

# The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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"A VERY ORDERLY and civilised demonstration." That was how a police officer described the National Secular Society's protest against the British Transport Commission's banning of the Family Planning Association poster from the London Underground. It was an apt description. From the idea's conception at an Executive Committee meeting a month or two ago, it had been intended that the protest, though strong, should be orderly and civilised. After all, our case was essentially a reasonable one, and reason was never allowed to be subdued to emotion.

We knew it would not be a mass demonstration. Although population control through family planning is a major world problem, second only—as Harold J. Blackham remarked to the British Transport Commission's representatives on Saturday, March 11th—to the problem of war, it isn't yet generally recognised as such. As for a single advertisement banned from the Tube, well, the majority of people could hardly be expected to concern themselves with that, could they?

It would, then, be an enlightened minority who would be expected to sign the petitions. And so it turned out. The National Secular Society's offices in Southwark being near to Guy's Hospital, doctors and medical students were to the fore. And a number of students paraded at the Hospitals Cup rugby final in which Guy's met St. Thomas's—and incidentally beat them. At the Family Planning Association's clinics, State Registered Nurses were notable among the signatories. Launched on a grand scale, of course, with more publicity and financial backing, more signatories could no doubt have been obtained. As it was, two thousand people in the London area signed without any pressure being brought to bear on them. Some liberal-minded Catholics even put "RC" after their names. In addition, a good many National Secular Society members wrote individual letters of protest to the British Transport Commission, and a few induced their MPs to write also.

## Sir Brian Robertson

One of these, Mr. Marcus Lipton, MP, received a reply from Sir Brian Robertson, Chairman of the Commission, which was quoted in *The Times* on March 11th.

"When we first displayed these posters in August we did not then expect they would give rise to religious controversy, but we started to receive protests by the end of September," states Sir Brian. "By the beginning of December it had become amply clear that the concept of family planning offended the religion of many people who had seen these posters."

"It is not a question of how many were moved to complain, but the fact that a controversy does clearly exist on religious grounds between large numbers of people, some for and some against the idea of family planning."

"We only bar advertisements that are controversial on political or religious grounds, and we think the reasons are sound. As a State-owned undertaking we could hardly, for example, accept posters advocating nuclear disarmament in opposition to official Government policy. If we accepted

posters based on the faith and views held by particular religious bodies, or countering those views, those bodies who spent the most or secured the best positions would be given an advantage over others, and we should get deeply involved in accusations of unfair treatment."

The last paragraph raises all kinds of problems which there is no time to go into now. But one point should be clarified. There are actually twenty grounds on which the Commission can refuse a poster (ranging from depiction of murder, through strip-tease and advertisements for contraceptives, to offers of employment) whereas Sir Brian's statement might be taken to imply just two. The word "only" should have been omitted as it was in the nearly identical explanations to other MPs from British Transport Advertising. (I am assuming that *The Times* has quoted accurately.)

I join Mr. Lipton in "appreciating Sir Brian's difficulty": the interpretation of do's and don'ts is always a tricky business. But I also agree with Mr. Lipton when he says: "I still think it is wrong that some undisclosed minority should in fact be able to ban the posters of quite reputable bodies like the Family Planning Association. Many of the posters now being shown serve a much less useful purpose." (*The Times*, 11/3/61.)

## "Undisclosed Minority"

This "undisclosed minority" particularly interests me. There is no doubt in my own mind that it consists mainly of Roman Catholics, but British Transport Advertising (the Commercial Advertising Service of the BTC) of Transad House, Leicester Square, London, denies that there is any indication of this. Mr. J. L. Perren, in a letter to Mr. James Dance, MP, which agrees almost word-for-word with Sir Brian Robertson's to Mr. Marcus Lipton, MP, (though omitting "only") says:

None of the letters received was from an organisation and none gave any indication that the writer was a member of the Roman Catholic Church or of a "religious minority".

I have tried to get Mr. Perren to amplify this remark. I wrote to him on March 6th:

None of the letters you received, you say, "gave any indication that the writer was a member of the Roman Catholic Church . . .". I want to ask if you are really serious when you say this. I take it that you are aware of the open Roman Catholic opposition to what it calls "artificial" methods of birth control, and its argument that such methods are opposed to "natural law". The presence of the term, "natural law" in such a context would be an "indication that the writer was a member of the Roman Catholic Church", and I find it hard to believe that none of the letters contained this or similar indications of the writer's denomination.

I told him, too, that Mr. M. L. Burnet (Assistant Secretary of the Ethical Union) when he heard that none of the letters "gave any indication that the writer was a member of the Roman Catholic Church", rang the British Transport Commission (not British Transport Advertising) at Marylebone Road, and was told that *not all* the letters received were from Catholics—implying that some at least obviously were. I asked if Mr. Burnet and myself

## — VIEWS and OPINIONS —

# Protest to the Transport Commission

By COLIN McCALL

might see the letters and clear up the contradiction, but this has been refused. I wrote again to Mr. Perren on March 10th, but could get no information. However, this is behind the scenes, and it is time to return to front stage.

