

The Freethinker

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ANYONE WHO HAS ever wandered down the byways of England will have found curious survivals of ancient religious endowments, institutions, customs, and practices. But no wayfarer is likely to have witnessed a stranger sight than could be seen by slipping into Southwark Cathedral on the morning of May 4th this year. For it was the occasion of a solemn "unfrocking" of an Anglican vicar.

The previous service of this kind was held at Chester in 1956, and the one before at Southwark in 1953. You can see that unfrockings, like General Elections and 'flu epidemics, have a periodicity of from three to five years, so those unfortunate enough to have missed this year's event will have to wait till about 1965 before their expectations are gratified. You can also see that Southwark, the diocese of the National Secular Society Headquarters, is unusually prodigal with this sort of ceremony: but whether this is an index of clerical depravity or episcopal vigilance I am unable to say.

Southwark Cathedral is a Gothic pile, mostly Revival, of goodly proportions. With two candles glowing before its doleful shadows, and organ echoes wailing in the vault, it had, the other Thursday, just the right Medieval atmosphere. If you couldn't find the Holy Ghost lurking in the Transepts, then I should despair of ever confronting Him at all.

The first indication that the service had begun was a moan of litany from the Retro-choir. Then there came into view down the North Choir Aisle the solemn, chanting procession—the Provost's verger, followed by the Residentiary Canons, the legal personnel (Chancellor and Registrar), the two Suffragan Bishops (Woolwich and Kingston), and finally My Lord Bishop of Southwark and his Chaplain hearing the crozier. If Jesus is there in the midst when two or three are gathered together in His name, how He must have darted in exultation among this lordly bunch.

Open and Notorious Sin

The first words I was able to make out were wrung from the lips of the Canon Precentor: "From fornication and all other deadly sin; and from all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, Good Lord, deliver us". As his venerable colleagues hobbled into view in the Crossing, I praised God for the infinite mercy that had already delivered them from temptation. Then came the Lessons, the Psalms, and the Collects. Every "old man" (I Samuel, 2) and "tree that bringeth not forth good fruit" (St. Matthew, 8) was generically cast out before the Bishop got down to the special case of the Rev. Dr. William Bryn Thomas. I was surprised to hear that the former Vicar of Balham Hill "grievously offended against the Law of God by open and notorious sin". Whether guilty or not, Dr. Thomas had seemed to me to be a perfect model of discretion, and it was only when Mrs. Brandy and "Mervyn by Divine permission Bishop of Southwark" got to work that the "sin" became at all "open and notorious". Any-

way, he was duly "removed, deposed and degraded", the sentence being "read signed promulgated and given" by the Bishop, enthroned at the entrance to the Choir. Then, having publicly disgraced and ruined its former servant, the loving Body of Christ prayed that he would be brought to "true repentance and amendment of life".

I reflected that, impressive as this ceremony was, it has seen better days. There was a time, less than 100 years ago, when the vicar would have been literally unfrocked. Today the Church of England, despite calling, as of yore, "upon the Most High God of Heaven and Earth Father Son and Holy Ghost", is itself but a ghost of its former greatness. No

longer able to enforce even the attendance of its errant clerics, it goes through all the motions of a farcical and empty ritual. But should we just shrug our shoulders at this absurd anachronism? I think not.

The ritual followed a conviction by a Consistory Court. "Oh," many will say, "just a disciplinary committee for professional churchmen". But is this so? From Guy Mayfield's *The Church of England: Its Members and Its Business*, I find that these courts are empowered to discipline the laity, not only by excommunication, but also by enforcing, on pain of imprisonment, public penance, in white sheet and carrying a white rod, on any specified sinner. Further, as the notorious case of the Digswell artists made clear, you don't even need to be an Anglican to fall into the clutches of these bodies. It is indeed possible for the Editor of THE FREETHINKER and myself to be cited for "contempt", merely for publishing this article.

