

The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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SOME TIME AGO, a speaker on the radio made the sapient observation that about the only thing which would ever bring about world unity would be an extra-terrestrial invasion from another planet. One may, I think, reasonably assume that some similar "Third Force" acted as motivator behind the recent meeting of the official leaders of the formerly bitterly hostile Churches of Rome and England. What was this unseen, but evidently potent

force which caused both Rome and Canterbury to sink their age-old rivalry and to forget concurrently that the sentence of death by fire had been solemnly pronounced by an earlier Pope against one of Dr. Fisher's most learned predecessors, England's first

Protestant Archbishop, Thomas Cranmer? In the present state of the world, it is not actually very difficult to guess who and what it was: Atheistic Communism! For what, in 1848 was already termed the "Spectre of Communism", today hangs like a great red cloud over the world, and in particular over the Vatican. Though it is unlikely that the name of N. Krushchev was mentioned by either of the eminent prelates who met in the Papal precincts, one can assume that the Russian leader and the forces behind him, were actually much more in both their thoughts than were angels, saints, or even God. For, unlike the nebulous deity of Christianity, Krushchev has body, parts and passions, not to mention rockets capable of hitting the Vatican if necessary, even quicker than they hit the moon.

Red versus Black

What is the real reason for the peculiarly malignant and persistent hatred with which Rome regards, and has now regarded since the early Twenties, the Russian Revolution and its offspring? For, after a brief (and now long-forgotten) attempt to come to terms with the new Russian regime, the Vatican ever since the accession of the Fascist Pope, Pius XI in 1922, has directed its world-wide strategy primarily to combat International Communism. To such an extent, indeed, that the ideological struggles of our time resolve themselves very largely into a combat between the two major Internationals of the contemporary world: the Red versus the Black. Nor have these spiritual combats always been carried on solely with spiritual armaments. Rome, it is true, no longer disposes of the direct political power necessary to raise armies of Crusaders as she did during the Crusades against the Muslim Infidels and the Albigensian heretics during the Ages of Faith. Today, the Vatican can only operate upon the battlefield with the aid of secular allies. But where such allies were forthcoming, Rome preached the Holy War at the top of her voice. She stood four-square behind Pilsudski at Warsaw (1920), Mussolini in Abyssinia (1935), Franco in Spain (1936-9), and Hitler in Russia (1941-5). (The German Catholic hierarchy unambiguously supported Hitler's invasion of Russia.) Even today it can hardly be disputed that, should the cold war suddenly reach boiling point, the Vatican would proclaim

the war of the West as a Crusade against the godless Russians and the persecuting Chinese. That is, of course, if there was time to do so before the whole Vatican entourage was summarily elevated to Heaven in the wake of a Russian rocket—with such velocity, perhaps that Pope John might even overtake the Blessed Virgin before she had completed her celestial Assumption.

What is the reason for this virulent hatred in which

Rome, under successive Popes, so persistently indulges? It can hardly be economic, since the Church of Rome is no stranger to collectivism. Most religious orders are run on Socialistic lines and in the 17th century in South America, the Jesuits even ran an appar-

ently successful secular experiment in collectivism in their famous Republic of Paraguay. Nor is even the Atheism that forms an integral part of the Marxist Leninist system, a sufficient explanation: the Catholic Church for example, does not like Freethinkers, but it does not devote the time and the language to them that it does to the Communists. The answer to this leading question seems to be that Rome feels herself hoisted with her own petard. In brief, the Red International has stolen the strategy of its Black predecessor: the Communists are now beating the Catholic Church, and at its own game. In any case, Freethinkers, by definition, always believe in free discussion, for which the Vatican has a simple and time-honoured recipe which it automatically puts into effective operation wherever and whenever it is strong enough to do so: suppress discussion or, still better, kill the disputants. As that acute student of Catholic world-strategy, Adolf Hitler, once noted, intellectuals are few, and if systematically extirpated as soon as they open their mouths, their menace can easily be eradicated. Hitler, we know from his own admissions, learned this strategy from the Catholic Church. Whether the Communists also learned it from this source is, perhaps, problematical; one could suggest in their case other more secular sources. But, and this is the essential point, they *have* learned it and, wherever in power, also systematically practise it.

"You Cannot Serve Two Masters"

The Church of Rome is often accused by its Protestant critics of neglecting the study of the New Testament. But it has certainly studied the above injunction ascribed to its titular founder. The Catholic Church has always endorsed this injunction. There is only one master, the one true Church of Rome. In pursuit of this aim, Rome has evolved a unique and never varying strategy, which it has followed consistently since the 4th century. As soon as it comes to power, it first uses the secular power to crush all opposition in the religious as in the secular field. Having done this, it then takes over the educational system and subjects the young to a thoroughgoing system of indoctrination (brain-washing is the more modern term). Finally, by a prolonged combination of secular violence, religious terrorism (whether physical or psycho-

VIEWS and OPINIONS

The Black International v. The Red

By F. A. RIDLEY

logical—the Inquisition or the fear of hell), and unceasing propaganda, the Church eventually creates an homogeneous Catholic society entirely subjugated to Rome. Such, in the briefest of outlines, are the time-honoured applications of Catholic world-strategy.