### The Deputation

The deputation of four who presented the petitions to the British Transport Commission on March 11th, comprised National Secular Society members, Mrs. Margaret McLroy, who wrote the article "The Catholic Church v. the Planned Family" (THE FREETHINKER, 20/1/61), Miss Laura Peacock, retired school-teacher, and myself, and Mr. Blackham, Secretary of the Ethical Union. We were courteously received by two representatives of the Commission, and briefly stated the case against the ban and for family planning. Meanwhile 70 members of the National Secular Society and the Family Planning Association carried posters urging "End the Ban!" in a procession round the Commission's building, directed by Mrs. McLroy's husband, William J. McLroy. And afterwards, Mr. McLroy chaired a short public meeting just off Marylebone Road, at which Mrs. Margaret Howard of the Family Planning Association and I were the speakers.

Many copies of the leaflet reprint of Mrs. McLroy's article were distributed and, as a matter of interest, here is a copy of a letter received by the National Secular Society on Monday, March 13th:

I was handed your pamphlet yesterday outside Marylebone Station. I am sorry I was unable to attend the meeting. Having lived in Southern Ireland I have seen the appalling poverty due to the misguided teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. As you rightly ask, why should we English be dictated to by a "foreign" religious body? I enclose cheque for 10s. to help the work.

Yours truly,

F. WHYTE (MRS.)

I should like to thank Mrs. Whyte and indeed all those who have helped us in our demonstration. Mr. William Scarlett of Kilmarnock, and Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Mowl of Salisbury, travelled up to London specially; young and old National Secular Society members were in evidence. Unfortunately, Brigadier Elstone, General Secretary of the Family Planning Association, could not attend in person, but his daughter deputised, and with her were Mrs. Howard and Mr. and Mrs. Simpson. All were pleased by the way things were conducted.

And now we await the response from the British Transport Commission before considering our next action.

## The Parable of the Good Secularist

By LESLIE WESTON

(Based upon personal experience)

A CERTAIN CHRISTIAN MAN fell among doubts, and was sore distressed. Now it happened that a priest came by the place where the man lay, languishing in his doubts. When it seemed that the priest must pass by without even noticing his dreadful condition, the man cried out with a loud voice, "Father, Father, help me! I am oppressed by the most fearful doubts".

The priest paused, and looked steadfastly upon the poor man lying by the wayside.

"Every one of your doubts is false," he said. "Had you hearkened unto the voice of authority, and not gone a-whoring after the imaginings of your own mind, this evil would not have come upon you. You must return to the camp at once: then all will be well."

"But Father, how can I reach the camp in this condition?"

"You cannot. You must shed your doubts first."

The Christian looked about him, and saw many encampments.

"Father!" he cried, as the priest turned away from him, setting his face steadfastly upon the road once more, "To which camp shall I go?"

The priest pointed towards an exceedingly large encampment. "There is only one camp," he said, coldly.

So the poor man languished on in his doubts, which appeared to him now ten times greater than before; until a certain minister passed by that way. The minister recognised at once the man's condition, and knelt by his side, willing to comfort him.

"Why," said he, "We have met before. You are the man who but lately travelled with our company. How came you to leave the camp?"

"Why, sir," replied the Christian, "I was trying to keep up with the rest as we moved from place to place. The going was difficult for me, and I fell into this horrible doubt. But you are a man of great learning and wide sympathies. You can help me with my doubts."

The minister listened kindly while the man told him of his difficulties. At length he spoke.

"If you travel with us once again, we will help you along the road. But we cannot remove your doubts. There is no answer, no cure for your condition."

"But sir, how can I possibly journey with you in this condition . . . ?"

"Doubt your doubts, believe your beliefs," said the minister, very kindly. Then he, too, went his way.

Now it happened after this that a certain Secularist, as he journeyed, came to where he was (the Christians have no dealings with the Secularists). And the Secularist had compassion on him, and listened while the man told him of his many and great doubts.

"It doesn't matter so much which camp you belong to," said the Secularist, "the important thing is to be honest with yourself and to try to be objective about your beliefs. I would like you to come along to our camp—but I perceive that we do not believe quite the same things. Perhaps you should try that little camp over there. Can you see it?"

"I think I can," said the man, "now that you have pointed it out to me. It is so near, too—I can reach it with just a little help. Thank you for your kindness, friend: yes, I shall go there at once."

So, with the help of the Secularist, the doubting man made his way thither, wondering greatly that neither the priest nor the minister had told him of the little encampment—for it was another of the camps belonging unto the Christians.

And it came to pass, as the wise man had foretold it, that, as he came into the camp, his doubts fell away from him, and it was well with him from that day forth.

Now, which of these three was neighbour to the man that fell among the doubts?

### OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death of Leicester Secular Society member, Godfrey Abbott at the early age of 49. Mr. Abbott, who had been a member of the Society all his life, was a great lover of Gilbert and Sullivan, and had appeared in the operas all over Leicestershire. He leaves a wife, a son and a daughter, to whom we send our condolences.

### NEXT WEEK

### THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE

By H. CUTNER

# Can Bishops Be Christians?

By F. A. RIDLEY

IN AN ARTICLE which he contributed to the *Evening Standard*, the Bishop of Southwark, Dr. Mervyn Stockwood, gave us some information about the clergy, or at least about that minute, but much publicised section of the clergy who eventually become Bishops of the Church of England. Every Bishop, explained Dr. Stockwood, immediately upon his elevation to episcopal rank, receives from the Archbishop of Canterbury (acting presumably in his official capacity as Primate of all England), a special Doctorate of Divinity known professionally as a "Lambeth D.D.", since the clerical Head of the Church of England resides in a palace in the salubrious Borough of Lambeth. The Bishop of Southwark went on to explain to his no doubt edified readers that one of the—shall we say, perquisites?—of this Lambeth Degree, is that it entitles its episcopal holder to wear upon ceremonial occasions, the colours (hood, etc.) of the University to which the Archbishop who bestows the doctorate himself belongs: a jealously guarded privilege which every University reserves for its own graduates. By presumably some special arrangement made in former times between the See of Canterbury and the English Universities, holders of the special Lambeth Doctorate are permitted henceforth to wear their Archbishop's University hood even though they personally are graduates of another (or in their case, the other) University.