A Protest

I cannot do better at this stage than quote a motion, proposed by the Council of the Ethical Union, which comes before the Annual General Meeting of the National Council for Civil Liberties on June 10th:—

The AGM of the NCCL protests against:

(a) The existence of statutory ecclesiastical courts independent of the normal Crown procedure.

(b) The hearing of incriminatory cases in these courts without a jury, without the normal demands of corroboration in evidence in criminal courts, and without formal admission that the accused is entitled to the benefit of a doubt if there is one.

(c) The power of these courts over every citizen, whether or not he is a member of the Church of England.

Court of Star Chamber?

The Consistory Court Judge—the Diocesan Legal Chancellor—is an official appointed by the Bishop, who is also the formal Prosecutor of the court. As statutory bodies, these courts cannot be sued in civil courts for defamation and deprivation of income, as a mere disciplinary committee could. Being outside the ordinary legal system, the Court is also beyond the ordinary appeal mechanism, and the only superior court is the ecclesiastical Court of Arches. It is clear that no official of these courts need ever have heard of the Bill of Rights.

The recent case is a striking example of these points.

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

"Unfrocking" a Vicar

By D. H. TRIBE

It is also, I might add in passing, a striking example of the general intellectual and moral tone of suburban parish churches. Whoever was telling the truth, it is clear that these oases of Christian piety in urban deserts are little better than hotbeds of gossip, neurosis, morbid sexuality, backbiting, slander, intrigue, and maybe adultery. But to return to the main point. There were, in my opinion, inconsistencies in both the prosecution and the defence cases. Probably I wouldn't put my last shirt on the vicar's complete innocence. But I consider the evidence presented at this judicial travesty of such a nature that an average Scottish jury would bring in a verdict of "Not proven", and an English one of "Not guilty".

Why did so much venom attach itself to this case? Dr. Thomas is well-known in certain circles, mostly extreme Left-wing. In *The People*, Sunday, April 30th, he claims: "They can say what they like, but I shall always believe that this political smear on me had a great deal to do with the events leading to my appearance before the consistory court". I am informed that he has documentary evidence from high places in the Church to support this claim. Though no upholder of the former vicar's politics, I should think it a "grave scandal" if he is right in this allegation. Is he? Certainly there are interesting features about the case. The presence in the prosecution camp of clerics equally Left-wing is not in his favour. But why, from the long list of clergymen

whose off-duty activities have aided the circulation of Sunday papers, was Dr. Thomas chosen for the rare honour of unfrocking?

I am told that even today the Church of England has practising priests who have been convicted of serious corruption of minors. Many more, like the recent abducting Rector of Balcombe, are persuaded by their bishops to unfrock themselves. On April 10th, Dr. Thomas entered a deed of relinquishment of holy orders before the Master of the Rolls in the Court of Chancery. This takes six months to become law. It's a nice legal point whether or not the whole matter was *sub judice* at the time of the Southwark unfrocking. Certainly the holding of an unnecessary ceremony rather savours of malice.

Summing up, let me stress two points. Firstly, the possibility, at least, of a grave miscarriage of justice to an individual, not through the personnel, but through the apparatus of consistory courts. Secondly, the need to recall public attention, and, for that matter, the attention of the National Secular Society itself, to the Disestablishment issue. Negotiation with bodies like the BBC and the Ministry of Education always runs into the snag that an Established Church gives Christianity a legal status in this country. Disestablishment and complete disendowment should be our constant cry. I hope that we shall give every support to the Ethical Union motion to the National Council for Civil Liberties.

The Historic Jesus

By C. STANLEY

SEARCH AS ONE WILL THERE IS, in authentic history, but one recorded instance of the execution of an unnamed pretended prophet by the Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate. It was for this act that the Procurator was banished from his office in AD 36. (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*. Book 18.4.1.) Likewise the only Jesus known to the world (outside the New Testament) who prophesied not only the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple and the Jewish people, but his own death also, was the son of Ananus who perished in the reign of Nero (AD 54-68) (Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, Book 6.5.3.) The Christian Church however insists that a Jesus, whom they state was not only the expected Messiah of the Jews but also God (or the Son of God) was crucified by Pontius Pilate in the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius in some year between AD 27-33 at the age of either 31 or 33, although it is evident even from their own records that such an event, if it happened, could not have occurred until at least after AD 37 when it would have been impossible for Pontius Pilate, to have been concerned in it.