Beaten At Its Own Game

Some historian once wrote that Napoleon was only eventually beaten when his enemies borrowed his methods. The same is true of the Vatican vis-a-vis Communism. For the Red International pursues what are essentially the same strategy and tactics as its Black rival has now done for 16 centuries. Wherever Communism comes to power it ruthlessly uses the State power to break its rivals in the political field, and then goes on to subject the whole of

society, but in particular the younger generation on whom the future depends, to intensive ideological propaganda and to a systematic brainwashing process. In all these respects it duplicates the time-honoured methods of Rome (particularly perhaps, in its treatment of the young) and it does so with the definite advantage that, unlike Rome, it is not forced to carry so much dead wood in the shape of a medieval theology and ethics. The net result of all this is that Moscow is beating Rome all along the line; beating it at its own game. And, short of a "holy" war (which would be mutually suicidal), there is very little that Rome can do about it—despite her "Chair of Atheism"! Like a drowning man, Pope John will clutch at anything for support, even at the arch-heretic, Dr. Fisher.

U.S. Supreme Court and Church — State Issues

MANY OF THE most controversial Church-State issues in American history are slated for decision by the United States Supreme Court during the years 1961 and 1962. The first two cases involving Church-State controversy are concerned with birth control and Sunday laws. The Supreme Court has accepted jurisdiction of a case in which Dr. C. Lee Buxton of Yale Medical School is chief plaintiff challenging Connecticut's ancient anti-birth control statute as a violation of freedom of speech and freedom of religion under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution.

In a similar category, scheduled for a decision some time during the present court year, are the Sunday laws of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Maryland, which restrict the sale of certain commercial articles on Sunday.

The birth control appeal is backed by the Planned Parenthood organisations of Connecticut and the American Civil Liberties Union. The challenge to old Sunday laws is being made primarily by Jewish organisations and by Seventh-day Adventists, with Catholic groups in opposition. Organised labour entered this case in defence of present Sunday laws when the Retail Clerks International Association of the AFL-CIO filed a brief as friend of the court in the United States Supreme Court, upholding the constitutionality of present Sunday laws.

Equally controversial, but subject to indefinite delay, is the Schempp compulsory Bible-reading case from Pennsylvania which reached the Supreme Court recently. After the Schempps, who are Unitarians, had won the unanimous decision of a three-judge lower Federal court declaring that it was a violation of the Constitution to compel their children to participate in Bible reading and other religious exercises in the public school, the State of Pennsylvania amended its Bible reading statute to make the school ceremonies voluntary. In October the United States Supreme Court sent the Schempp appeal back to the lower courts for a review of the possible effect of the new voluntary law.

Meanwhile, at least half a dozen other controversial cases relating to religious instruction and religious ceremonies at public schools will probably reach the Supreme Court within two years. In Miami, Florida Unitarian, agnostic, and Jewish parents have challenged the combination of Bible reading and religious ceremonials practised in Dade County public schools with the help of the American Jewish Congress and the Florida Civil Liberties Union. Late in October, Circuit Judge A. Fritz Gordon ruled out the issue of psychological compulsion involved in so-called "voluntary religious programmes". The plaintiffs' attorneys had argued that even under a voluntary system the social compulsions exercised upon children as

members of a group made the religious ceremonials compulsory in fact. This issue, the gravamen of several religious instruction cases in past history, will now go to the United States Supreme Court if the plaintiffs succeed in carrying their case that far.

In New York, late in October, the Appellate Division, New York's second highest court, decided unanimously that the non-compulsory recitation of a simple prayer by public school students in Herricks, Long Island, was constitutional. The prayer reads: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country". The New York Civil Liberties Union has announced that it will carry this case if necessary to the United States Supreme Court.

Two cases somewhat similar in principle may ultimately reach the United States Supreme Court from Maryland. The case of Roy Torcaso, a would-be notary public who has challenged Maryland's law requiring a belief in God for such an office; and a case involving a student and a teacher who are challenging Maryland's compulsory system of religious exercises, including Bible reading and the Lord's Prayer at the opening of each school day. Maryland's Attorney General has been asked to rule on the legality of the absence of a student from public school classes in protest against being compelled to participate in the State's religious exercises in public schools. Simultaneously Mrs. Tobey M. Wiebe, wife of an instructor at Johns Hopkins University, has threatened suit against the State's compulsory Bible-reading practices in public schools on the ground that such practices interfere with her freedom as a prospective teacher.

In a ruling by Maryland Attorney General C. Ferdinand Sybert, objections to the Bible readings do not justify absences from school; however, children may be excused from class during the reading of the scriptures. The only complete recourse for objecting parents, Sybert said, is to enroll their children in a private or sectarian school. The Bible reading itself, he ruled, is constitutional in Maryland.

Francis H. Snyder, head of Citizens for the Connecticut Constitution, has announced that Connecticut's bus suit will be appealed to the United States Supreme Court, with statewide support by various Connecticut groups. Connecticut's statute permitting local towns to use their funds for bus transportation for pupils in sectarian schools was upheld by the Connecticut Supreme Court of errors by a 4 to 1 decision in June. The main basis of the appeal will be the strong dissenting opinion of Associate Justice Samuel Mellitz insisting that: "The purpose of transportation is to promote the interests of the private school or religious sectarian institution that controls and directs it . . . In my view all compulsory support is proscribed [by the Constitution]."

Reprinted from *Church and State* (December, 1960).

It's That "Man" Again

By D. H. TRIBE

I HESITATE TO ENTER the historicity lists, lest I weary spectators of this somewhat archaic issue, or perish on the lances of Mr. Cutner's learning. Particularly as, if I can pretend to any expertise in Secularism, it is its relation to modern science rather than to ancient history. But I questioned some of Mr. Cutner's assumptions at a recent lecture, and he very courteously offered me the pages of THE FREETHINKER.

