. Michael Gonzi, Assistant at the Pontifical Throne and Archbishop of Malta.

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IN TWENTY YEARS OF POWER says *Time* (1/8/60) the government of "reform-minded" Luis Muñoz has "done wonders" for Puerto Rico. But it has "incurred the sturdy opposition" of Brooklyn-born James Edward McManus, Roman Catholic Bishop of Ponce, the island's second largest city, who accuses it of disregarding "its obligations with respect to the divine laws", and who has called on Catholics to throw it out in November and elect instead a newly-formed Christian Action Party (PAC). Bishop McManus, we learn, denounced the island's legislation of birth control as far back as 1949 and is, rather understandably, "dead set against Puerto Rican law that divorces couples who have been separated for three years, and against sterilisation of women, a relatively simple procedure in public hospitals". But the real rub, it seems, came in May this year, when Governor Muñoz strongly opposed a bill authorising schoolchildren to take an hour a week off for religious instruction. The Governor pointed out that, because of a shortage of classrooms and teachers, the children only got three hours of education a day, as it was. The bill was defeated, and a month later Bishop McManus wrote in a pastoral letter: "The philosophy of your government makes it responsible for the moral evils that cloud and de-Christianise our society". Muñoz, says *Time*, "dismisses the vote-getting strength" of the new PAC, estimating it at 50,000 out of the island's 900,000. But he does worry about the "explosive emotions" that a clerical party might arouse. He wishes the bishop would stay out of politics. Perhaps, though it is better that the clash should come now: the Church may well come off worse.

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THE SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY'S Annual Reunion will be held in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, on Sunday, September 25th, at 3 p.m. This year's Guests of Honour will be Charles Bradlaugh Bonner, President of the World Union of Freethinkers and Archibald Robertson, Lecturer to the Society until his recent retirement. In addition to speeches, there will be musical items and refreshment, and the Secretary of the SPES extends a cordial welcome to all members of the National Secular Society.

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THE FOLLOWING is taken from *The Rationalist*, Organ of the South African Rationalist Association:—

"*The Bible Handbook*, by G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball, was first published in 1888, and is to be found on the bookshelves of many a rationalist in South Africa. Its tenth edition, published in 1953, has been banned by the Minister of the Interior and may not be imported or sold. The Rationalist Association is organising for August in Johannesburg a public meeting when the book will be reviewed and extracts read. The public will thus get an opportunity of forming their own opinion as to whether the Minister acted intelligently or otherwise."

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OUR OCCASIONAL CONTRIBUTOR, Mr. D. Joseph, is anxious to obtain copies of two works by Joseph Wheless, *Forgery in Christianity*, and *Is it God's Word?* both published in America by Knopf. Please write c/o THE FREETHINKER stating condition and price.

On Controversial Questions — 1

By H. CUTNER

ONE OF THE GREAT QUALITIES the Bible enjoys is that it still gallantly stands up to the most deadly and destructive criticism, and comes out as unabashed as ever.

This is not due, as readers of this journal are fully aware, to the undoubted fact that the criticism is both deadly and destructive, it is due to another undoubted fact—that few Jews and Christians know anything of the criticism, or even bother to read it if they do know. And they are often helped in their belief not only by their own all-believing followers but—I am sorry to say—by quite a number of Rationalists and Humanists.

Let me go back to a problem discussed in these columns a few months ago by Mr. P. G. Roy and Mr. R. W. Morrell, the famous "Exodus" of the Israelites. I may say at once that I do not believe a word of the story of the Exodus, as recounted in the Bible. It is all unmitigated nonsense, and there is not a scrap of evidence for a word of it. But please notice what I say—"as recounted in the Bible".

If the story were not in the Bible, would even Mr. Morrell (who stoutly believes it) defend a word of it? Does he really believe that.

The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks and herds, even very much cattle . . . Even *the selfsame day* it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt . . . (My italics)?