After May 31st when the present Archbishop of York, Dr. Ramsey, takes over as Archbishop of Canterbury, a Lambeth Doctorate conferred upon any future Bishop will entitle its episcopal holder to wear the regalia of a Cambridge D.D., and not as hitherto, the rival colours of Oxford. For, explains our authority, Dr. Ramsey is a Cambridge man (actually a former professor at that seat of learning, whereas the present Archbishop of Canterbury is an Oxford man like all his predecessors during the present century).

This, concluded Dr. Stockwood, gives great satisfaction to him personally, since the Bishop of Southwark is himself a Cambridge man even though—as one who owed his Lambeth Degree to the present Archbishop (Fisher) he himself is doomed to wear the incongruous Oxford colours for the rest of his natural—or at least episcopal—life. I hope I have made this as clear to the readers of THE FREETHINKER as the Bishop of Southwark did to the readers of the *Evening Standard*.

The above dissertation by his Anglican Lordship the Bishop of Southwark (in whose diocese the office of THE FREETHINKER is situated) implies but does not—perhaps for obvious reasons in this democratic age—emphasise a very significant ecclesiastical fact about the Church of England both past and present. To become an Archbishop or Bishop of the Anglican Church it is absolutely necessary; it is in fact, a rule with no known exceptions (at least as far as I am aware) to be a University graduate. Not only that, but to be a graduate of one of our old Universities, Oxford or Cambridge. A preliminary spell at a public school is also eminently desirable as a supplementary qualification, but I do not think it is the unvarying rule. I believe there have been Bishops who had been privately educated, though no boy from a non-public school could—or so I would imagine—ever hope to become a Bishop. As far as Oxford and Cambridge are concerned the rule is absolute; every Archbishop and Bishop of the Anglican Church has held, or holds today, an Oxford or Cambridge degree, derived

not from Lambeth, but from actual residence in those famous seats of learning—not to mention pillars of the establishment in Church and State!

The same rule applies to most of the higher Anglican dignitaries; e.g. I understand that the present Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Matthews, is the first cleric to hold that office with a degree from the parvenu, and originally anti-clerical University of London. But as far as the "Most and Right Reverend Fathers in God" the Archbishops and Bishops of the Established Church of England are concerned, there are not and (as far as I know) never have been at any time between Elizabeth I and Elizabeth II, any exceptions whatever to this rule. Every holder of episcopal rank for the four centuries during which the Anglican Communion has existed, has been an M.A. of either Oxford or Cambridge mostly, one imagines, from Oxford which, rather than the nominal headquarters of Canterbury and York, has always been the real spiritual metropolis of Anglicanism.

The age-long usage already indicated, prompts the critical observer to ask the surely pertinent question, can a Bishop be a Christian? For, only consider the obvious contradiction between the invariable practice of the Church of England as indicated above, and the immemorial teachings of Christianity for nineteen centuries. For Christianity, whatever it may be in current or bygone practice has always professed in theory to be cosmopolitan, universalist and supraracial. Quotations in the infallible scriptures (to which, incidentally every Anglican Bishop pledges loyalty upon his appointment) abound upon this point, viz.: "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek . . .". "He hath made of one blood all nations upon earth". etc. Not a word about Oxford or Cambridge! On a more serious note: how is it even possible to reconcile the conception of universal brotherhood, as still officially taught as an indispensable part of the Christian religion, with an episcopal monopoly exclusively reserved for Oxford and Cambridge graduates?

Incidentally, there was until recently, a class distinction as much as an academic one, since an Oxford or Cambridge education represented the exclusive hall-mark and monopoly of an English gentleman. We must again ask how this discrepancy between Christian doctrine and Anglican practice can be reconciled. Until it is, we must follow the dictates of an obvious logic and categorically deny that a Bishop of the Church of England can be a Christian since *ipso facto* he denies the equality of all Christians in Christ which is, and always has been, a cardinal tenet of the Christian religion. THE FREETHINKER must save Christianity from the Christians, not for the first time.

As far as I am aware, the Church of England is alone in this practice. Certainly in most other Churches, Popes and Prelates have often come from the most menial surroundings; and in any case, what about the early Christians, the founders of the religion which provides Cantuar and his Bishops with their faith—and their livings? Not an M.A. nor a B.A. amongst them. St. Paul was a tentmaker, St. Peter a fisherman, whilst Jesus Christ himself was a carpenter, or more decorously, a woodworker. Here, truly is a pretty kettle of fish! None of the recorded founders of the Christian religion would have had the proverbial dog's chance of becoming an Archbishop, a Bishop, or even probably an Archdeacon  
(Concluded on next page)

## This Believing World

As was to be expected, both the BBC and ITV, in their religious programme on Sunday, March 12th, dealt in detail with the New English Bible, the New Testament part of which appeared two days later. At last, it seemed, we were getting God's Holy Word in an "intelligible" form, in our own modern English. The Authorised Version, it also seems, is quite out of date and is, in many places, hopelessly unintelligible. So now there really is no excuse for not reading what God, Jesus, Paul and John actually meant, the inference being that a rose smells as sweet no matter what it is called. Considering the Holy Veneration the Bible has always received from Christians in its Authorised form, especially as—though in many places unintelligible—it is still used to swear upon in a court of law, this bally hoo about the new version proves how powerful religion still is.