Let me at once admit that there is no conclusive evidence for Jesus. No contemporary reference exists, not even by a fellow-provincial, Justus of Tiberias. Of the near-contemporary, non-Christian references, Suetonius is cryptic, Pliny the Younger non-committal, Tacitus late hearsay or worse, and Josephus an acknowledged forgery. We are left with the Gospels, the Pauline epistles, and general historical deductions.

One of the commonest historicity arguments—that from the time of Nero onwards devout Christians were prepared to face martyrdom, which they would not have faced for a fable—is unconvincing. Men are sympathetic to persons *qua* persons, but die for beliefs. Christians died for the Risen Christ (I Cor. 15,14), not the historical Jesus. Yet a widespread belief in the historicity of a Redeemer—more consistent than with the other mystery religions—may have significance. Further—a point which seems to be observed by the more popular Secularist writers—Christianity is basically a Jewish heresy, not Egyptian occultism! Features of the latter give every indication of being grafted on to the former, rather than the converse. Of course, Judaism is itself nothing but an amalgam of foreign ideas, at first predominantly Babylonian, and later predominantly Persian, but always with an especially patriotic and materialistic slant. Late Messianic writings fall generally into three classes:—(a) predictions attributed to patriarchs (b) sonorous outpourings altogether devoid of such homely details as attend the Christian story (c) claims associated with undoubtedly historical figures, like the Maccabees. Let us therefore look at the Christian story itself, starting with oblique references in Paul.

Mr. Cutner may object that Paul has even fewer credentials than Jesus. All I can say is that, to adapt the famous Voltairean quip, if the Apostle Paul did not exist then it would be necessary to invent him. In other words, short of a Divine miracle it is hard to imagine how Christianity could have spread throughout the Roman Empire unaided by a Romanised Stoic Jew, with a verve for evangelism, and a sheer genius for organisation and writing letters. What light do these letters, the earliest Christian documents, shed on Jesus?

True, not very much. Paul seems far more concerned with the theological significance of Jesus than with his biography or even his teaching. But this is a common feature of Jewish writings. If we take I Cor. 9 and Gal. 1 and 2 at their face value—and there seems no good reason against—then Paul is clearly of the opinion that there had been in Palestine a preacher and martyr called Jesus Christ, whose immediate disciples enjoyed a prestige which threatened Paul's own. "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" has a querulous note which might almost make us suspect that the apostle's conversion during an exclusive encore to Our Lord's earthly performance, was a Pauline invention. Any suggestion that the references to Peter were a forgery of the Roman Church cannot easily

be reconciled with the fact that Paul is shown successfully accusing the Pope Elect of heresy!

But let us pass to the Gospels. Here we find the most glaring contradictions in the narratives of birth, length of ministry, death, and resurrection. There are undoubted accretions from Egyptology, numerology, astrology, demonology, magic, Mithraism, Hellenism—the lot. Nor is there anything unique about Jesus's recorded teachings. Those in the Synoptics are almost entirely a rehash of Judaism, notably from Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, the Book of Enoch, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (so strikingly similar that it was suppressed for centuries), the Dead Sea Scrolls, and even the generally unpromising Leviticus (19, 18). Shibboleths of Messianic warriorship and kingship jangle discordantly amidst lyrics of pietism and pacifism. It is clear that at best the Gospel authors knew little of the actual life of Jesus, and attributed to him whatever it was in their interest to do. Nevertheless, there remains a core of teaching, which, however derivative, has its own internal logic, is specifically directed at the poor and sinful—an innovation in Messianic writings—and uses parables more consistently and to better effect than the Old Testament, the Talmud, or the Pseudepigrapha. All these features suggest the work of "some mute inglorious Milton".

Another significant fact is the mention of Nazareth in all the Gospel narratives. It has been argued that as this is the first we hear of it, it is an allegorical invention based on a Hebrew root meaning *to vow* and found in the word *Nazarite*. But there is no fictional *desideratum* for Jesus to be transported from Bethlehem, the city of David and traditional Messianic site, whose implication in the mutually exclusive accounts of Matthew and Luke is the really suspicious element, to the wilds of Galilee. In view of the reckless invention of the crucifixion story, drawn as a major political crisis involving the Sanhedrin, the tetrarch of Galilee, and the procurator of Judaea, the gospel writers would hardly have selected for Jesus's upbringing a little-known area simply to confound biographical investigation!

What picture looms out of the mist of speculation? Jesus as a political revolutionary? Jesus as a runaway Essene monk? Jesus as a village philosopher? Jesus as an unsuccessful hot gospeller? Jesus as a double-crossed quisling? It is, frankly, impossible to say. If then we don't know what is fact, and what is fiction, why not reject the lot? The difficulty here is that we have then to explain who invented the fable and for what purpose. It is not basically a Nature myth, though its main festivals have inherited this symbolism: Mary became the "Mother of God" by fifth century sophistry, and is not herself the Earth Goddess. It is not Zionistic, being more hostile to Jewish orthodoxy than to Roman imperialism. Yet though it whitewashes, it does not glorify Rome. In the crucifixion story it even attributes treason to the Roman procurator: but is too late to be considered an attempt to discredit him. Of the Christians, which Church or Churches planned the core of matter common to all the Gospels? Rome? Hardly. Though the Vatican may, despite Protestant claims, be considered the ossified *reductio ad absurdum* of Pauline and Jessene teaching, the life of its Court was sufficiently unlike that of the

(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

Writing in one of our national journals, Mr. Guy Schofield wants to know why we *assume* that Christ was born on December 25th? This obviously means that the Christian Churches have completely failed to prove it after nearly 2,000 years of incessant teaching that he was. Mr. Schofield, of course, is an out-and-out believer, and is ready to accept even an Apocryphal Gospel as Gospel Truth if he agrees with it. After telling us about the Massacre of the Innocents—a story absolutely true in his opinion—he agrees that, as Mithras was born on December 25th, the Christian Fathers “with great shrewdness” made “our Lord” born on the same date. And this is the way “Gospel Truth” was manufactured.