Nothing could be clearer in the narrative than that something like two to three millions of *people*—600,000 men must suppose a population of that figure—came out of Egypt in *one* day with innumerable herds of cattle, and of course food and water for both the people and the cattle, to say nothing of clothes and household effects. The story is just fantastic nonsense, especially as there is not a scrap of evidence anywhere for it.

The date for this "exodus" is about 1490 B.C., but even those who believe it happened, agree that in all probability it was not written down until about 536 B.C. by Ezra, though from what documents, if any, we do not know.

Defenders of the Exodus story like Mr. Morrell throw it overboard directly those of us who do not believe it query it. Either the Exodus story as given in the Bible is true—that is, that it has a clear historical basis—or it is not true. Mr. Morrell's article (May 6th) is headed "Historical Basis of Exodus?" and he then proceeds to discuss a number of things which are simply *not* in the Bible at all. Why?

For example he tells us, "Evidence available indicates that these kings ('the Hyksos' or shepherd kings) employed the Jews in their civil service as tax collectors, etc." (I suspect that the "etc." covers quite a number of things.) And the first question I should like to ask is, "Which Jews?" When and where are "the Jews" mentioned? No Jews are mentioned in the Pentateuch for a very simple reason—there were no "Jews" in existence then. The "Jews" are an invention of Mr. Morrell as of course he must know—otherwise I am bound to charge him with not having read his Bible. As another example of his invention, he tells us that "from the Old Testament the Jews were employed making bricks and constructing a city for the Pharaoh". For Mr. Morrell's information however I might as well tell him that it was the "children of Israel" not the "Jews" who were forced to make bricks.

This is not just careless reading. It is exactly what I have found exists among "defenders" of Bible stories—an utter incapacity to defend them except by overthrowing what is narrated, and by *inventing* some kind of substitute.

Never mind about the Hyksos or the shepherd kings or whether they were or were not eventually slaves who were kicked out by the true Egyptians. We actually know very little about them, and they are not mentioned—any more than are the "Jews"—in the Bible story. When I discuss this, I always mean the story which is believed in by Jews and Christians from the Pentateuch, which they believe is a "revelation", was actually written by Moses himself, and which has been more or less miraculously translated for us from the "original" Hebrew in our Authorised Version.

But Mr. Morrell, who believes that the "exodus" really took place, does his utmost to show us that his "exodus" is not at all the Biblical one, and only his invention is the true account.

He tells us that the "affinity" of the "Hebrews" and the "Hyksos" or "shepherd kings" is "here" demonstrated. What is it that is "demonstrated"? That the "Hebrews" were "shepherd kings"? All of them? And will the reader note the way in which the "Hebrews" now come in—for of course there isn't a word about them in the Exodus narrative. For me, the way defenders of nonsensical stories in the Bible insert all sorts of things to prove their case has always been most amusing.

In one of his replies to Mr. Roy, Mr. Morrell introduces the Egyptian Exploration Society, and to it we can go. In a letter dated July 23, 1887, Edward Naville, one of its officials wrote:

In all the excavations which the Egyptian Exploration Fund has made of the Delta, there is one remarkable fact to be noticed. Absolutely no monuments of the XVIII Dynasty have been found.

The XVIIIth covers the reign of the Hyksos, and the Harmsworth Encyclopedia says, to call them the "shepherd kings" is inaccurate. They were *expelled* about the year 1580 B.C., that is, about 100 years before the Israelites are supposed to have left Egypt; and there is not a scrap of evidence of any kind which makes the Israelites and the Hyksos the same people. Even Mr. Morrell had to turn "Israelite" into "Jew" for which change there is not the slightest authority given in the Biblical account.

But there is much more than this. The Palestine Exploration Society spent many years in Palestine excavating many sites and they never discovered *anything whatever* to substantiate *any* Biblical account. For example, considering the world-wide renown Solomon has enjoyed, it is surely remarkable that there are *no* archaeological remains of him, or his distinguished father, David. In his *Researches into Oriental History*, the author, Dr. G. W. Brown, quotes Professor Rawson who, for many years, travelled all over Egypt and Palestine—he was of course a fully-believing Christian—and he wrote:

The simple truth is, there is not the slightest reference to a Hebrew on any kind of a monument in Egypt, on any stone, papyrus, sarcophagus, seal, scarab, sphinx, tomb, or temple.