Luke, who it is claimed was not only a follower of Jesus (after the latter's death) but also an accurate historian, in the Gospel under his name states that Jesus was born during the time of Cyrenius's census of the people of Jerusalem and not, as recorded by his opposite number, Matthew, during the reign of Herod the Great, who died in BC4. The census referred to by the writer of Luke's Gospel took place after the banishment of Archelaus, the son and successor of Herod, over 10 years after the death of his father. Luke (3,23) also records that the Gospel Jesus began his ministry at the age of 30 which, on his own previous evidence, could not have been, at the earliest, before AD 36.

During Nero's reign, Zacharias the son of Barachias was murdered in the Temple. But Jesus is reported by Matthew (23.35) as saying: "That upon you may come

all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of the righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias whom ye slew between the temple and the altar". In a vain endeavour to square the Gospel account with the facts, theologians declare that there were in fact two Zachariases, sons of Barachias, who were slain in the Temple, one long before in BC 840 (not mentioned in history) and the other whose death occurred in Nero's time; and that it is the former who is referred to by Matthew. Such a declaration not only makes nonsense of Jesus's contrast of Abel as the first righteous martyr and Zacharias (if he died in BC 840) as the last, but ignores the absence of any record that the first Zacharias was slain.

It was also in Nero's reign that the star (of Bethlehem?) appeared over the Temple. The gate of the Temple opened of its own accord and the great light in the heavens shone above the Temple (described by Josephus as having happened at the feast of the Passover). The Jewish historian also referred to the Penticostal commotion, when the Jewish people expected that the Messiah would appear and lead them to victory against the Romans—an expectation so strong that only the entire destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple convinced them of their delusion. According to Acts (25,19) it was also in Nero's reign that Paul was tried by Festus and sent to Rome, where he found the Jewish population entirely ignorant of the existence of the Gospel Jesus at a date (according to apostolic records) 35 years after the crucifixion, and when Churches were supposed to have been established generally throughout Palestine and the Roman provinces.

The only true prophet was Jesus the son of Ananus who foretold the destruction as soon to be fulfilled, who was described by Josephus to have a Divine passion, and who prophesied his own death. He alone in authentic history is the true prophet of the destruction of Jerusalem, and it was many years later that his action was ascribed to another Jesus, unknown in history. Another Jesus who was a composite figure, a blend of Jesus, son of Ananus and Pontius Pilate's victim, the false prophet of Mount Gerizim.

A Vatican Anniversary

By F. A. RIDLEY

ON MAY 15TH, 1891, the then Pope (Joachim Pecci, 1878-1903) Leo XIII issued one of the most famous documents in modern ecclesiastical history, the Encyclical Letter, *Rerum Novarum* ("On considering new matters"), which broke ground hitherto unfamiliar in previous Papal pronouncements upon current affairs. For *Rerum Novarum* was primarily a sociological manifesto, an analysis and defence of the social policy henceforth to be pursued by the world-wide Roman Catholic Church under the supreme direction and inspiration of the Vatican itself. This, it must be emphasised, represented quite a new departure on the part of the hitherto rigidly medieval Church.

For *Rerum Novarum*, if it does not quite deserve the extravagant praise which has been showered upon it by so many modern writers, was certainly a bold, and up to a point, original manifestation of Papal social policy, particularly in view of the up to then, intensely conservative background of the Papacy. *Rerum Novarum* was to have many successors, but notably the *Quadregesimo Anno* ("In the 40th year) the anniversary Encyclical issued by Pope Pius XI on May 15th, 1931. May 15th constitutes accordingly, a notable Vatican anniversary.