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There is not a particle of evidence that Jesus was born on any *known* date. Mr. Schofield claims that Jesus was born “during the midwinter of 5-4 BC”, but this is pure speculation. How little the Gospel writers knew of chronology can be seen in the way Matthew introduces us to John the Baptist—“In those days” John came on the scene which means (as Robert Taylor pointed out) merely, “Once upon a time”, the favourite opening of fairy tales. Following Matthew, Mark makes Jesus also come “in those days”, and as Herod is supposed to have died about 4 BC, Christians have reluctantly had to give up 1 AD and make the birth of Jesus occur any time before.

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The Rev. D. Ingram Hall of Canterbury indignantly denounces what he calls “the Christmas racket”—the illuminations and decorations shops indulge in at Christmas time. These are not put up “in honour of the Holy Birth of Christ” he says, but to persuade people “to start spending earlier”. As a member of a Church which holds vast properties and shares from which it derives a huge income, surely this makes amusing if not impudent reading? Why shouldn't shopkeepers cash in at Christmas time as well as other times? Most of them believe in the “Holy Birth” anyway—and they also quite rightly believe in giving the public what it wants.

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Although the Bible is the most boosted-up book in the world, articles regularly appear boosting it up still more in many of our national journals. One of the latest appeared in the *Daily Express* (24/12/60) by a Mr. Peter Forster who repeats various things about it which have done duty for centuries, such as, “it has sold incalculable millions”, it is full of “all kinds of histories”, its earliest passages were “written thousands of years before Christ's birth”, its “ultimate” message is “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”, and so on. Mr. Forster is quite sure that John was *not* written by the Apostle John but, thank God, “the tremendous idea of salvation comes in” with the New Testament. What the world would have looked like without this “tremendous” idea we shudder to think.

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Moreover, the New Testament teaches “life after death”—so that all who believe in this part of the Bible (like Mr. Forster) will live on and on, no doubt perfectly safe in the arms of Jesus. As Tommy Trinder would say—“You lucky people”. And naturally, the conclusion of Mr. Forster is that there is “no fact in human history more fantastic than that so much should have resulted from the life and teaching of a village carpenter”. Thus is myth and legend perpetuated.

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The late Pope Pius XII some years ago told a group of lawyers “that there is an eternal hell after death for the

souls of men who have committed grave sins”—though he did not tell them what these “grave” sins were. Perhaps one of them was ridiculing the Roman Church. However, the rector of St. Mary-le-Bow, the Rev. J. McCulloch, laughed this out of court when interviewed by Mr. Norman Price for *Sunday Pictorial*. He called those great standbys of “our Lord”, Heaven and Hell, “medieval symbols”, and belief in them “persists only in the more backward Christians”. Fancy calling the saintly Pius a “backward Christian”!

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Another striking piece of wisdom from Mr. McCulloch was his belief that “there'd be no Evil at all if we all loved each other perfectly”. *Perfectly!* Could anything be easier? In addition, Mr. McCulloch does not appear to believe that every word in the Bible emanates from God Almighty, for he says that the Holy Book is like plum-duff—“rich fruits of beauty among a lot of stodge”. The Bible gives the story “of how an ancient people found God”, and (though he does not say so) it made the Christian world actually believe that the “ancient” people were really God's Chosen for nearly 2,000 years. Does Mr. McCulloch still believe this?

★

A book appeared recently by Dr. Silva Mello, a Brazilian psychiatrist, entitled *Mysteries and Realities of this World and the Next*, in which he “debunks” all the stories we have about ghosts, witches, saints, werewolves, soothsayers, and—of course—mediums. There is not a scrap of scientific evidence, he claims, for any “supernatural” event. He dismisses “reincarnation” stories with contempt, and his conclusion is that “it's all in the mind”. But there is just a little difference between the drivel we so often get from the mediums and reincarnationists, and some of the stories of the supernatural which have come down to us. *The Arabian Nights* for example is surely one of the most *entertaining* books in the world. Can we say the same for the incoherent rubbish which modern mediums pour out when in a trance?

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As is the case every Christmas in Palestine or Galilee or wherever Christians tourists go in the “Holy Land”, they will be shown the exact places made so popular by God's Precious Word. The Arab “guides” know exactly the House where the Holy Ghost “visited” Mary, and therefore where the world-famous Conception took place. Also the famous Carpenter's Shop kept by Joseph where he taught young Jesus how to stretch a door “miraculously” if it didn't fit first time. As for bits of the Holy Cross—do not all Arab guides know where the only piece left “secretly” in the Holy Land can be found? We cannot help wondering whether even the Archbishop of Canterbury did not bring back a Precious and Holy Souvenir from the Land made so famous by “our Lord”?

IT'S THAT “MAN” AGAIN

(Concluded from page 11)

Gospel Jesus to drive vernacular translations underground. Perhaps . . .

But further speculation is idle. Though Mr. Cutner may be right, I do not see how he can ever prove it, or why it matters. And I merely repeat what I said at the meeting, that the cause of Freethought is ill served by dogmatic denials of what is neither disprovable nor improbable.

