

# The Freethinker

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ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS of the cold and gloomy month of January (which by a ludicrous chronology is supposed to begin the New Year), has been the announcement of the approaching retirement of the Archbishop of Canterbury—or to give His Grace his full and sonorous ecclesiastical style, of Geoffrey Cantuar, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England and Spiritual Head of the Church of England by Law Established—actually the 99th occupant of that exalted office since St. Augustine took over in 601 AD after consecration by the Benedictine Pope, Gregory the Great. While in cold reality His Grace's Church is still able to style itself as "The Church of England by Law Established", a candid colleague

of Dr. Fisher recently had the honesty to confess that the (self-styled) "Church of England" is nowadays merely a rather unimportant and diminishing sect—a fact which was rather unkindly recalled in a cartoon in a recent issue of the *Daily Mirror*. This depicted the retiring Archbishop ruefully contemplating his dilapidated sheepdog (appropriately named "out-dated approach to modern times") and commenting upon the reduced numbers of his still faithful flock. It is, in fact, in this year of ever-growing doubt and disbelief in all forms of the supernatural, only its still official status as the State Church that confers any real importance either upon the Church or upon its ecclesiastical head, Dr. Fisher its 99th Archbishop, or Dr. Ramsey its nominated 100th.

## Geoffrey Cantuar

We repeat that the wide publicity given to his retiring Grace, represents a tribute neither primarily to the man as such nor to the real spiritual and intellectual importance occupied by his Church in current world affairs or even upon our limited national scene, but solely to the officially privileged position which it holds in glaring defiance of the whole present scheme of things in the multi-racial, multi-religious British Commonwealth. In himself, Dr. Fisher has never demonstrated any particular intellectual distinction, even in the realm of the dubious (pseudo) science of Divinity. Actually such theological eminence has not been common even amongst Dr. Fisher's ninety-eight predecessors, for with the notable exceptions of the famous medieval theologian, St. Anselm (12th century Archbishop of Canterbury and author of that celebrated tract, *Cur Deus Homo*, which altered the whole Christian doctrine of the theological significance of the death of Christ) and of Dr. Fisher's own immediate predecessor, Dr. William Temple, the See of Canterbury, like that of Rome, has not been conspicuous for learning. Most previous Archbishops have been ecclesiastical bureaucrats, and it would probably be true to say of Archbishops of Canterbury in general what an intelligent critic once commented about the Popes: they have seldom been saints or scholars. In actuality most of them have been the same sort of people who get on in the Civil Service or in big business. Dr. Fisher's own record denominates him

as an efficient bureaucrat who runs true to type. If he had not felt "called" to serve in what turned out eventually to be a quite profitable area in the Lord's vineyard, he would probably have proved to be an efficient head of a governmental department. Even in his own Anglican Communion it appears unlikely that there will be any wide demand for his posthumous canonisation. Throughout his long and distinguished career both in education and in the Church, it can probably be stated with reasonable assurance that Dr. Fisher has never said anything that anyone is likely to remember on the day after his death, nor has he even done anything at all memorable, except possibly when as Headmaster of

Repton (a post he held for 18 years) during the first World War, he sacked one of his junior masters allegedly because he was a Pacifist. (Since the gentleman in question, Mr. Victor Gollancz, was thus enabled to qualify for his later role as leading publisher of the British Left it seems possible that Dr. Fisher may later have regretted this particular action!) The image that St. Augustine's 98th successor will leave to posterity will no doubt be that of a "sound, safe and cautious ecclesiastical statesman", the appropriate head of the Established Church of an officially Conservative country. It would take us too far afield to ask what those revivalist Jewish Messianic agitators the traditional Jesus and Paul would have thought of their present representative in Canterbury, or for that matter, what this eminent Christian would have thought of them had he been their contemporary.

## What of Cantuar 100?

What of Dr. Fisher's successor? It is curious at first sight that the choice for this still officially important position is not in the hands of the Anglican hierarchy or clergy, or (it goes without saying in an appointment of this kind) of the rank and file of the Anglican Church which has never practised any form of Democracy or workers' control. Rather paradoxically as it might seem to the uninitiated the actual choice of Archbishops lies in the hands of the Prime Minister, and our Tory Prime Minister has selected a High Churchman, and former pupil of Dr. Fisher, to follow him. In these matters it is the Prime Minister's, not a Divine or even a Sovereign choice, though I understand that the devoutly Protestant Queen Victoria did once stop the election of a prospective Archbishop upon the suspicion of Romanist leanings. Anyway, one cannot envy the new Archbishop his job, with Rome knocking persistently on his own door; with scepticism undermining the integrity of his flock and a nuclear war of inter-denominational annihilation only just round the corner. (Incidentally, we hope that Dr. Ramsey does not share Dr. Fisher's apparent complete unconcern about this last-named calamity.) If THE FREETHINKER may be permitted (since we are all members of the Church of England) to offer just one suggestion to His incoming Grace, we would suggest that he follows the apt example

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

## Exit Cantuar —and the Devil!

By F. A. RIDLEY

of his brother of Rome and like him, sets up a Chair of Atheism to study what is likely to prove his most formidable bugbear. And in the event of any difficulty in finding a suitable occupant, the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society will be pleased to assist.