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The "Daily Mail" must really be a little more careful. The Holy Bible tells us that the Universe was "created" in the year 4004 BC, and then the *Mail* publishes an item of news (10/3/61) telling us that a house has been discovered by Dr. J. D. Clark at Kalombo Falls in Northern Rhodesia, which he dates 55,340 BC! There was a time when the Church would have come down on the *Daily Mail* like a ton of hot bricks in thus contradicting God's Precious Word—but in our Evolutionary days this item hardly raises an eyebrow. But it is most interesting to note that this date proves there were then people—human beings—who could actually build a house. Even the world-famous Adam does not seem to have been able to do so in the Biblical year of 4004 BC.

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Incidentally, Dr. Clark, however great an archaeologist he is, slipped up badly when he added that the site of the house had "the atmosphere of Jules Verne's *Lost World*". It was, of course, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who wrote *The Lost World*—not the brilliant, audacious Frenchman.

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A new Church paper has appeared in Woolwich and it begins its debut by attacking "the folly of mankind in seeking for peace by arming for war". This is no doubt a very good argument, but it completely disagrees with "our Lord" who distinctly said in Matthew 10, 34, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword". And the history of the Christian Church has proved how right he was.

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However, this new paper also points out that "the Church often behaves like granny looking for her knitting while the house burns down". It becomes more cheerful in claiming that "more and more people are becoming dissatisfied with the tin gods of cash, comfort, security, self, and sex"—as big a piece of arrant nonsense as we have read for many a day; and that "the Church is slowly stirring out of her slumbers", another piece of nonsense. It may be long in coming, but the Church—all the Churches—are bound to learn that the real reason why it has failed and will continue failing, is simply because what it teaches is *not true*.

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Ultra Protestants will not like the coming visit of the Queen to the Pope, and in the *Daily Mail* recently, Canon Morris asks "Why this rush to Rome?" His answer is that "in the parlous state of the world today, Secularism, hand in hand with Communism, challenges the whole foundation upon which all Churches take their stand. A united front to meet the challenge would seem essential".

But Secularism is not hand in hand with Communism. On the contrary, the early Christian Church was according to Acts almost entirely Communist; while Secularism produced many great leaders, Bradlaugh, Foote, Ingersoll, Spencer, and many others, who were strongly opposed to any dictatorship, and particularly that of Communists. Why will eminent Christians constantly bracket Secularism, which stands for a "free" Society, with Communism, which is all out for a Dictatorship?

## A Common Disease

There are many varieties of the disease known as Religion. The one most prevalent in our community is *Religiousus Christiani*. This disease is mainly congenital and is transmitted by parents to their offspring, the parents being under the illusion (itself caused by the disease) that infection is beneficial and that only people suffering from the disease can be regarded as really healthy. The original source of the disease however is to be found in the many Dust Heaps one can't help seeing around the countryside. These Dust Heaps are infested with Black Beetles and these Beetles are the main carriers of the disease which they inject into their victims.

The effect of the disease is to make the patient docile, thus permitting the Beetles to suck the victim's fiscal blood with great ease. Sufferers from the disease become Cross with each other and with everybody else. They also suffer from a slight numbing of the brain and whereas some rush about doing harm, others rush about undoing the harm. Some have fits of trembling and horrible forebodings while others have beatific visions and experience an inner glow which tends to be accompanied by a form of paralysis.

The sufferers from one variety of the complaint—the Malady, or Ma-lady—tend to be more violent and Cross than the others and their temperature rises on the slightest provocation. They claim that only when Malady rules over all the earth will all be Well. These folk and their parasitic Black Beetles are known as the Black Plague and feared accordingly. In some countries such as Spain and Portugal the Malady has reached epidemic proportions with inevitable impoverishment and death. Only the restoration of a health-giving Democratic environment, the eradication of the Black Beetles, and a wide-spread inoculation with the serum of the Scientific Method will cure these people of the pestilence. D. L. HUMPHRIES.

## CAN BISHOPS BE CHRISTIANS?

(Concluded from page 91)

in the Church of which they were the founders, or at least in that section of it "by Law Established", in England. Fortunately, a simple remedy exists for this melancholy situation, and we submit it in all humility to the incoming tenant of Canterbury, Dr. Ramsey. Let him posthumously confer Lambeth degrees on SS Peter, Paul *et al* (with Cambridge hoods inclusive). By this means, a scandalous gap would be closed in the current logic of the Anglican Church. It would also have the further advantage that the Bishops of the Church of England could again feel and call themselves Christians.

## DEATH PENALTY MEETING

THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN for the Abolition of Capital Punishment (14 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.2), is to hold a meeting in the Albert Hall, London, on Tuesday, April 18th at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are 1s. and 2s. 6d., and the speakers will include Lord Altrincham, Kingsley Amis, Peter Kirk, MP, Christopher Brasher, the Bishop of Colchester, Gerald Gardiner, Victor Gollancz and Sydney Silverman.