He lists a number of eminent archaeologists—Bunsen, Lepsius, Champollion, Glidden, Mariette Bey, Brugsch Bey, and many others, and not one of them discovered anything whatever substantiating the long sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, or their exodus, or the story of the Plagues, or of the Pharaoh who was drowned with most or all of his army pursuing Moses and the three million

Israelites in the Red Sea. And as far as I have read historians of Egypt, they concur in saying that the Exodus of the Bible narratives has *never* been the subject of any Egyptian monument or written history. If Mr. Morrell, or any other Bible believer, knows of one, will he please give me chapter and verse?

Catholic Decency

By COLIN McCALL

IN OUR ISSUE OF May 13th, 1960, reference was made to a defence of the late and generally unlamented Senator McCarthy by Patrick F. Scanlan, K. S. G., Managing Editor of the American Roman Catholic magazine, *The Tablet*. Mr. Scanlan had written to the British *Catholic Herald* (11/3/60) strongly condemning favourable reviews (especially by Catholics like Christopher Hollis) of the book, *Senator Joe McCarthy* (Methuen) by *The New Yorker's* Washington correspondent, Richard H. Rovere. Mr. Rovere had exposed McCarthy as a man completely lacking in any sense of honesty and decency. Mr. Scanlan defended the dead Senator as a good Catholic, telling us that: "he never missed Sunday Mass; he made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament nearly every afternoon . . . he was wedded in the cathedral at a Mass; he died fortified by the Sacraments, was buried from St. Matthew's Cathedral, Washington, with the final blessing being given by Archbishop O'Boyle and with a superb eulogy delivered by Mgr. Cartwright, P.A., rector of the cathedral. Both his character and his patriotic efforts were approved by Cardinal Spellman, among others".

Now another prominent American lay Catholic, Luke E. Hart, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, New Haven, Connecticut, has taken *Harper's Magazine* to task for printing an article by Mr. Rovere (in May, on "Eisenhower and the New President") and referring to him as the author of *Senator Joe McCarthy*.

"I was disappointed and disgusted"—writes Mr. Hart in the July, 1960, issue of *Harper's*—"to observe in the note accompanying the article . . . a reference to the fact that the author [wrote] the book *Senator Joe McCarthy* and that you should give that as a token of esteem . . ."

Mr. Hart gives his own opinion of Rovere's book, and of magazines that print his articles. *Senator Joe McCarthy* is "the most disgraceful publication that has come off the press in recent years . . . A person who could write such a book should not be allowed to write anything else for a decent people to read and the fact that you allow him to write the lead article in your magazine raises a serious question in my mind as to whether it is worthy of any further consideration".

The implied threat is then developed: "I note that you have published our advertisement 'Who Are These Million Men They Call "Knights"?' on the left-hand page near the back of the book . . . This is another indication of your lack of consideration for things that are worthy . . . I am going to give serious thought to the question as to whether we should not discontinue entirely the publication of advertising in *Harper's*".

Here is Catholic crudity, if you like. Fortunately, *Harper's* is sufficiently strong to meet the threat head on, and the episode is only likely to injure Roman Catholicism at a time when it is a talking point in the U.S.A. The magazine's Editors make four comments on Mr. Hart's letter: "(1) Regardless of our opinion of it (which happens to be high) Mr. Rovere's book was mentioned because it is a relevant fact. (2) Placement of advertising in *Harper's* is decided by its business department. (3) Advertisers rarely try to influence *Harper's* editorial policy, and never

Finally, there is the express declaration of the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Ben Gurion, recently, who ridicules the story of the 600,000 men given us in the Bible narrative. He says the number should be 600, though I doubt very much whether he would agree with Mr. Morrell in claiming that they were all "shepherd kings".

succeed in doing so. (4) In this country neither Mr. Hart nor anyone else is authorised to decide whether an author should 'be allowed to write anything else'."