The captains and the kings—and now the Archbishop—depart. But whilst lacking the blaze of publicity which attends Geoffrey Cantuar off stage, we must confess to being more intrigued by another, less-publicised, but quite possibly more important exit reported on the same day: the departure, at least temporarily from the new catechism, of our old friend (and fellow-Freethinker), the Devil. For a brief announcement on the radio informed us (on the day of the Archbishop's resignation) that after an appropriately hot discussion, the Convocation of

Canterbury had agreed to a new Church catechism that henceforth omitted all reference to the Devil and all his works. Here's news! and what a problem for future Anglican theologians. For Archbishops can be replaced, but who the devil can replace the Devil? And how the devil can he do it? On a more serious level, how, in future can Christianity hope to carry on without its oldest and most indispensable ally? How can Christianity do without the Devil? This indeed, is a problem vastly more serious and permanent than the mere selection of the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury, and it seems that many members of the Church of England have recognised it. There has, we are later informed, been an outcry against the decision to drop the Devil and a clamour for his reinstatement.

## Jews and the Vatican

By J. GORDON

PERHAPS IT IS A SIGN of the increasing influence of Judaism that the Vatican has lately been making one or two overtures towards the Jews. There has been some talk of an invitation to the Jews to discuss the question of Jewish participation in the Pope's Ecumenical Council. Not surprisingly, Jewish opinion on this is sharply divided. The Chief Rabbi of Britain, Dr. Brodie, declared that he could not see how an invitation could be extended to Jewish religious leaders to attend a conference whose purpose would be to consider Christian doctrine. Others think that a competent body might be elected, representative of World Jewry, to make suggestions to the Vatican for the modification of certain parts of the Catholic catechism and liturgy which are offensive to Jews.

However, the Vatican does seem anxious, at least at present, to avoid being dubbed "anti-semitic". A recent issue of the *Osservatore Romano* contains a strong attack on the writer of an essay in the October 1960 issue of UNESCO's monthly magazine, *Courier*, for daring to suggest that theological anti-semitism paved the way for modern "scientific" anti-semitism, and that Christianity is ultimately responsible for it. No well-informed student of history would dissent from this proposition, but to the Vatican it was like a red rag to a bull. Temper seems to have overcome reason, for the Vatican newspaper's reply consisted of irrelevant comparisons between the tie of a common faith and the tie of a common blood, together with some rather back-handed compliments to Jews in general. Many Jews fight shy of expressing openly any criticism of the Church, so it was quite refreshing to read in Ben Azai's Personal Column in the *Jewish Chronicle* for November 25th, that:

"The tart reaction of *Osservatore Romano* to Leon Poliakou's view that theological anti-semitism paved the way for the scientific variety is a useful reminder that the Vatican is more attuned to receiving submission than criticism". Exactly! And at a time when Jewish leaders are stressing the need for more Jewish education for the Jewish community in general, it seems opportune to point out what everyone ought to know and, in particular, what every Jewish student ought to know: that Christianity has been responsible for more bloody persecution and savage cruelty towards the Jews than has any other single factor since the beginning of the Christian Church. I shall leave the last word on this subject to the late Leo Baeck who was much revered as rabbi and scholar in his time, particularly amongst Liberal Jews.

The Church persecuted the Jews with the despotism of a Diocletian, with all the resources of invention, all the devices of torture and force . . . All instruments of torture were

applied in the attempt to overthrow the Jews; then, when their persecutors saw them in their misery, which they themselves had brought upon them, they found pleasant consolation in the thought that it was God who had rejected them.

(*The Essence of Judaism* by Leo Baeck).

Yet, to the modern student of comparative religion (and a good many others besides!), Orthodox Judaism is doomed to extinction. The more it struggles to preserve its vitality, the more glaring becomes the gulf between it and the modern spirit. One may admire the staunch adherence of the Jew to his ancestral faith and traditions in the face of appalling adversity, but the modern world looks with contempt and pity, rather than with anger at Orthodox Judaism with its slavish adherence to the Law for its own sake, its absurd overestimate and reliance upon the insight of the Rabbinical authors of the Talmud, and its pitiful concern over all the trivia and minutiae of ritual slaughter of animals, strict Kosher cuisine and dieting laws, to say nothing of the recent ludicrous controversy over mixed dancing. Modern life is simply passing it all by and the more alert amongst modern Jewry are realising it. It is unlikely that Orthodox Judaism will maintain its numbers in Britain through fresh waves of immigrants as in the past. Israel is today the natural first choice of any would-be Jewish emigrants. Also, since proselytising is uncommon with Judaism for obvious reasons, and since the attitude of the London Beth Din towards Jewish converts contains provisions, promises and stipulations guaranteed to daunt even the most intense admirer of Judaism, the outlook for the future is not very bright.

The above observations do not apply to the movement known as Liberal Judaism which "began" in Germany some 150 years ago. Liberal Judaism, which goes further even than Reform Judaism in dispensing with archaic Jewish laws and practices, might be regarded as the "modernist" wing of the Jewish Faith. Unlike the Orthodox communities, the Liberal Jewish Synagogues are expanding in numbers and influence. Their members are drawn chiefly, of course, though not entirely, from ex-Orthodox Jews. There are also ex-Christians, and others who see in Liberal Judaism the basis of a satisfying faith without, on the one hand the archaic and now meaningless forms of Orthodox Judaism or, on the other, the absurd and equally meaningless doctrines of Christianity. Liberal Judaism is to some extent adapted to modern needs; it welcomes converts and indeed ultimately aims at becoming a universal religion. But with all its liberalism and all its adaptations it retains the one fundamental absurdity of its Orthodox ancestor, the belief in God. Nothing can make that modern or meaningful.