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ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENTS

DR. RICHARD HOPE: Letter posted on to Mr. Snook, as requested.

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.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Thursday lunchtimes, THE FREETHINKER on sale, Piccadilly, near Queen Victoria Statue.)

Marble Arch Branch N.S.S. (Marble Arch).—Meetings every Sunday, from 4 p.m.; MESSRS. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD, D. TRIBE and J. P. MURACCIOLE.

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.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square, Nottingham).—Every Friday, 1 p.m., Every Sunday, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute Cinema, Paradise Street), Sunday, January 15th, 6.45 p.m.: C. H. SMITH, "Biology—the Challenge to Superstition".

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Tuesday, January 17th, 7.15 p.m.: H. L. BEALES, M.A., "The New U.S. President—Problems and Prospects".

Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 15th, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY, "Spinoza, the God Intoxicated Man".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (The Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, January 15th, 7.15 p.m.: CANON STANLEY EVANS, "The Christian Conception of Morality".

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Society (Co-operative Education Centre, Broad Street), Sunday, January 15th, 2.30 p.m.: W. CLARK, M.P., "Serving My Apprenticeship".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, January 15th, 11 a.m.: KATHLEEN NOTT, "The Freudian Ethic by R. T. La Pierre".

Notes and News

ON DECEMBER 30th, 1960, we reported questions in the House of Lords by Lord Shepherd and Lord Chorley, on the British Transport Commission's decision to remove a Family Planning Association advertisement from the London Underground System after letters had been received—in the words of the government spokesman, Lord Chesham—"objecting to the poster on religious grounds". The National Secular Society has launched a petition of protest to the Transport Commission and plans further action. And next week our Views and Opinions article will be "The Catholic Church versus the Planned Family" by Mrs. Margaret McIlroy.

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THIS SUNDAY (January 15th), Marble Arch Branch of the National Secular Society presents a particularly interesting lecture at the Carpenters' Arms (7.15 p.m.), when the speaker will be the Director of Junior Clergy in the Diocese of Southwark, Canon Stanley Evans. Canon Evans will speak on "The Christian Conception of Morality". The

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED, £12 18s. 6d. A. Bedane, £1; S. Trent, 2s. 6d.; C. W. Schwab, £1 15s.; D. W. Coleman, £5 5s.; A. W. Coleman £5 5s.; Miss L. Pye, 5s.; F. H. Eastman, 15s.; R.J.B., 15s.; J.T., 10s. Total to date, January 13th, 1960, £28 11s. 0d.

Marble Arch Branch will also make its annual collection in aid of the NSS Benevolent Fund at this meeting. Incidentally, the Branch syllabus for the first quarter of 1961 is now available from the Hon. Secretary, W. J. McIlroy, 140a Hornsey Lane, London, N.6, and it includes Mr. Christopher Brunel, Mr. H. J. Blackham and Dr. John Lewis among its many attractive speakers.

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AT THIS TIME, TOO, Branch Secretaries and the General Secretary of the National Secular Society respectfully remind members that subscriptions for 1961 are due.

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THE *Daily Express* ended the year (31/12/60) with truly sensational news. Dr. Morton Smith, Professor of History at Columbia University, USA, told a staff reporter that "some 'secret teachings' of Christ" had been found in an ancient monastery outside Jerusalem. The reporter understood that Dr. Smith's discovery "is likely to touch off a bigger stir than the controversial Dead Sea Scrolls" for "many leading theologians have denied the existence of the 'secrets'", which were apparently contained in "a copy of an ancient letter from the early Christian theologian Clement of Alexandria". In this case, though, the *Express* was much less informative than its fellow Beaverbrook paper, the *Evening Standard* had been the previous day. There we read that Dr. Smith described the letter as "presumably a 17th or 18th century copy . . . hand written on the back of pages of a Dutch book printed in 1646", and said "that if the letter was accepted as having been written by Clement opinions about the teachings of Jesus and the origin and character of the Gospels would probably have to be reconsidered". More informative; less sensational; and involving a big "if".

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TWO FREETHINKING LADIES, both widows, are desirous of buying a small house in the London area for £2,000. Any reader who can help should please contact the office.

ONE-DAY STRIKE IN HEAVEN

MISSING G.—Hurried corrections had to be made to the hymn sheets before carol service at St. Mark's Church, Scarborough. A line of "O Come All Ye Faithful" read "Sin in exultation" instead of "Sing in exultation".—*Yorkshire Post* (28/12/60).

"Missing g my foot!" said a shop steward of the Celestial Musicians' and Choristers' Union, in an interview. "Shows how little these parsons really know about this place. The printer had the gen, obviously."

"The fact is," he explained, with a grin, "we staged a one-day token strike, like your private enterprise bus crews, and for practically the same reason—extra duties at the festive season and no time off 'in lieu' . . . And what a day it was! Talk about sinning in exultation! We threatened to pitch our harps into the crystal river, played Colonel Bogey on our trumpets, and even locked old Peter up in his gate-house with his own keys. Called us a gang of wild cats he did, the old blackleg."

He paused and sighed. "It was great fun while it lasted. But we're back on the old job again, and it's much more monotonous than driving buses and punching tickets . . . Still, we managed to wring a few concessions out of the Big Chief: free throat pastilles and treatment for sore fingers, and a scheme for duty by rota in 1961. And we'll keep him to it. The CMCU's nearly hundred percent strong nowadays. So—any back-sliding, and we'll sin in exultation again."