The sociological, as distinct from theological, evolution of the Roman Catholic Church, constitutes an intriguing, but little-known chapter in the complex annals of ecclesiastical history. For successively, Rome has been allied with, and has vigorously defended, the ancient social system based upon chattel slavery, the medieval feudal system based on agrarian serfdom, and the modern capitalist system based on wage-labour—a remarkable record. To which can also be added the Jesuit Republic of Paraguay (18th century) founded upon a rigidly enforced system of economic collectivism, probably the first socialist state to be administered by Europeans prior to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Up to 1891, when Pope Leo issued his Encyclical, Rome had been still in its feudal phase, during which it had been closely allied with Absolute Monarchy and with the class-rule of the still largely feudal landlords. The Church was, in general, still bitterly opposed to the rising industrial system and above all to the Liberal (i.e. secular) outlook of the rising bourgeois class in political, economic and, in particular religious matters. The Vatican had fought fiercely against the French Revolution and against its European successors during the first half of the 19th century. In 1864, Pope Leo's immediate predecessor, Pius IX, in his famous *Syllabus of Proscribed Errors*, had condemned the whole Liberal philosophy, and in particular its attitude to religion as expressed in the famous Liberal formula: "the free Church in the free State". This document contained the declaration: "Let anyone be accursed who presumes to maintain that the Church can permit Liberalism, Toleration and Progress".

The primary importance of *Rerum Novarum*, lay not so much in its positive social proposals, which were too vague, abstract and generalised to have much practical effect, but rather in the decisive fact that it recognised that the old feudal regime had finally passed away and had been replaced by the industrial order of modern capitalism. Or briefly (as I noted in my pamphlet: *The Catholic Church and the Modern Age*, Freedom Press, 1940), "with the issue of *Rerum Novarum*, the Middle Ages ended in Rome".

Leo had formerly been Papal Nuncio in Belgium, then

as now, one of the most industrialised lands in Europe, and in preparing his famous Encyclical, he drew upon his own experiences, plus those of other Roman prelates in industrial lands, of whom the English Cardinal Manning and the German Bishop Ketteler, were the best known. The intentions of the Encyclical were obvious: to define the current and future attitude of the Church to both contemporary Capitalism and to the then rising opposition movement of Socialism. In the vague and pompous ecclesiastical jargon of *Rerum Novarum*, it is actually rather difficult to trace any positive programme, but we should probably sum up the overall intention of the document if we stated that in it, the Church offered itself as "the rejoicing third" as (in political terminology, "a third force") in the then mounting hostility between Capital and Labour, the two great contending forces in the industrial world.

On the whole, the Encyclical (whatever Christian Socialists may have said to the contrary), comes down heavily on the side of Capitalism, for it explicitly defends private property, inequality in personal possessions and the rights of the owners to exploit their property. *Rerum Novarum* states explicitly that all the major institutions of capitalist society; private property, a class-divided social order, the State, are institutions of divine origin. The Pope also condemns socialism as philosophically objectionable on account of its secularist and materialistic outlook. This condemnation was repeated forty years later in even sterner and more emphatic terms by Pius XI, who stated explicitly that "no Catholic can be a Socialist" and, after declaring that this definition applied even to the most moderate forms of Socialism, went on to attack Russian-inspired Communism (which, of course, did not exist in 1891), as the most recent and dangerous enemy of the Church.