# The Man Nobody Knows

By H. CUTNER

MR. D. H. TRIBE'S dashing entry into the Myth Theory is typical of the young recruit who has got a woefully small smattering of the subject, and a few convenient clichés.

As Bruno Bauer early in the nineteenth century said (quoted by Renan in his *Critical Histories of Jesus*)—"The most ancient histories of all peoples is mythical; Why should the history of the Hebrews be the only exception, when a single glance at the books of the Bible proves that they contain legends like other nations?" And he adds, "As to the historic Christ, who does not see that everything related of him pertains to the ideal, and has nothing to do with the real world?" What Mr. Tribe fails to touch is the question of *evidence*. He admits in his gaily off-hand way that "no contemporary evidence exists" about Jesus; then how in Heaven's name does he come to know that he existed? From the New Testament?

Where in the New Testament then do we find particulars of the "man" Jesus he obviously believes in—if only so very little? The Jesus of the New Testament is *not* a man but a God. If you go to it then for your Jesus, you can only logically go to it for a God Jesus, for there is nobody else. This Jesus was virgin born, he performed miracles, he rose from the dead, and ascended up to Heaven. You cannot abstract a man Jesus from all this because the *evidence* for him is that of the God only—as Cardinal Godfrey (I think it was he) pointed out to Malcolm Muggeridge, and to which that astute gentleman (who had cheerfully admitted that he only believed in the Man Jesus) could make no reply. If Mr. Tribe can send me to any evidence whatever as to a man Jesus going about "doing good", I shall be pleased to consider it. If there is no contemporary evidence (as Mr. Tribe admits) as to the existence of a man or a "God" Jesus—what earthly use is it to tell me that I "cannot prove it" or "why it matters"? What is it that I cannot prove? That Jesus is a "myth"? But what I need first is the *fact* of the existence of Jesus—not *any* Jesus but *the* Jesus of the New Testament as a man. It will then be time to settle what I can or cannot prove.

In the meantime, Mr. Tribe rushes me off to Paul who is so real to him that, going to Voltaire, he feels if he never existed he would have to be invented. So what? How do we know that Paul was not invented?

That some one with a very distinctive style of writing wrote some of the Epistles, or at least parts of them, can be conceded; but who was he? There is not a scrap of evidence that the Saul of Acts ever wrote a line of them. In that book, his name was changed to Paul in the twinkling of an eye, and some of us would like to know why? In any case, it should not be forgotten that the "authenticity" of the Epistles of Paul was very severely attacked by Professor Van Manen in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, and Mr. Tribe could find this supported by the late Thomas Whittaker in his *Origins of Christianity*. If Van Manen was right, then whatever Paul is supposed to have said in an anonymous document of the second century—as Van Manen contends—he gives us no more *contemporary* evidence than do the Gospels.

But note how this is sensed by Mr. Tribe, for he admits that after all, even if genuine, they tell us very little of Jesus. On the contrary of course, they tell us quite a lot, but not the kind of thing which can make Mr. Tribe very happy. Let me tell him why

The Jesus of Paul is "the Christ", the Messiah, the Anointed, the Son of God. The Epistles themselves can be twisted like the Gospels to mean anything, for in the Authorised Version they are mostly unintelligible—hence the desperate efforts to make them appeal to the present generation by new translations. But on some things Paul is as clear as crystal. In Cor. 15, he tells us of the appearances of Jesus after his Crucifixion when "he rose on the third day", and appeared to Cephas, to the Twelve, to over 500 brethren, to James, to all the Apostles, and last of all to Paul himself. This passage *cannot* be twisted, and is the final answer to all who drag in Paul as a witness to a "man" Jesus or even a "Man" Jesus. Only a God can rise after being put to death.

To tell us that when Paul said he had seen "Jesus Christ our Lord", this proves that "our Lord" was a mere *man* who went about Palestine "doing good" shows to what length supporters of Jesus can go. I at least cannot reason with them.

I am aware that the New Testament is packed with allusions to Jesus, but they are all to Jesus the God or the Son of God. And in addition there are dozens of other Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, to say nothing of actual letters written by Jesus, all of which were once—and sometimes even now—considered absolutely genuine. But in every case, Jesus is a *God*.

The way Jesus can be proved to be a Man only, by citing the Gospels and Paul, brings me to a favourite argument of mine. Supposing a thousand years hence the question arose—Mr. Pickwick a real celebrity, or just a character invented by Charles Dickens? Well, we have first his biography entitled *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*—the word "posthumous" surely indicating their authenticity. Secondly we have given us various known places all quite authentic relating to Mr. Pickwick's adventures in the George Inn at Southwark, at Rochester, at Bury St. Edmunds, in the White Horse Inn at Ipswich, and many other well known spots still existing. (Incidentally, our valued contributor, William Kent, has written an excellent and valuable monograph on the George Inn, a little work which all Dickensians must treasure.) You can trace Mr. Pickwick's adventures in all these places, and if you want proof that he and his famous followers—Sam Weller, Tupman, Snodgrass, and Winkle—also went to France, you can consult *Pickwick Abroad* by G. W. M. Reynolds, though with sorrow I must admit that this account of Mr. Pickwick's adventures are considered by Dickensian authorities to be "apocryphal".

In addition, many other "apocryphal" stories of the great man later appeared, as well as genuine portraits, and plays, and music, to say nothing of the way his name was given to pens—*e.g.* the Pickwick pen—and I believe even to cigars. In other words, there is abundant "evidence" that Mr. Pickwick was a live character.