Freethinkers can have nothing but praise for this exposure of Mr. Hart and his Knights of Columbus. The affair will tell the American public more about those million men they call "Knights" than any advertisement on left-hand or right-hand page, near the front or the back of the book. *Harper's* readers will be able to judge for themselves how "decent" the million are likely to be, if Mr. Hart is "Supreme" among them; how "worthy" the things they aim for and represent. *Harper's Magazine* is, indeed, highly to be approved for its forthright treatment of Mr. Hart's attempted bullying. But the episode is in many ways disturbing.

Linked with the Scanlan letter, it provides clear evidence of powerful McCarthyite forces still in existence in America. Probably these are mainly, though not entirely, Roman Catholic. Certainly, not only much of the Catholic laity, like Mr. Hart and his million Knights, but many of the Catholic clergy from Cardinal Spellman downwards, seem quite unrepentant on the McCarthy issue. And those of us who thought that even Mr. Rovere was perhaps just a little too gentle in his treatment of a lying thug (which is what, in fact, McCarthy was) must see the book against a background of appallingly widespread timidity and unashamed threats of the Hart kind.

Harper's is strong enough to withstand such a threat. Yes; but what about a less strong paper? A struggling paper? Might not a threat from the Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus force a Galilean recantation? It is not impossible as I see it. *Harper's* is quite right when it says that in the U.S., "neither Mr. Hart nor anyone else is authorised to decide whether an author should 'be allowed to write anything else'." But censorship isn't always authorised, and we know that Mr. Hart and his ilk are a powerful influence for ill in American cultural life. Legions of Decency (whose view of the decent is akin to his) can make or break films, financially and artistically, and for all I know can interfere with radio, T.V., and even literature. Rovere is a noted political commentator, and all Mr. Hart's threats are unlikely to intimidate a prospective publisher. Again, though, I think of the less established men—the unknown writer, the small publisher. Could they afford to take the chance of defying the Mr. Harts? Might they not yield as (commercially) bigger men have been known to yield? I don't think the possibility can be ruled out.

But that is not the worst danger. Worse, is the self-censorship that often results from the awareness of such influences in society; the timidity and fear that spread so fast under McCarthy ("a foul-mouthed, bragging brute" as Mr. Hollis called him in the review condemned by Mr. Scanlan) and which haven't yet disappeared from the American scene. All praise, then, to Mr. Rovere and to *Harper's Magazine*. All decent people who read them will admire them.

—NEXT WEEK—

CATHOLIC CRIME: WHO PAYS THE BILL?

By Dr. J. V. DUHIG

CORRESPONDENCE

VOICE FROM THE COLONIES

A reader from Sydney, Western Australia writes to me c/o THE FREETHINKER Office, and as he omits his precise address, I am only able to reply, by courtesy of the Editor, via the same medium. By the way doesn't THE FREETHINKER get around! He writes:

"I have read—how disappointed I was—your little articles in THE FREETHINKER, I believe you are disappointed. But don't lose hope! There is still time. So we have to give a more appealing witness. Most of us are so weak. In St. John's Gospel, Ch. 7 v 38, 'He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water'. So take it—Call out 'Jesus is here in the flesh, Halleluyah, Halleluyah, Halleluyah.' In the middle of the night, no one will hear you. Then you will have the great fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Even we free-thinkers, or free reasoners get a great kick when that is said at the end of the sermon".

Well I would like to let my correspondent know that I carried out exactly his directions, but regret to say that it proved quite negative. So that I am in the same position as a compatriot and townswoman of his quoted in THE FREETHINKER:

There was an old woman of Sydney
Who had a disease of the kidney
She prayed to the Lord
That she might be restored
And he could if he would
But he didnae.