At the same time, whilst ultimately opting for private property and capitalism as against collectivism, both Popes—and Leo in particular—sharply criticised the current working of the industrial system, and displayed much concern over the terrible social conditions. "A few rich men", Leo declared, "have laid upon the toiling masses a yoke little better than slavery itself". And he went on to remind the contemporary rulers that "it is by the labour of working men that States grow rich". However, the Papal remedies for a deplorable economic situation were vague and often tended to pass into the domain of moral platitudes. In the main they consisted of generalised appeals to the employers to act in the spirit of justice towards their employees, coupled with vague suggestions for the extension of facilities for acquiring property for the destitute masses. How an economic system based essential on competition among industrialists could be swayed by abstract considerations of social justice, His Holiness (in his infallible wisdom) did not see fit to explain! To a general attitude similar to that of his predecessor, Pius XI (also one of the more able Popes) added a definitive recommendation for Catholic states to adopt the economic structure of the "corporative state", as then (1931) existed in the Fascist Italy of Mussolini, and as still exists in the Portugal of Salazar.

The net effect of these two major Encyclicals, and of their lesser-known successors, was to establish Rome as a "third force" between Capital and Labour, though with
(Continued on next page)

This Believing World

In spite of the fact that the Rev. B. Graham in his great revival campaign a few years ago converted hundreds of thousands of Christians to Christianity, the Rev. F. Martin writing in the *Sunday Dispatch* (April 16th) appears to dislike him, and calls him "Billy the Kidder?"—even more irreverently than we may have done. Mr. Martin finds the advice given by "Billy" in a syndicated column to bewildered Christians consists mostly of teachings from "the Old Testament, sweetened with dear Abbie and some sound platitudes thrown in". But then what did he expect? What is the main teaching of "Our Lord" himself? Is it not "mainly from the Old Testament" too, wherever it is any good?

★

Some of "Billy's" advice is against drinking, smoking, and gambling, and Mr. Martin opposes him by pointing out that Jesus changed water into wine which was meant to be drunk and that there is a text in the Bible which says that every green herb is for the use of man. In any case, we must not forget that the Rev. Billy insists that "heaven does not let the sinner go free"—and with Jehovah as a kind of policeman, this certainly would be difficult if it were true. No, Mr. Martin does not like his Christian comrade, and hopes "that God looks more kindly than Dr. Graham on the rest of us".

★

One of the little known Christian sects is that of the Plymouth Brethren, and as several members of it were in Oxford and Cambridge universities, and as they do not like some of the words used in various ceremonies, they have "abandoned university life". Personally we think the universities are well shut of them and indeed of all narrow-minded Christians. The Brethren's religion is practically Calvinistic, and so it hates any liberal thinking whatever. Hell and damnation is the fate for unbelievers.

★

For this reason they will not like the way the Devil is being ousted from the Catechism—that is, if he ever will be. According to the *Daily Express* (May 4th), his fate will be decided "with other pressing business" next October. The Convocation of Canterbury met to say farewell to Dr. Fisher, but not before he heard the Archdeacon of Ashton most irreverently admit that he once "denied the existence of the Devil—and was chased by a thunderstorm" but he was not struck by lightning, and therefore concluded that the Devil "was thoroughly inefficient", a remark which caused the Archbishop "to chuckle".

★

Dr. Fisher should really thank the Freethinkers who did more than chuckle when the Devil was mentioned. They laughed him out of court and helped to civilise the Christian world in abolishing him as well as the torrid place of his abode—Hell. Few Christians now believe in the angry and vindictive Jehovah of the Old Testament, and they have been trying to replace him with "gentle Jesus", forgetting that "our Lord" damned all unbelievers to Hell for ever which was more than even Jehovah did. However, the Devil is a wily old bird, and perhaps the next Archbishop of Canterbury will not only get him back into the Catechism, but make all Christians once again believe in his veritable and everlasting existence.

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The Methodist Church has discovered in a religious survey that "almost twice as many women as men are interested in religion", and that while 25 per cent of men had no interest in religion whatever, only 14 per cent of women

had no interest. All the same, the survey showed that 87 per cent of those interviewed "believed in God". Moreover, even of the people who called themselves Christians, 62 per cent admitted that "it was not necessary to have anything to do with the Church to be a Christian". The Church was "irrelevant, out of touch, or out of date".