# THE FREETHINKER

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

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Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1

Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1. Members and visitors are welcome during normal office hours. Inquiries regarding Secular Funeral Services should also be made to the General Secretary, N.S.S.

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

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

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, Paradise Street), Sunday, March 26th, 6.45 p.m.: T. D. SMITH, "A History of Astronomy".

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Tuesday, March 28th, 7.15 p.m.: J. W. LESLIE, F.B.E.A., "In Search of Purpose" by A. E. Morgan".

Leicester Secular Society (5 Humberstone Gate) Sunday, March 26th, 6.30 p.m.: R. CLEMENTS, O.B.E., J.P., "Japan—the Progress of a Pagan Nation".

Marble Arch N.S.S. (The Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, W.1), Sunday, March 26th, 7.15 p.m.: A Meeting.

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Education Centre, Broad Street), Sunday, March 26th, 2.30 p.m.: W. GOSLING, B.Sc., "Men and Machines—Developments in Ergonomics".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Sunday, March 26th, 11 a.m.: O. R. MACGREGOR, B.Sc., "Sexual Morality".

## Notes and News

FOR HIS REVIEW OF *Essays and Introductions* by W. B. Yeats, J. I. M. Stewart chose the heading, "Hankering After Magic" (*Sunday Telegraph*, 5/3/61). He was referring, of course, to Yeats, but it was clear from the review that Mr. Stewart has some hankerings of his own. Yeats might often be credulous but at bottom his convictions were "far from being unimpressive", wrote Mr. Stewart. "An early essay on 'Magic' asserts that many minds can flow into one another, that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself, and that this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols. Neither this nor the related doctrine of the independent existence of our thoughts can be written off with the trivia of the seance room". Mr. Stewart is wrong. It can and, as far as we are concerned, it is.

OUR GOOD FRIEND Collin Coates, editor of *The Westralian Secularist* (for private circulation only), tells us of a friend in hospital awaiting an abdominal operation who was visited by a Church of England minister. When the patient said he saw no evidence for the existence of God,

## The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged: £43 6s. 8d. R.L.M. 7s.; A. J. Wood, 2s. 6d.; A.E. 10s.; H. Howard, 2s. 6d.; F. Allman, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. N. Henson, £1; G. Swan, 2s. 6d.; Mr./Mrs. Jones, 5s.; C. Cullen, 7s. 6d.; Proceeds of Raffle, N.S.S. Dinner, £4 8s.; Total to date, March 17th, 1961, £50 14s. 2d.

the clergyman took the line: "You can't prove you are here, a person in this bed", etc. As the doctors had just taken away a portion of his colon for examination, nurses were regularly charting his temperature, and friends and relatives who visited him treated him as having an objective existence, Mr. Coates's friend thought there was "strong presumptive evidence that there was such a person as Jim Flood". We are prepared to accept the evidence, too, and wish Mr. Flood full recovery from his operation.

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FROM MR. JOHN DOMAKIN of Kingston, Surrey, come some excerpts from an article, "The Coming Copernican Christology" by Professor Woodbridge O. Johnson of Park College, Missouri, USA, in the October issue of *The Hibbert Journal*. "The orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation presents a static provincialism" argues Professor Johnson. "The new Christology will try to show that God has not in the past limited his self-revelation to Jesus of Nazareth, but that there have been other incarnations of God in human flesh, are likely even now to be others . . . Jesus Christ is no longer the one and only. His Sovereignty is limited to this 'wayside planet' . . . The Father, constituting the common factor of all the Trinities, is augmented by a different incarnate Son, possibly also a different Holy Ghost for each world". There's no chance to get away from it all, it seems, even by space travel.

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IT WAS GOOD to see the editorial of the *Rome Daily American* (24/2/61) coming out strongly in favour of President Kennedy's exclusion of parochial schools from the school aid programme. "Communities maintain free public school facilities open to everyone and supported by the taxpayers" it said, and "Asking the taxpayer to establish a free school and also to contribute to the support of a private school in the same community seems a bit like asking the taxpayer of a resort area to finance a public beach open to everyone and also to subsidise a swanky private beach restricted to members only. It also, in a sense, calls on them to underwrite a duplication of facilities, or, if you like, to finance competition".

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SPLendid NEWS from Harlow, Essex, where on Friday, March 10th, the Trades Council passed a resolution condemning the British Transport Commission's ban on the Family Planning Association poster and asking for its restoration.

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VETERAN FREETHOUGHT LECTURER Tom Mosley recently debated with the Senior Lecturer in Theology at Nottingham University, Dr. R. P. C. Hanson on "That one can be moral without religion". The vote went to Dr. Hanson, but a vote on courteousness might not have done so. He called Mr. Mosley a "besotted dogmatist" (*Nottingham Guardian Journal*, 9/3/61, and *Nottingham Evening News*, 9/3/61). However the latter paper called the debate "lively" and both summarised Mr. Mosley's argument satisfactorily.

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A 15-YEAR-OLD Nigerian boy, Yekinni Adebeshin, of Christ Church Cathedral School, P.O. Box 13, Lagos, Nigeria, asks us to publish his name in our columns. He would like pen-pals of both sexes, "especially readers and lovers of your newspaper".

# From Jewish Messianism to the Christian Church

By PROSPER ALFARIC  
(Translated by J. V. DUHIG)

## IV

The first form of Christianity explains the quick success of its propaganda and also the violent opposition it aroused. The idea of a Christ come here below at the time predicted by the prophets in realisation of total justice, and to expiate the sins of his brothers by his sufferings and death, must have pleased pious Jews of modest condition, keen above all about moral perfection and harshly treated by the masters of their time. They found themselves in him; they considered him as one of themselves.