W.H.D.

NEXT WEEK

TESTAMENT FROM A SPANISH PRISON

By COLIN McCALL

Can Democracy Be Safe For Catholicism?

By EVA EBURY

SUCH IS THE SIGNIFICANT sub-heading in a review of Father Murray's new book, *We Hold These Truths* (Time, December, 1960). With typical Jesuitical casuistry, Father Murray, S.J., is supporting the pluralism of America (i.e., the separation of Church and State). Perhaps the reviewer is giving a warning as well as a prophecy when he says that, "in the months to come, serious Americans of all sorts and conditions, in pin-stripes and housecoats will be discussing his hopes and fears for American democracy".

The appellation of Jesuitical casuistry is not lightly given to Father Murray's involved arguments and calculated misconceptions. The Declaration of Independence, the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights are offered as the grounds for Catholicism to stake its claim to control of social life in the US, and the veneration that Americans have for their courageous past is to be thus perverted in the cause of Catholic supremacy. Murray claims that matters such as State and Church, the one caring for the people's earthly well-being, the other endowed with the mission of guiding them towards salvation, are all parts of a larger issue; the American public philosophy which must provide a kind of spiritual charter by which all Americans can live together. The builders of the Republic knew what they meant by freedom, and they believed "that freedom can only survive if the people are inwardly governed by moral law". American public philosophy has broken down, says Murray, they need one governed by Right Reason, "a new moral act of purpose", which he calls, "the natural, eternal law", governing man's relationship to God and his fellow-man. But "as human relationships become increasingly complex, the factoring out of natural law eludes the unaided reason of the ordinary man, therefore these matters become the province of what St. Thomas Aquinas called 'Sapientes' (The Wise)". Murray warns Americans against the subtle and seductive systems by which ethics are considered relative, systems like modern, evolutionary, scientific humanism, which "regards human values, such as reason, justice and charity as man-made, and human rights as dependent on man for their guarantee". "Only within the Catholic community has natural law endured", but "because their Church is vast and all too easily regarded as monolithic, American Catholics are often taxed with everything from Spanish Catholic intolerance, to Italian Catholic cynicism, from Legion of Decency censorship to neo-Thomist philosophy".

It is not ten years since Father Murray was ordered to submit such teachings to Rome before rushing into print. Today, with the issue of Church and State so much in the fore in US politics, Rome sees the value of his subtle casuistry. Somehow the American public must be gulled to accept the thesis that Catholicism stands for the division of Church and State, with the State, the upholder of law and order and the Church the upholder of morals. To accept, but not to question the law and order; based on natural law, through Rome from God, that is for the "Wise" to decree. The Jesuit Order is the Pope's fighting force, and its purpose is to make Catholicism presentable to all parties in all ages, endorsing the words of Paul and the teaching of Loyola, "I became all things to men".

Murray is thus in direct line with the great Jesuit Cardinal from whom he quotes. Cardinal Bellarmine threw himself into the politico-social controversies of his day, to buttress the tottering papacy. Kings and princes were upholding Protestantism and Nationalism in the

Reformation period, and the era of Rome as the spiritual head of the vast Holy Roman Empire was passing. A new philosophy was needed and the Jesuit was ready to oblige: "the voice of the people is the voice of God; authority rests with the people; kings have only delegated rights; the subject has the right to rebel; a heretic ruler has no rights". His book was publicly burned by the Parlement of Paris, but the Papacy was saved. Despite these great services to his masters, Bellarmine was only canonised 32 years ago, for this philosophy soon became a Frankenstein monster and Rome made haste to dissociate herself from liberalism of any sort. Father Contzen, S.J., then demonstrated the opposite from Bellarmine just as convincingly, in a learned work of 10 volumes.

Liberalism is now no longer the enemy, and America, the home of individualism, must be wooed. Socialism is the Evil One today, and the Jesuits must again take up their pens to remodel the papal philosophy. Liberalism and Freemasonry can become bondsmen to the One True Church, in the major battle of world politics. Father Murray now calls Cardinal Bellarmine to his support. He quotes with approval from the Roman Catholic 3rd plenary Council of Baltimore, "we consider the establishment of our country's independence, the shaping of its liberties and laws, as a work of Special Providence; its framers building better than they knew, the Almighty's hand guiding them". For, Murray says, "while the Catholic ideal was, and is, a ship of state in which all acknowledge the One True Church, US Catholics soon realised that the unique US situation gave them unprecedented freedom to grow". (The Catholic population increased from 1850 to 1960, 4 times faster than the American population as a whole.)

Can Democracy be safe for Catholicism? Father Murray concludes triumphantly that a nation "Under God", and accepting the First Amendment, which he says "seemed more interested in providing for the freedom rather than the restriction of religion", is the soil for future Catholic expansion. Is Catholicism safe for Democracy? Murray neglects even to postulate this question. He says, of course, that "government funds for parochial schools—simple justice demands", but that "Catholic pressure for it should be confined to argument and slow persuasion". Not by the big stick; solely by pressure from the "Wise"; for this is a democracy. How easily is the wool pulled over the eyes of this generation of shibboleth-seekers! The First Amendment, the separation of Church and State, was the "wall" that Jefferson attempted to build against the encroachment of religious bigotry, animosity and tyranny, that all ideas might flourish side by side, in a land free from religious intolerance, and subjected to no "pressure" from individual groups, however powerful. We can but answer in the negative, that vital, unpostulated question, Is Catholicism safe for Democracy?