To put the matter in another way. Just as the only way to account for Christianity is to accept Jesus as its Founder—a favourite argument these days by Humanists—so we must accept *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* as true to account for Mr. Pickwick. And note: I am leaving out all "miracles" in both cases.

Finally—is the Myth Theory of use in fighting against Christianity? I think it is the only way in which we can hope to make any progress whatever.

(Concluded on next page)

## This Believing World

The retirement of Dr. Fisher from Canterbury has brought the usual flood of eulogies, as one of the best of England's Primates; but the appointment of Dr. Ramsey seems to have puzzled our journalistic experts. For example, the *Daily Express*, in an editorial, tells us that Dr. Ramsey "is a keen walker". It appears he once, barefoot, "led a pilgrimage of 2,000 people to Holy Island". No one can doubt that this superb quality will help the worthy Archbishop in his important task.

★

The same journal tells us that a year ago, Dr. Ramsey conducted a mission at Oxford University and was "ganged up" by "angry young Agnostics". And what happened? Surely we can guess. "Ramsey knocked them for six again and again". Not once or twice, but "again and again"! We are always intrigued at the way ignorant and angry but quite unknown Agnostics are beaten in a discussion by almost any priest. We confess that this does sometimes happen, but has it ever happened with a well-known Agnostic like Ingersoll or Bertrand Russell?

★

The question of religion, which obsesses so many otherwise admirable Adoption Societies, was pressed very forcibly by Mr. Daniel Farson in his illuminating but very sad, "A Child Is Wanted", on ITV the other week. Two ladies, representing these adoption societies, were—of course—entirely for a *Christian* family to adopt a child; while a doctor, who was also interviewed, firmly opposed them. As the Societies were originally Christian, they had a right, said the ladies, to insist on this religious background.

★

What should have ensued was, however, the damning fact that the hundreds of thousands of cases of appalling cruelty exposed every year by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children almost always occurred in admittedly *Christian* homes. Mr. Farson ought to have shown the two ladies what is, to some of us, an agonising Report issued by the NSPCC every year. It appears that there are still some people who would prefer an unwanted child *never* to be adopted rather than share a home with Rationalists.

★

After a spate of pictures—some of them undoubtedly masterpieces—representing "our Lord" dressed in a detergently washed long nightie "whiter than white", it appears that the Evangelical and Reformed Church (US membership 800,000) has approved of showing him now dressed like a modern 15-year-old boy in an undervest, jacket, with short sleeves and white Bermuda shorts. A drawing of this is shown in the American magazine *Time* (November, 1960). All we now need to make his mother Mary also a little more up-to-date, is to clothe her in a jumper and skirt before doing the Assumption ascent into Heaven.

★

We never knew that Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, who recently retired from the City Temple, kept a staff of ten psychiatrists, but he appears to have felt that Christianity needed a little more than just Jesus. Dr. Weatherhead's aphorism, "Good religion is never bad psychology, and good psychology is never bad religion" is his excuse for the ten psychiatrists, no doubt. We would hazard a bet that he considers Jesus is the greatest psychiatrist that ever lived?

★

The Bishop of Coventry has tried to answer Mr. Norman Price's efforts—related in *Sunday Pictorial*—to find God and what he looks like by telling us that God "came to us supremely in Jesus Christ". As this has been said by

almost every priest and bishop since Apostolic times—what a waste of effort Mr. Price has indulged in! For "Cuthbert Coventry" as he calls himself, Jesus (that is, God) came to us on Christmas Day, as a baby, and the Bishop found him thirty years ago and "He has been making himself known to me ever since". We shall have to take his word for it and leave it at that.

### THE LAST STRAW

"In days long dead," the Devil said,  
"The clergy found me useful;  
They loved to dwell on the pangs of Hell,  
By Terror kept their pews full—

Unceasingly depicting me  
As the Tempter ever yearning  
To lure the weak up the Stygian creek  
To the everlasting burning.

But now no more on Tophet's shore  
Do the Bible-punchers linger;  
No voices boom of 'the gates of doom'  
With thump and warning finger.

Except RCs (who cannot please  
Themselves) and timid ladies,  
No one believes that Sin receives  
Its due reward in Hades.

And the Island Race (How its bishops' base  
Ingratitude doth rack me!)  
Has shed its fears of a thousand years—  
So, the parsons seek to sack me!"

W.H.D.

### ANGELIC VISIONS

A suggestion that angelic visions have been seen in a particular type of glass manufactured by them have been denied by Pilkington Brothers, the St. Helens glass manufacturers.

The visions have been reported from Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire, and Scotland but the glass firm say they are optical illusions caused by the textured surface of that particular type of glass.

"This glass has quite by chance the optical properties of diffusing the light from a point source such as an electric lamp or street light" says the firm's house journal. "The resultant image sometimes looks like a thick cross and on other occasions, according to the position of the light, it can be confused with the shape of the human image.

"Recently at Oswaldtwistle, where a farmer had installed a pane of this glass in a stable, a blurred figure could be seen from the darkened interior when light from a street lamp shone through the glass from outside.

"Some months ago the same thing was noticed in Scotland" says the journal. "But what they saw, however, is no mystery to us and it certainly wasn't any vision in the religious sense. Our glass makers in Birmingham know only too well that although their product is very good it has received no heavenly status."

—*Liverpool Echo* (16/1/61).