F. L. HOUGHTON.

FEAR OF DEATH

Dr. J. V. Duhig fails to understand that because Scientific Materialism has nothing to offer in place of the fear of old age and death, it does by no means necessarily follow that such questions should be scoffed at as meaningless, and the questioner jibed at as a case for the doctor. The doctors and scientists are powerless before the gravest problems that torture mankind. It is not enough to cure a man of this or the other disease, or to make it possible for him to live longer; it is necessary to explain what the destiny of man is, and why he must grow old and die at a time when his will to live is strongest. J. J. Rousseau rightly said, "He who pretends to face death without fear is a liar". And I should like to add that he who pretends to face old age without fear is a damn liar. In early youth we regard ourselves as older than we really are, and long to be "grown-up" but, having once reached maturity we do not wish to grow old. Science has no solution to give for such fears, and in countries where scientific planning is carried out in nearly every manner and form there exists the highest suicide rates. What has Dr. Duhig to say about that? What comfort is there in having all the laws of science at our fingers' ends when our back bends and our face wrinkles and our teeth fall out? This knowledge does not make us happy at all, but it does make us doubt whether scientific knowledge leads to the true happiness of mankind.

R. SMITH.

Thorough-paced heretic though I am, I usually wince over Dr. Duhig's outbursts. One gets the impression of an extremely irascible man with a life-size prejudice against all who are not avid idolators of Father Science. And he has a propensity to over-statement, which does not impress those who cannot share his enthusiasm.

He is often, I'm afraid, an unfair critic—his attack on Mr. R. Smith is a case in point. Mr. Smith will probably agree, on reflection, that in the sentence criticised he didn't express himself too well; but his meaning is clear enough, and the second part of that sentence is not the nonsense that Dr. Duhig dismisses it as.

"What has Scientific Materialism to offer in the way of happiness and as an antidote to the fear of growing old and the fear of death?" is the question asked by Mr. Smith (if he will pardon my slight re-phrasing). The Doctor answers in respect of the first part of it, "Everything"; and one may well smile at his naïveté. About old age and death he says that, as these are natural and inevitable, "fear of them is irrational and, in Mr. Smith's case, morbid". This reasoning doesn't strike me as particularly good. While I admire those who can look forward equanimously to old age and smile at death, the truth is that many cannot. From how many patients is the fact of their impending death withheld?

I don't think the good Doctor, whatever may be his qualifications, distinguishes himself for psychological insight. Perhaps he'd better stick to talking to the ladies about their sexual difficulties and leave religious and freethought controversy alone.

G. I. BENNETT.

CHRISTIANITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Your letter, title as above, published in THE FREETHINKER of August 5th, 1960. The writer of the letter states that she personally knows of 14 mental illnesses, connected with Christianity, especially Fundamentalism. I know of 46 of such cases, mental and nervous illness, and steadily the list is added to, as I inquire. Each person I meet now, who tells me that he or she has had nervous or mental illness—I enquire: "Do you attend Church. Chapel, or Spiritualist gatherings?" Rather ironically, a lady who was upbraiding drinking as leading to mental illnesses, was shortly afterwards rushed away to hospital, having turned violent! She is completely life-long teetotal, but is, alas, a devout Christian! We do not have to probe very far to see the basis of her own mental illness! I have pointed out these evidences to members of the medical profession, but I am told "not interested". Thus, it is, I think, high time that doctors *did* become interested.

ERIC COXON.

NAMES

The ceremonial connected with the recent royal christening reminded me of the curious fact that everyone of us has to go through life bearing names which have been imposed upon us by others. Many people cordially dislike the names which they carry through life, but bear the burden as it is not one that can be easily shaken off.

The Churches of various kinds are responsible for keeping this form of superstition going at the expense of the helpless infants, who can only scream their protests (and often do). It is one of the sources of revenue of the various types of black-coated upholders of superstition: but it seems a strange thing that in a supposedly free world no one has even the choice of the name they have to respond to all through life.

C. H. NORMAN.

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