But this idea was to have still more success amongst the numerous converts recruited by their propaganda. These outsiders who had come from Judaism of their own free will, had been attracted to him by his monotheistic faith and by the purity of his morals. The Mosaic law repelled them and the history of the Kings of Judah and Israel had for them no attraction.

The idea of the bellicose Messiah of the nationalists made them uneasy by reason of the prospect of the wars he would have to wage against Rome and of inferior status he would incur for all those not of his race. On the contrary, the Saviour Christ, suffering and dying for the expiation of the sins of others, was the answer to their inmost aspirations, precisely because he did not have a national character and did not address himself solely to the sons of Abraham. The most learned of them were happy to salute in him the ideal just man, whose celebrated portrait Plato had made in his *Republic*, or the Sage of the Stoics whom Seneca shows us "invincible to pleasures, happy in adversity, calm in the midst of the tempest". The common people loved to feel him very close to them, taking pity on their miseries, devoted until death. He represented no nationality and so with him fell all barriers which separated Jews from Gentiles. For those who wished to take example from him, there was no longer any preoccupation about circumcision nor about the multitudinous precepts of the Mosaic Law. It was enough to live by the Spirit, mortifying the flesh, serving God by loving one's neighbour as oneself.

Paul's great originality was to have seen this and to have advocated it without ambiguity to whoever wanted to listen; to have dared to say, while being himself a Pharisee by origin, that in the Christ Jesus, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3, 28).

In this way he rendered the new-born faith an immense service; he allowed it to expand. Reduced just to a membership of dissident Israelites, Christianity would never have been anything but a sect at the level of mediocrity. Rendered possible of assimilation by the Gentiles, it saw infinite prospects open before it: it was on the way to becoming a universal religion.

But this was just what many Christians did not want.

Paul represented only the point of view of those who were established inside the body of the Gentile community; of those above all who lived in Syria. On his own evidence, he was at Damascus when he went over into their camp after having campaigned against them. He left this town on his way to Arabia then returned. After this he traversed the Syrian country and Cilicia. At this time him co-religionists of Judaea did not even know him by sight (Gal. 1, 17-21, 22-24). Then we find him

again at Antioch where their representatives had an affair to settle with him. The city was very cosmopolitan; Hellenism was held in honour. Gnosis was there in full bloom, for the Simonians were stating that their Master had there recruited numerous adepts and, according to Irenaeus, that Saturninus, a disciple of Memander, was teaching. It is not surprising that in such an environment the new-born Church should fairly quickly break the bonds attaching it to the Mosaic system, that it should declare it was enough to believe in the Christ to be saved, without practising the works enjoined by the Law.

But in Judaea, and especially in Jerusalem, many Christians did not understand it that way. Living, as it were, in a closed system, in an atmosphere of intense nationalism, they could not but repudiate with horror these new doctrines which undermined the old Law. And it was not only people of little standing who talked in this way, but the "pillars" of the Church themselves, James, Peter and John. Delegates were sent along in the wake of Paul and his companions, to put on guard their adepts against the teaching of these unauthorised people; these false apostles who were seducing the ignorant by preaching a faith of depreciated value. Paul was forced to go to Jerusalem along with Barnabas to assume the defence of his work. An agreement was reached on the basis of a promise by him to organise collections amongst the Gentiles in favour of the Judaeans communities (Gal. 2, 1-10). But, after his departure, the same critics followed him throughout the country he was evangelising. He had to defend himself and state the case against his contradictors.

There is still an echo of his controversies clearly visible, in spite of posthumous weakening and corrections, in several of his Epistles. Therein he reproaches the faithful for allowing themselves to be shaken in their faith by these apostles, latecomers amongst them, whose object was none other than to undermine his own apostolate and to cause them to lose the benefit of it. The sense of these words is too restricted when one wishes to see in them—as is ordinarily the case—only an affirmation of the disagreement about the attitude to be adopted towards the Gentiles. The terms used are much more cogent than that. Paul states clearly that his adversaries are preaching a Gospel "other" than his, a Jesus "other" than he of whom he has made himself the apostle. In what then does his doctrine exactly consist? He tells it himself to the Corinthians: "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we, we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. 1, 22-23). There is the crux of the situation. Paul's opponents regard his doctrine as scandalous. As he himself said, on one occasion with tears, they make themselves "enemies of the cross of the Messiah" (Phil. 3, 18). Doubtless they are Christians but their Christ is not the just man without a country who suffers and dies for all sinners whoever they may be. He is the hero who is destined to resume the warlike work of Joshua and of David and restore the kingdom of God on the ruins of all Empires. That is why he gives no unreserved welcome to all the uncircumcised: he accepts only those who really want to join with him in the undivided practice of the Mosaic Law.

This interpretation of Pauline texts, natural as it may be, might seem hazardous looked at in isolation. But

another New Testament document provides it with a valuable confirmation.

In this work, more mysterious in appearance than in reality, which seems to have been written a little before 70 AD when the Temple was destroyed, Christ plays a leading role. But his crucifixion is mentioned only very incidentally, in a short verse which looks in itself like an apocryphal gloss (Apocalypse, 11, 8). Everywhere else he appears as a heavenly Being who existed since the beginning of the world in the form of a sacrificed lamb and who on earth will show himself as the son of man to wipe out his enemies and secure the triumph of the elect when the end of time shall come, regarded as imminent. This conception is singularly close to that of the nationalist Jews against whom the Roman governors had to take severe measures.