### THE MAN NOBODY KNOWS

(Concluded from page 35)

Our cardinals and bishops will smile benignly, even indulgently, when they meet an "unbeliever"—like Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge for instance—who hastily assures them that he is a thorough believer in Jesus Christ though not as a God or the Son of God. There is still some hope for this kind of "heretic". But they are almost ready to lose their temper when Jesus is put in the same bunch of gods we know once flourished in "classical" times—Jupiter, Osiris, Krishna, Apollo, and similar non-existent deities. These mythicists can never be converted. They are beyond the pale.

In my opinion, the only Freethought argument Christians shrink from is the mythical one.

NEXT WEEK

THE PROBLEM OF FAMILY PLANNING

By H. CUTNER

# THE FREETHINKER

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## 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

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Tuesday, February 7th, 7.15 p.m.: MRS. V. CREECH JONES, J.P., "The Young Offender".

Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, February 5th, 6.30 p.m.: G. C. NERLICH, M.A., B.Phil., "Is Scepticism Superficial?"

Marble Arch Branch N.S.S. (The Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, W.1), Sunday, February 5th, 7.15 p.m.: H. McCORMACK, "Galileo and the Persecution of Scientists".

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Education Centre, Broad Street), Sunday, February 5th, 2.30 p.m.: Rev. C. W. HARRINGTON, "The Illusion of Freedom".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Sunday, February 5th, 11 a.m.: Mrs. DOROTHY PICKLES, M.A., "The Moral Crisis in France".

## Notes and News

MR. F. A. RIDLEY, President of the National Secular Society, and author of such works as *The Jesuits*, *Julian the Apostate* (unfortunately now both out of print) and *The Evolution of the Papacy*, has accepted an invitation from the Litific Society of Queen's University, Belfast, to propose the motion, "This House deplores the influence of the Roman Catholic Church". The debate will take place on Tuesday, February 7th, and the Catholic opposers will be Sir Arnold Lunn and Mr. Douglas Woodruff, Editor of *The Tablet*.

THE OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE of the Abortion Law Reform association most strongly urge all their members, supporters and friends to write to their constituency MP and other MPs known to them, asking them for their votes in favour of the Second Reading of Mr. Kenneth Robinson's Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill on Friday, February 10th, 1961. This long-awaited Parliamentary opportunity is a unique chance to amend the 100-year-old Abortion Law of 1861.

THE HUMAN BRAIN, said Dr. John D. Williams, a Mathematician of the American Rand Corporation, "is badly organised, inaccurate and slow". It does some things very well, he told a meeting of the (US) National Council of

Teachers of Mathematics (*Time*, 20/1/61) but, like the brain of other vertebrates, it is "an item of random design to meet one basic purpose: survival. The fact that it has out-thought things like sabre-toothed tigers is no evidence that it is particularly apt for abstract thinking". "Creators of intelligent artificial brains," continued Dr. Williams, "should strive for machines that are designed and built specially for abstract thinking. The necessary hardware will soon be available: electronic units, analogous to brain cells, that can be produced by the billion, be made too small to see with a microscope, send 100 million signals per second, never make mistakes and last indefinitely. Computers made of these wonderful gadgets and geared for abstract thought should be able to out-think the brightest human brain."

THE REPORT OF THE "Lamplighter" meetings held once a fortnight at lunchtime in a Leicestershire junior school may prompt Freethinking parents to check up on possible religious activities at their childrens' schools. It is too much to expect any political party, or even the Trade Unions today, to come out openly in favour of secular education, but Freethinkers must continue to advocate it as the only equitable—and reasonable—basis for an educational system.

FROM LEICESTERSHIRE to Canada where, in a cutting from the *Family Herald* (28/7/60) sent to us by Mr. Robert Hudon, we learn that James Gladstone, the Dominion's only Indian senator "has advocated that the education of his people be taken entirely away from religious denominations and handled directly by the federal government". Mr. Gladstone acknowledged that missionaries have contributed much to the development of Indians, but he felt that their education should now be comparable with non-Indian communities. Complimenting Mr. Gladstone on "his boldness in proclaiming the facts", Mr. J. M. McDonald (*Family Herald*, 22/9/60) said that since the days of the dog sleigh and the canoe, advances had been made in some fields, but there had been "little or none in the realm of religion".

A NAPLES TAX COLLECTOR, Signor Antonio Mirra, has—according to the *Daily Telegraph* (19/1/61)—filed a "citizen's suit" against a Bologna research team headed by Professor Daniele Petrucci, which recently fertilised a human embryo in a test tube. Signor Mirra alleges that the research team have committed infanticide according to Article 578 of the Italian Penal Code by "having carried out experiments of artificial insemination and fertilisation and, as they announce, after the successful experiment having destroyed the embryo on the 29th day of its fertilisation".

AS A SUBSTITUTE for "pie in the sky", Hugh Evelyn recently published Oswald Blakeston's *Edwardian Glamour Cooking Without Tears* (15s.). Now Blakeston's "Heligoland Sequence", a new series of drawings, is to be on exhibition at The Foyer Gallery, Everyman Cinema, Hampstead, from February 6th to March 4th. The artist visited the island in the autumn of 1960 and was delighted to find that the islanders, who once merrily pitched a kill-joy missionary into the sea, still remember the old island proverb: "He who has the devil for a friend can safely go to Hell".

AS WE GO TO PRESS we have good reports from Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society of Mr. T. H. R. James's maiden speech, "The Beliefs of an Unbeliever".