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"These results are quite staggering," sadly admitted the Rev. F. Thewlis, and he pointed out that 57 per cent of the people who now do not go to church were once members of a Sunday School. In fact, six out of seven Sunday School children have been lost to the church. Poor Wesley—this must be sad news if he hears it. What a sequel to his long life's work!

★

Like poor old St. George who has lost favour these days in the eyes of the Roman Church, St. Philomena the "Martyred Virgin" will no longer grace the venerable and formidable list of Saints so devoutly adored by all good Catholics. It has been discovered that the romantic account of Philomena, long accepted as absolutely true, is sheer fiction invented by "a canon named di Lucia", says the Catholic Encyclopedia. Thus, one by one are the Faithful deprived of the sustenance and help which martyred Christians have given for centuries to true believers. Giving up stained glass windows, and hymns, and saints, and perhaps even the Devil—when is all this going to stop?

THE TV BOGEY

TELEVISION, that shining symbol of our "never had it so good" society, has always been a source of gnawing irritation to the "good living" and the "saved". Year after year the churches are being depopulated and clerics are prone to put the domestic monster high on their list of reasons for this heart-breaking trend. TV has become a bogey which is dragging the people away from the foot of the Cross and robbing them of the spiritual joy which comes from worshipping the Lord.

Though it pains my devout heart to say so, I fear that many people would rather watch Wild Bill Hickock sending a bunch of trigger-happy villains to Boot Hill than listen to Father O'Balderdash's yarn about Moses dispatching an Egyptian to the Great Unknown because he had the temerity to do battle with one of God's chosen people. More, I am certain there are base materialists who find monkey cyclists in televised circus shows infinitely more enthralling than the good father's tale of the performing Satanic snake in Eden. People prefer to spend Sunday night at the London Palladium instead of at St. Matthew's.

But the Church is making big efforts to win back its square-eyed deserters. Some men of God have even allowed teenagers to imbue beloved hymns with a 1961 rock 'n' roll beat. "Shall We Gather at the River?" may yet be knocked off its celestial pedestal by "Red River Rock". Minerals and potato crisps may soon be sold during the money-jingling intervals in church, and washing-powder samples be given away after the service.

DEREK GREEN.

A VATICAN ANNIVERSARY

(Concluded from page 155)

a definite bias towards the former. Their real historical importance lay not so much in their often—no doubt deliberate—ambiguities, as in the time and circumstances in which they appeared. Henceforth the Vatican was not only in, but of, the modern world, created on the ruins of the Middle Ages by the Modern Industrial Revolution.

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. (Platt Fields), Sundays, 3 p.m.: Messrs. C. SMITH and G. A. WOODCOCK.

Marble Arch N.S.S. (Marble Arch), Sundays, 12 noon: MESSRS. F. A. RIDLEY, D. H. TRIBE, C. H. CLEAVER and G. F. BOND. Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD and D. H. TRIBE.

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

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

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

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute Cinema, Paradise Street), Sunday, May 21st, 6.45 p.m.: R. F. MURRAY, "Proof for the Existence of God".

Notes and News

"JUST WHAT IS THE WEALTH of the Vatican?" asked star reporter René MacColl in the *Daily Express* (6/5/61). He estimated its fortune conservatively at £5,000 million, the main basis of which was the Lateran Treaty with Mussolini, whereby the Vatican received about £750 million in a lump payment. Today, said Mr. MacColl, the Vatican owns: (1) "A series of important and famous banks, including the Bank of Rome, the Banco di Santo Spirito (the Bank of the Holy Ghost), and the Credito Centrale del Lazio"; (2) "A controlling interest in Italy's biggest gas, light, water, telephone, and public transport services, real estate concerns, hotel chains, and insurance companies"; (3) "The Bastogi Finance and Holding Company, a huge concern through which the Vatican makes deals in real estate, railways and cement"; (4) "Voluminous interests in countries including Britain, Switzerland, and the U.S.". "The TETI telephone company, one of Italy's biggest", continued Mr. MacColl, "is Vatican-owned, and in the Generale Immobiliare the Church has the largest real estate company in the whole country". The *Daily Express* is to be congratulated for publicising these enormous business interests. For years Italian Freethinkers have been complaining of the stranglehold of the Church on the affairs of their country.