The group to which the apostle of the Gentiles belonged is in any case aimed at and cautioned.

The tone of the controversy shows how violent was the disagreement between the Hellenic Christians and the Judaic Christians. But the former had numbers on their side, and the constant possibilities of increase, while the latter could grow only within narrow limits. To them the ruin of Jerusalem was fatal, besides which many were destined to die in the turmoil and the survivors had seen their hopes too deliberately repudiated to retain for long their attitude of refusal to compromise or, at least, to induce new adepts to adopt it. Bit by bit they disappeared.

The check to national messianism brought about a general retreat from the apocalyptic idea. In the early days, while quite admitting that the Christ had already come in modest form, the Pauline communities believed he was going to return without delay with all the trappings of a triumphant hero. On this point they shared the hope of the Judaic Christians. It is for this that, while divided from them on the question of the Christ crucified, they remained in communion with them. The two Epistles to the Thessalonians bear witness to the near coming of the Messiah in a conviction as that asserted in the Apocalypse. This faith was presented in a form less national and less warlike.

But it showed itself to be equally living. So attractive were its promises that they dominated everything. There was less concern about knowing what Christ had done in his modest role of scapegoat than with foreseeing what he was to accomplish on the next day after his glorious Coming. One thought of him gathering all the nations around Jerusalem where God would reign with him and through him over the entire universe. But, when the Holy City into which he was to make a triumphal entry, was nothing any longer but a heap of ruins, when the Jewish people whom it was his mission to restore were all but annihilated, hope died away, without however actually disappearing. The expectation of a great return continued but was not considered as imminent: the prospect receded into a future more and more remote.

As attention was diverted from the second coming of Christ, it concentrated on the first. Until then, the idea of it was rather vague and vaporous, of the kind we see forming through the writings of Paul or the Epistle to the Hebrews. Somehow or other, what Jesus had said or done was thought of through the medium of the Old Testament texts in which it was foretold. But as the eye of Faith became fixed on this vital theme, so was felt the need to see with greater precision and more continuity how the old oracles had been realised.

It was in response to this preoccupation that the oldest Gospel was written. Its appearance marks the decisive

turning point in the evolution of the Christian community. If the image of Christ had remained as nebulous as it is in the writings of Paul it would have had only a very restricted range. The masses would never have become passionately interested in this vague phantom which had neither form nor colour. The little book bearing the name of Mark gave it the life it needed. In striking relief he painted the sweet and attractive figure of the Son of Man, modest and comforting, scattering benefits and reaping ingratitude, restoring life to the dead and dying himself on a cross.

Henceforth Jesus was a person of flesh and blood, nearer to us than any of the ancient gods. All the others were felt to have lived in very far off times: he appealed as one recently here as guest. In intimacy with him, had lived, without however understanding him, Peter, James and John with whom Paul had talked at Jerusalem. Like them but far more so than them, he belonged to history.

Henceforth, the Christians could do without the Jewish Bible. No longer did they need to scrutinise the old oracles to seek the rule of their faith. The face of Moses paled before that of Jesus. The Church was self-sufficient.

(Concluded)

## Wisdom and Innocence in Birmingham

AT A CONFERENCE for peace which opened on Saturday, March 11th, 1961, at 2 p.m. in the spacious Warwick and Dudley Rooms of the Queens Hotel, Birmingham, Earl Russell delivered a solemn warning on the possibility of a nuclear war, planned or accidental, and the inadequacy of Civil Defence. The convention was attended by two hundred delegates and representatives of Trade Unions, Disarmament Organisations, Peace Committees, Labour Party Groups, Communist Party, Womens Co-operative Guilds and Social Youth Organisations.

Lord Russell emphasised that the majority of the people of Great Britain still do not understand the facts about nuclear explosions. Figures of estimated casualties by the USA Federal Civil Defence Administration in the case of a Russian attack would be 120 million dead at the start, and in Russia 200 million dead, with many millions more injured. In Britain survival would be unlikely. The bare figures do not give a picture of what the countries involved would be like afterwards. Hospitals, water supplies, food, transport, medical aid and public services generally would cease to function. Drains and sewers would be destroyed. There would be severe epidemics. All this on the first day's bombing. The amount of damage that would result by "fall out" is impossible to estimate. At first it would affect the people in the immediate situation, afterwards it would be distributed throughout the earth.

The British Government advises its people to make for the shelters in case of aerial bombardment. They are given four minutes warning of an attack. Earl Russell said most of them would be trampled to death before ever they could reach a refuge. They are then told to "stay put" until the danger is over. Strontium 90, the leukæmia and bone cancer agents last years; carbon 14, which decays very slowly, can last 5,000 years. There is no alternative to this dreadful holocaust unless we about turn and march towards sanity and life and away from the horror and violent death of the human race.

Lord Russell said Civil Defence can only gain us a few hours of life at great expense and added, "I do not think it is worth it". He called for unilateral disarmament by Britain. This would, he pointed out, enable the country

to lead a group of politically mature neutral countries in conciliatory work between America and Russia. Professor Lancelot Hogben of Birmingham University sent a message of support.