# Vaccination and Inoculation

By Dr. J. V. DUHIG

I HAVE NOTHING but contempt for anti-vaccinationists, anti-vivisectionists (AVs) and anti-inoculationists (AIs): they are callous, ignorant and pompous fanatics. My critic Mr. Newton is a borderline case as we shall see. If they had their way all the magnificent experimental, and much of the preventive, medicine of the last century would have been impossible. (I propose to deal with this in detail in a later FREETHINKER article). The operation for the cure of congenital malformation of the heart which has given long useful healthy life to people who would have had a short, useless, unhappy and unhealthy one, was founded, like so many others of similar beneficence on vivisection. Diphtheria anti-toxin, one of the great discoveries in history—greater in my view than the discovery of the North Pole—which saved the lives of millions of children was also founded on vivisection but these fanatics would have prevented it.

Now for my critics. Mr. Nicholson's pretentious and impertinent drivel is worthless. He knows nothing about me. Mr. Denning's stock twaddle in the approved AV jargon is, if possible, worse, as he speaks of "filthy serum". Therapeutic serum, as delivered from the maker is completely pure and not essentially different from human serum in our own blood.

Now to the facts.

*Smallpox:* There is not the remotest shred of evidence that vaccination does not prevent Smallpox. The deaths from Encephalitis were due to an unwise change in the method of manufacture which has been since corrected.

It was not adopted in Australia where we have never had a case of post-vaccinal encephalitis. I have vaccinated over 5,000 people who never had any but a very mild transient fever. The dangers of vaccination are grossly exaggerated by the AVs. The triumphant statement is made that no baby in England has had Smallpox. This is for the same reason that babies have not had Yaws, Sleeping Sickness and Yellow Fever; because of the admirably rigid quarantine regulations they have never had the chance. But once let Smallpox into England and the death-rate amongst the un-vaccinated would be a holocaust. The wonderful quarantine service in England (and Australia) is the AV's fool's paradise. I would advise readers to apply to the Anglo-Soviet Cultural Regulations body for literature on the change in Smallpox incidence and mortality since the introduction of compulsory vaccination in USSR since 1917.

*Typhoid:* For two years I was physician to a military general hospital serving about 6,000 troops in World War I (WWI). The only case of typhoid we had in the whole two years—it was fatal—was in a recruit who on conscientious grounds refused anti-typhoid inoculation, misled probably by some fanatical fool of an AI. (Mr. Hillier could have suffered this fate.) While sanitation was good army standard, it is obvious it was possible to acquire typhoid and it was common in civilian life but the only one who got it was uninoculated while his mates eating and living in absolutely identical conditions, but inoculated, escaped. This case convinced me for ever of the value of anti-typhoid inoculation. In the New Guinea campaign the Australian Army medical people—two of my former students actually—told me that in the late stages we got into the old Japanese lines and thousands of prisoners were captured or gave themselves up. Their sanitation was abominable and they were riddled with malaria, dysentery and internal parasites but my lads never saw a

case of typhoid in those abominably dirty conditions; the Jap soldiers were inoculated. In WW2 the Australian Army in the Middle East came into places where Typhoid was endemic and prevalent but never had a case themselves.

I agree that improved sanitation reduced the civil incidence of Typhoid but not to anything of the same extent in military conditions in war.

Now Mr. Newton tells us that "In the South African War *practically the whole* of our 328,000 troops engaged were inoculated against typhoid". This statement must be the babe of Mr. Newton's fanatical AI imagination because there are no records in existence which would enable anybody to make such a claim. And it is simply not a *fact*. It is probably true to say that only a minority were inoculated at all and only a very tiny minority, if anybody at all, were inoculated with an effective antigen of a quality equal to that used in India in 1900 and by the Japanese in 1904. To all intents and purposes, as I originally indicated, hardly a single soldier received proper inoculation. In India typhoid vaccine gave excellent results as it did for the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904. As the matter is at present it is impossible to be certain about what happened in South Africa in this respect.

Here are the *facts* as far as we know them. "In South Africa," says Professor Major, the historian, "(anti-typhoid) vaccination was voluntary and quite haphazard. The vaccine was often wrongly prepared [a point which would escape the Newtons]. Records were kept carelessly and often lost. 'No complete records of anti-typhoid vaccination in the South African War have ever been published and they probably do not exist' (Russell). When typhoid showed an increasing toll the Army authorities decided that typhoid vaccination was of no value and ordered it to cease. Two years of bitter controversy followed, but a Royal Commission after an exhaustive investigation rehabilitated it. In 1911 after a study of the question by Colonel F. F. Russell (same as above) the U.S. Army introduced unequivocal compulsion. The results were startling. The typhoid rate which had been, per 1,000, 2.43 in 1910, fell to 0.31 in 1912 and to zero in 1913". *History of Medicine* by Professor Major, Professor of Medicine and History of Medicine, University of Kansas.

"In WW1 of 4,128,479 troops only 227 died of typhoid. Deaths from the diseases on the Civil War scale would have been 51,000 and on that of the Hispano-USA 68,000." (*USA Official History*.) The inference is that inoculation was responsible.

"In WW2, the typhoid incidence was one-twentieth of that of WW1. The chances of typhoid were the same and the non-specific protective factors were the same but the specific protection of inoculation was considered to have improved." (*USA Official History*.)