Well might President Adams write, "I do not like the reappearance of the Jesuits, shall we not have regular swarms of them here, in as many disguises as only a King of the gypsies can assume, dressed as printers, publishers, writers and schoolmasters? If ever there was a body of men who merited eternal damnation on earth and in hell, it is this society of Loyola's. Nevertheless, we are compelled by our system of religious toleration to offer them an asylum". And Jefferson reply, "it means a step backwards from light into darkness".

Far From The Madding Crowd

By RUSTICUS

Then came old Ianuary, wrapped well
In many weeds to keep the cold away;
Yet did he quake and quiver like to quell,
And blowe his nayles to warm them if he may.

—Spenser.

I HAVE JUST RETURNED from watching a football match in the village sports field. A bitterly cold day, with a wind blowing across the pitch sharp enough to "whim taties", in local parlance—peel potatoes. The two 'keepers have spent most of the time blowing their nayles, and there was no score. Unusual, this, when village matches sometimes produce scores resembling cricket results: I recall one match ending in a score of 14-11.

I would gladly pay a pound to stay away from a Test or County cricket match, or a professional football match, and equally gladly pay a similar amount to watch a village cricket or football contest. The lads of the village do at least enjoy themselves, and everything is done in a friendly and sporting manner, even if the language occasionally causes a blush on the boundaries or touchlines. Today one of our chaps suddenly found the ball at his feet, after a free-for-all in the goalmouth. Harry was standing just outside the penalty area when the ball plopped at his gargantuan feet. Stepping back a pace he rooted the ball at goal and struck the crossbar. "---- it!" he remarked shortly. Much to his amazement, the ball returned to his feet, and he sent in another pile driver. This also struck the bar. "---- the ----- thing!" Harry shouted. A shout of laughter went up.

As I have said, the chaps enjoy their village contests, as do the onlookers. Can this be said of County cricket, as played today, or of professional soccer? Let me quote a recent newspaper report—

A Football League referee narrowly escaped from an angry mob . . . seconds after the referee had blown the final whistle hysterical fans screamed: "We'll kill him. Let's get after him".

And when one reads of the goings-on at the Olympic Games—drug taking, petty quarrels, childish appeals against decisions, etc., one is tempted to conclude that the only place where pure sport is to be found is on the playing fields in the villages of England's green and pleasant land.

As I returned to the village after the match I encountered one of my especial cronies, old Charlie Green. He was lounging on the footbridge, and I got into conversation with him. A bent old chap of eighty summers, bad on his feet, his gums are as innocent of teeth as on the day he was born. Owing to his toothless condition conversation with Charlie sometimes becomes a trifle irksome. His mumbling requires interpretation, and it is necessary to listen to his oracular pronouncements with close attention. Now Charlie has intimated—rather vaguely—that he "keeps a hey on the river", on behalf of the local angling club. Not being able to foot it fast or far, Charlie is obliged to perform his official duties with the aid of what he calls a "spy-glass". Which, interpreted, means a binocular. Lounging on the footbridge over the river, Charlie is able to supervise half a mile of river downstream and a good mile upstream. I don't think his piscatorial duties are of a very onerous nature, for the entire stretch of river he defends against poachers is in full view of the village: a poaching stranger would stand little chance of escaping instant detection. Strange to say, non-member angling boys are tolerated by the local club: the fish these nippers pull out of the river is nobody's business.

I once asked Charlie if he considered fishing a cruel

sport. "'Ouldst thee like to be pulled out o' river wi' hook in thee lip?" he asked. Brief and to the point.

Alas, I regret to report that Charlie is a wicked old man. One summer evening, encountering him on this same footbridge, I noticed that his binocular was directed landwards, so to speak. Following the line of his fascinated gaze, I observed a courting couple, lying full length under a hedge. Affecting pained surprise at Charlie's action, I tried to think up a reason as to why he should desist from playing peeping Tom. Unable to produce an argument likely to impress Mr. Green I let the matter drop. Generously handing me his binocular he invited me to help myself. On my politely declining his offer he clapped the glass to his eyes again, remaining motionless for several minutes, like an old crow on a gate post eying a fat young chicken.

I am disappointed in Charlie. At his age he would be better employed contemplating the Judgment Day. This writer only hopes that he himself will be as interested in the wonders of Nature when he reaches Charlie's age—but rather doubts it.

CORRESPONDENCE

VACCINATION AND INOCULATION

Dr. J. V. Duhig's letter, one regrets to say, ignores all that can be urged against the views he holds: making bombastic claims for vaccination and inoculation and, what is more serious, ignoring the side effects on members of the armed forces, civilian population and, worst of all, young children. On Dr. Duhig's other point, not only are Freethinkers avoiding the armed forces; better still, they are devoting their energies to the ending of war.

JAMES H. MATSON.

Dr. Duhig thinks Mr. Hillier was not acting rationally in refusing inoculation and vaccination. I have a strong fancy that Mr. Hillier is far more informed about medical practice than the Doctor thinks. Like me he has examined the medical case and has reasoned that to inject a sick body, or even a healthy one, with a filthy serum is neither constructive, rational nor likely to prevent disease of any kind. The Doctor quotes a lot of statistics which could be easily refuted by others more formidable if space permitted. Just one point. In this country between 1930 and 1956, 86 babies under 1 year died of vaccination, but not one died of smallpox. We are not told how much damage is caused to the brain—e.g. post vaccination encephalitis, epilepsy and even lunacy.