Earl Russell spoke for nearly one hour and answered many questions from the floor. He received a tremendous ovation as he left for London in the late afternoon and gave permission for his talk to be printed in pamphlet form.

This grand old man of intellectual liberty, this severe critic of Christianity, this wise philosopher, this brilliant writer, quiet, gentle and restrained, still fights for the peace of nations and for the fraternity and happiness of mankind. He will be honoured and revered when Governments are forgotten.

THOS. H. R. JAMES.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### PUGWASH CONFERENCES

The front page article in your issue of March 3rd might give the impression that Cyrus Eaton was not only the founder of the Pugwash Thinkers Conferences in general, but also of the Pugwash International Conferences of Scientists in particular. This is not so. The latter were founded in 1955 by an appeal signed by Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein and nine other scientists. Cyrus Eaton was subsequently a most generous benefactor, but the most recent conferences were not financed or sponsored by him, and nor will those in project be.

WAYLAND YOUNG,

(Publicity Officer to the Pugwash International Conferences of Scientists).

### DIPHThERIA

I thank Mr. Tyldesley for his letter and moderate tone. I shall get the authorities he quotes and possibly say more later. However from my own experience over 40 years I cannot possibly agree with them entirely. When diphtheria antitoxin (DAT) was introduced into Australia, the disease was very common. DAT was first used *intelligently* in Brisbane about 1900 and our figures produced at a medical congress in Sydney caused a sensation as our case mortality was very significantly lower than that in Sydney and Melbourne, though conditions otherwise did not differ. Our good tradition continued and our case mortality was strikingly low, about 2% in "mitis" cases. But the absolutely convincing evidence came when we suddenly had an epidemic of "gravis" type in which the ordinary doses of DAT were ineffective. But when we increased the dose of *concentrated* DAT, the case mortality again fell to the old figure. The only possible explanation of this was DAT. There is not in my mind the slightest doubt of its efficacy. There is no doubt that infective disease tends to decline apparently spontaneously apart from any form of treatment: tuberculosis in England in the late 19th century, before specific treatment started, probably due to housing reform; and I should think that the same is true of diphtheria in some countries, attributable to lowering the chance of close human contact. In Brisbane, scarlet fever, once a scourge, is now almost unknown. But that does apply to diphtheria. Up to the introduction of diphtheria toxoid (DT) we never had less than 100 cases, including about 5 nurses, convalescents and contacts in hospital at one time. I got immunisation going in 1930 on a very big scale, and by about 1940 the disease had practically disappeared, though it was still possible to acquire the disease as proved by the odd cases admitted, all unimmunised. In my 28 years in charge of the Brisbane hospital Pathology Department, we never had a death of an immunised child; all the deaths were in the unimmunised or not fully so. After Brisbane became practically diphtheria-free, cases were still occurring in country areas and in other Australian cities and towns, but we were able to close our diphtheria block and take it over for my department, and we have not had a nurse case since. There is not the remotest doubt about how this result was secured. I should have said that on one occasion we had two Jehovah's Witness children unimmunised in hospital at the same time as another unimmunised child. The parents of the former refused antitoxin for the children, who both died; the third recovered on it.

The fact that Toxoid protects is fully and irrefutably proved by the accidental mechanism of its discovery by Dr. Glennie at the Wellcome Research Laboratories at Beckenham, Kent, to the authorities of which application should be made for the very romantic story. Suffice it to say that the formalin-"contaminated" raw toxin thus, unknown to the laboratory workers, converted into toxoid was shown to protect laboratory animals against

doses of toxin well above the MLD (minimum lethal dose) which would normally have killed them. That is to say that the formalin treatment preserves the immunising factor and destroys the toxic factor.

I shall need vastly more and better evidence than Mr. Tyldesley has produced to convince me of the inefficiency of DAT and DT.

(DR.) J. V. DUHIG.

[This subject having been vigorously debated is now closed.—Ed.]

### RETURNED WITHOUT THANKS

It seems that some misguided member of your organisation has seen fit to send me, anonymously, the enclosed publications. I do not accept into my house material of this nature, mendacious, scurrilous and obscene. I am therefore returning them to you at your proper cost. The wrapper may assist you to determine from which of your members you should recover the return postage.

F. AELRED O' SHAGAR.

[The above letter was sent with three copies of THE FREETHINKER in a sealed but unstamped envelope. The writer is a priest.—Ed.]

### NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH, 15th, 1961. Present: Messrs. F. A. Ridley (Chair), Barker, Corstorphine, Ebury, Hornibrook, Johnson, Mills, Mrs. Ebury, Mrs. Venton, the Treasurer (Mr. Griffiths) and the Secretary. Apologies from Messrs. Corina and Mellroy, and Mrs. Trask. New members were admitted to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Marble Arch, Nottingham and Sussex Branches which, with 3 individual members made 13 in all. Branch reports and/or financial statements were received from Bradford, Merseyside, North London, and Wales and Western Branches. The North London Branch again contributed its monthly £5 to the Building Fund. National Campaign for Abolition of Capital Punishment meeting on April 18th in the Albert Hall was noted. British Transport Commission picket was reported and thanks expressed to outside bodies and persons who had helped. Conference Agenda was approved. Propaganda matters were discussed. Messrs. F. A. Ridley, L. Ebury, J. W. Barker, W. Griffiths and C. McCall were re-elected Trustees of the National Secular Society. The next meeting was fixed for Wednesday, April 12th, 1961.

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