Mr. Newton correctly says the British Army had 7,400 cases of typhoid, a magnificent achievement for over 2 million and possibly 5 million troops; such an incidence is microscopic. And the picture is enhanced when it is remembered that typhoid incidence was ten times higher amongst the uninoculated than amongst the inoculated. The *British Official War History* shows that in a typical year, 1915, there were 9.5 cases per 10,000 amongst the inoculated but 103.5 amongst the uninoculated. So that of the 7,400 about 6,700 had somehow escaped inocula-

tion. And as I was most of my time in the front lines or thereabouts I can safely say that this magnificent result was due only in small part to sanitation. Anti-typhoid inoculation was the great protector. A total of less than 1,000 cases in over 4 years amongst about 4 million men or more is something to boast about. In South Africa the typhoid incidence was 190 per 1,000, in WW1 it was 2 per 1,000. This huge discrepancy cannot be explained away by just sanitation.

I cannot accept Mr. Newton's French figures; they are too crude. As I know, having worked in France after the war, a new type of anti-typhoid vaccine was in use in the principle of which I did not believe and it is possible such was in use in the army. I have written to the French Embassy in Canberra for exact particulars. Mr. Newton's first statement about "practically all troops inoculated" has made me very wary of all his statements. As to civilian life there is no need for inoculation in our city as we have a pure water supply and a 98% pasteurised milk supply and other precautions which have practically wiped out typhoid. But in flood or disaster conditions in the country typhoid inoculation is practised when necessary.

**Tetanus:** In WW1 Tetanus antitoxic serum (ATS) was used on wounded as a prophylactic but no doctor thought it more than just fairly good and worth trying. Here are some figures from the *British Official War History*.

	Mortality
<i>In France—</i>	
Protected	66.5%
Unprotected	83.3%
<i>In England—(Sir D. Bruce)</i>	
Protected	22.5%
Unprotected	53.3%

Normally without ATS the death rate in tetanus at that time would be of the order of 80% so that ATS was obviously of great value especially in conditions where all possible facilities were available as we see in the striking contrast between the figures for soldiers in France and in England. I was intensely surprised when the Secretary of the Anti-Vivisection Society sent me some figures which apparently he thought adverse but which showed results of which anybody could be proud. They showed with ATS in WW1 a drop in mortality from 54.6% in 1914 and 56% in 1915 to only 19.2% in 1917 and 25% in 1918. He also has some figures allegedly by Sir David Bruce. They seem rather cock-eyed but do show an enormous improvement on the mortality in untreated cases.

The Secretary of the AV Society does not seem to be aware of the fact that in WW2 we used tetanus toxoid and not ATS as formerly. ATS gives only passive immunity for three weeks or so. Toxoid gives an active firmly refractory immunity for at least one year which is greatly increased by a booster dose after a year. As a result of this tetanus has ceased to be a scourge or a menace in civil or military life. The Australian Army in WW2 was free of it. (ATS is serum, tetanus toxoid is filtered formalised broth culture of the organism.)

In Queensland in general and Brisbane in particular a quadruple antigen is now used for protecting children against diphtheria, Tetanus (toxoids), Whooping Cough vaccine (bacterial) and Poliomyelitis (killed virus). This has greatly diminished these diseases, and Diphtheria is almost completely eradicated.

Luckily there are no AVs or AIs in this city. It should not be forgotten that governments do not put fools in charge of their civil or military medical services.

### LUNCHTIME "LAMPLIGHTER" MEETINGS AT LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOL

ON NOVEMBER 8th, 1960, Mr. W. G. Hazel, Head Master of Braunstone Ravenhurst Junior School, Leicestershire, explained in a circular to parents that the religious service "taken by Mr. Farrands and Miss Luker at the school" was a "Lamplighter" meeting and that in future it would "take place once per fortnight lasting 20 minutes from 1 p.m. to 1.20 p.m.". "It does not," he said, "obtrude on school time and is a voluntary organisation. It is *not* sectarian in character." But, he added, "No child will be admitted to these meetings without written permission from the parents".

On hearing of the above, Mr. C. H. Hammersley, Secretary of Leicester Secular Society, wrote (16/11/60) to the Director of Education of the County of Leicester, Mr. Stewart C. Mason, M.A., asking "whether this service is conducted with the knowledge and consent of the County Education Committee and whether it is in order for teachers to use school buildings for this purpose?" Mr. Hammersley also expressed concern that evangelically-minded teachers "may consider themselves justified in using pressure in class to persuade children to secure the necessary written permission to take part in these services". The Director of Education replied (November 17th, 1960):

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 16th November, the fortnightly meeting of "Lamplighters" at the Braunstone Ravenhurst Junior School is one of a wide variety of extra-curricular societies, clubs and activities which take place at schools in general, and which are welcomed by the Education Committee both for their social and educational value.

In so far as this particular Society is Christian it accords completely with the express intention of the Education Act and it avoids any conflict with the provisions of the Act relating to County Schools, by being non-sectarian. Since, however, it is a religious activity, the Headmaster has wisely decided that membership shall not be accorded merely on the request of the children, but that the consent of parents shall be given in writing so that the religious or anti-religious views of parents are completely safeguarded.

Your suggestions that pressure might be applied on children would, I am sure, be resented by the teachers, and your implication that it would be effective second-hand is hardly complimentary to the parents.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) S. C. MASON, Director of Education.

It might be commented in passing that Mr. Mason's final paragraph is hardly courteous to Mr. Hammersley, but that is not the main lesson to be learnt from the letter. It should finally disillusion all those who supported the 1944 Education Act fondly believing that religion in schools (in or out of curriculum) was all right as long as it was non-sectarian.