The trouble is that the medicos for several generations have given the impression that sick bodies can be made well by something out of a bottle, a pill, plaster or serum. In short they have encouraged the drug mania. But in spite of all their wonder drugs they are finding that world sickness is overtaking them. As well as with people we see it with livestock, swinefever, foot and mouth, abortion, fowl pest, and with crops the same troubles exist—it's "spray, spray and more spraying" followed by more and more disease.

All this arises primarily from land fed on chemicals instead of natural fertilisers, and I guess that like myself Mr. Hillier has done more thinking on these matters than the doctor is prepared to admit.

CHAS DENNING.

It is a pity that Dr. Duhig, when remembering the unverifiable statement in "an Army circular", did not also remember the following facts:

(1) In the South African War practically the whole of our 328,000 troops engaged were inoculated against typhoid. There were 57,000 cases of the disease with 8,000 deaths. (2) In the 1914-18 War in the British Army alone there were 7,400 cases of typhoid (Lancet, Vol. II, p. 1190). (3) From August 1st, 1914 to October 30th, 1915, there were 540 cases and 87 deaths—officially stated only 39% in the uninoculated. (4) In the French Army inoculation was compulsory from March 1914. Up to October, 1916, there were 113,000 cases with 12,000 deaths. As far as I am aware the last 2 years' figures were never stated. (5) From 1871-5 average death rate for this country for typhoid was 373 per million (i.e. before the Public Health Act). For

the quinquennium 45 years later it was 23 per million with virtually no inoculation but continuously improving sanitation.

S. NEWTON.

Dr. J. V. Duhig's defence of vaccination and inoculation in your issue of 30/12/60, will no doubt draw replies from anti-vaccinationist readers, but I think the matter worth consideration from a specifically Freethought point of view. The basis of Dr. Duhig's letter seems to be: (1) that Medicine is a science; (2) that official statistics are "gospel" truth; (3) that Freethinkers must not defy verifiable scientific truth.

May I on points (1) and (2) refer Dr. Duhig to Supplement No. 2 by F. G. Crookshank, MD, FRCP, to *The Meaning of Meaning*, by Ogden and Richards, 1938 edition. Says Dr. Crookshank:—"Medicine today is an Art or Calling, to whose exercise certain sciences are no doubt ancillary, but she had forfeited pretension to be deemed a Science, because her professors and doctors decline to define fundamentals or to state first principles, and refuse to consider, in express terms, the relations between Things, Thoughts and Words involved in their communications to others". Regarding official reports, Dr. Crookshank in the same essay writes:—"By the judicious use, under compulsion, and at proper times, of such linguistic accessories as . . . and N.Y.D. (not yet diagnosed) the inconvenient appearance in official reports of unwelcome diagnoses could always be avoided, and a desirable belief in the absence of certain kinds of illness could easily be propagated".

Since points (1) and (2) therefore are at least debatable, point (3) loses its force.

While exercising a rational scepticism in matters religious, Dr. Duhig seems to maintain a religious credulity in matters medical. He is not consistent in his Freethought.

W. E. NICHOLSON.

VEGETARIANS AND INSURANCE

In the issue of December 2nd, 1960, Mr. B. M. Stanger asks whether particularly favourable Insurance terms are offered to Vegetarians.

I can assure him this is so—The Sentinel Insurance Co. Ltd. and The Vegetarian Assurance Agency both offer preferential terms to Vegetarians: if he cares to get in touch with either company or with The Vegetarian Society, Bank Square, Wilmslow, Cheshire, he will find this to be correct. I regret being somewhat late replying to Mr. Stanger.

EDWARD H. KIRBY.

Chairman of the Executive, *The Vegetarian Society*—a reader of THE FREETHINKER since 1920 and until I die!

[We have received a similar letter from Mr. John M. McClelland, Hon. Secretary of the Ulster Vegetarian Society.—ED.]

ENCOURAGEMENT NOT DESPONDENCY

In his article "The Heretical Sixties" Mr. Ridley asks, "Where are the intellectual giants like Darwin, Marx, etc.?" Perhaps we have no giants but we have people like Bertrand Russell and Marghanita Laski, who rarely fail to expound their heresies when given the chance of using the mass media of television and sound broadcasting.

The local or lesser heretics he asks about are in the National Secular Society branches. There he will find not intellectual giants, but quite a number of minnows who strive week after week at their meetings, factories, offices and among their social contacts to bring a spark of life into this age of apathy. Many of these people need encouragement, not the despondent note which this article strikes.

W. MILLER.

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MR. CORSARO

If ever there was a case of indoctrination, it is shown by Patrick Corsaro, in the argument with Mr. Cutner. There is no doubt that Mr. Corsaro was so indoctrinated as a child that he cannot eradicate the falsehoods. Pity too. He seems to be an intelligent man whose power of reasoning on religion has been destroyed. This is what all freethinkers are up against, and we must fight for the abolition of the teaching of myths as truth in the schools.

PAUL VARNEY.

OBITUARY

Walter Parry, who died from a heart attack on December 30th, 1960, at the age of 68, will be sadly missed by the Merseyside Branch of the National Secular Society, and by the many other Freethinkers who had come to know him and to enjoy his hospitality. It is hard to imagine visiting Liverpool and not being greeted by that lively and lovable personality. The only consolation is knowing that his wife and family will carry on the work he did so willingly and well. And it is good to know that, despite the suddenness of her loss, Mrs. Parry is taking it very bravely. We send her our deepest sympathy.

The cremation took place at Anfield Crematorium on January 3rd, and at Mr. Parry's request there were no flowers and no service.

C.McC.

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