However, Mr. Hammersley wrote to the Director again on November 28th, thanking him for his assurance that "no pressure is put upon children to take part in these services" and saying:

We should be most interested to know whether the same facilities accorded to the "Lamplighter" would be granted to a teacher who wished to run a class on "Morals without Religion" or "Scientific Humanism", provided a number of parents desired such classes.

Again we give Mr. Mason's not-especially-courteous reply in full, *viz.*

Dear Sir,

As I think I explained in my previous letter, extra curricular activities of a school are a matter for internal decision.

I cannot however, imagine that any school would wish to include among its activities the kind of thing you mention since this is in clear conflict with the organisation of the school itself as laid down in the Education Act.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) S. C. MASON, Director of Education.

## CORRESPONDENCE

## CALLING THE BLUFF

Dr. Duhig's observation on calling the bluff of the Roman Catholic Church is very true, as I know from my own experience as an ex-RC. His suggestion that pamphlets be published on the social consequences of Romanism is an excellent one, as I believe many Catholics are disturbed on the point and would be amenable to such an approach. Even the sober Kirk is disturbed by the numerical growth of Catholicism, though they are aware of the heavy losses of Rome in Scotland. Catholic schools, entirely state-supported at the expense of Protestants and Freethinkers, produce most of Glasgow's criminals, and Irish Catholic emigrants, with their large families are the primary cause of Glasgow's slumdom. English Protestants and Freethinkers should be warned, as the English Roman Catholic Hierarchy have gone on record that they would like the "Scottish Schools System" established south of the border. RCs form a large percentage of Glasgow ruling Labour Party Corporation, and this Church never seems to encounter difficulties when it acquires sites for the many new churches it has built since the war. It can well afford to do this as others pay its schools bill. There is even a new Roman Catholic Hospital at Langside, Glasgow, opened last year with the Lord Provost (Lord Mayor) in attendance.

Finally may I express my appreciation of Mr. Pigott's articles on Sicily?

FRANCIS SOATER.

## COMMUNISM AND CATHOLICISM

I greatly appreciated Dr. Duhig's article "Communism and Catholicism", particularly his condemnation of the pseudo-scientific charlatan, Lysenko and the terrible treatment of the great Russian scientist, Vavilov. It is something that should not be forgotten.

ROBERT I. TURNEY.

Dr. J. V. Duhig (20/1/61) says: "I cannot be either a Communist or a Catholic. When I have been called a Communist I have replied that I dropped one religion and do not propose to take on another". I do not think Communism can be called a religion. Religion implies belief in the supernatural, and Communism definitely does not do this. It is atheistic, as Dr. Duhig admits earlier in his article.

D. CAREY.

I understand that Materialism (orthodox brand) states that "the explanations of all phenomena are to be sought and found in the conditions of their appearances" and that Dialectical Materialism states that "all phenomena are interdependent and subject to a process of continual change". Accordingly I fail to see how Dr. Duhig can give the tag "an abstraction" to the latter species and fail to abuse the former species at the same time. He would no doubt agree with my thesis that all religions are phenomena, and by virtue of their co-existence at any stage in history are interdependent. The evolving forces of society (i.e. automation techniques, accretion of medical knowledge, etc.) must impinge on society and thus produce change, though change of course does not necessarily mean change in a socially desirable direction (say from a Freethinker's point of view). Now the atrocities of certain Communists and other political groupings are themselves explosive examples of crises in social evolution, and are the result of the struggle of non-mutual phenomena (in the political sphere the interplay of divergent economic interests) and all Freethinkers will join with Dr. Duhig in his condemnation of atrocity and suffering arising from these clashes, but do not let us confuse the philosophic view of Dialectical Materialism with changes that would have arisen even if Marx had never lived.

C. W. MARSHALL.

## HONOUR FOR THOMAS PAINE

I have recently received from that indefatigable Painite in America, Joseph Lewis, a reproduction of a letter from President Eisenhower, thanking Mr. Lewis for a bust of Thomas Paine. Written on the 1st. September last year, the then President said he

was "delighted to have such a fine bust of one of America's great men and, as my secretary told you, I shall see that it is eventually sent to the Eisenhower Library in Abilene".

My researches have so far not revealed much commendation of Paine by America's new President, but in *Profiles in Courage*, John F. Kennedy makes a passing reference to Paine crossing verbal swords with President George Washington over whether the young American nation should fight imperialist Britain. Kennedy writes of "Tom Paine", an unpardonable offence, did he but know it, as it was only the enemies of Paine that called him "Tom". Though this sounds so friendly an abbreviation, for some reason his friends sturdily called him "Thomas", as is clear from records of his times and the years immediately after. For many years Sherwin's *Political Register* and Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian* carried notices about this time of year of dinners to be held to commemorate the "Birthday of the Immortal Thomas Paine". I hope this pleasant practice may be started again as a regular event, as Paine's works have a timelessness that truly puts them in the immortal class.

CHRISTOPHER BRUNEL.

## OBITUARY

Edward Thomas Bryant, who has died in Folkestone in his 80th year, will be remembered by many fellow-Freethinkers in the London area as a Hyde Park speaker of quiet sincerity and persuasiveness and as a member of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society. It was fitting that a secular service should be conducted on January 23rd by J. W. Barker, who had served with Mr. Bryant on the EC and had spoken with him on the NSS platform on many occasions.

We send our sympathy to Mrs. Bryant and her two sons.

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