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THE RECENTLY-AMENDED preamble to the South African Constitution Bill has abolished the right of any elected Member of Parliament to affirm if he can't swear to God that he "will be faithful to the republic . . .". Though there is no state Church in South Africa, since the con-

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged, £77 8s. 9d. E. J. Rosie, 5s.; Anon, £3 5s.; A.S., 10s.; W. E. Huxley, 5s.; J.M.B., 10s.; W.H.D., 8s.; J.W.C., 4s.; F. Muston, 5s.; S. Jones, 2s. 6d.; Anon, 5s.; J.S., 4s.; Mrs. V. Roberts, £1 5s. Total to date, May 12th, 1961, £84 17s. 3d.

stitution in 1925, the people of the Union have acknowledged "the sovereignty and guidance of Almighty God".

★

IN OTHER PARTS of Africa, however, there is need for Christianisation, according to the Church Missionary Society, and a resolution before the annual meeting called for a missionary recruiting campaign "on a scale never before attempted" (*Leicester Mercury*, 2/5/61). The requirement was crucial, and the urgency was overwhelming said President Sir Kenneth Grubb, because it was obvious that modern Africa was entering a fluid and formative period. But the Secretary, Canon M. A. C. Warren, wanted to make it clear that in asking for 150 more missionaries, they were not asking for "150 anybodies". "The Asia and the Africa into which these men and women will go will make the most tremendous spiritual demands upon the foreign missionary of tomorrow", said Canon Warren.

★

OLD TIMES and old battles were recalled by a photograph in *Southwark Civic News* (April 1961), of "The Ring", a circular boxing arena which formerly stood at the junction of Blackfriars Road and Union Street, London. But the first and most notable contests in The Ring were between its builder, the Rev. Rowland Hill, and the Devil. The eccentric revivalist built the Surrey Chapel (as it was then called) in 1783, and built it with "no corners within which the Devil might lurk", and he preached for nearly half a century from a pulpit in the centre. The Ring was twice hit by bombs during the War and the site was cleared in 1941.

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THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH of the National Secular Society is to hold a Dinner for members, supporters and friends in the Stork Hotel, Corporation Street, on Saturday, June 10th, and the Branch President, Mr. C. H. Smith will be the Guest of Honour. A sum of £25 has been allocated towards the expenses, which means that all who wish to attend can do so at approximately half the cost of the meal. Tickets are 7s. 6d. each and are obtainable from Mr. W. Miller, 62 Warwards Lane, Selby Oak, Birmingham, 29. It is hoped to make the Dinner an annual event.

**NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY
ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

RECEPTION AND SOCIAL

The N.S.S. Executive Committee cordially invites delegates and friends to the above at the
**CONWAY HALL,
RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1.**
at 7 p.m., SATURDAY, MAY 20th

THE CONFERENCE
(for Members Only)
will be held at the
CONWAY HALL on SUNDAY, MAY 21st
at 10 a.m.—12.30 p.m. 2 p.m.—4.30 p.m. Lunch 12.30 p.m.

AN OUTDOOR DEMONSTRATION WILL BE HELD
at Speaker's Corner, Marble Arch
ON SUNDAY EVENING, 6.15 p.m.

AND A NAMING CEREMONY
of "BRADLAUGH HOUSE"
the N.S.S. Headquarters,
103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.
will take place on MONDAY, MAY 22nd, at 11 a.m.

Extraordinary People

BY COLIN McCALL

A FEW WEEKS AGO, Frank Maitland passed some pertinent comments on one of the full-page Moral Re-Armament advertisements that have been appearing quite regularly in our "quality" newspapers. If the converts listed in the advertisement were the "new men" who are going to spell out the new world", exclaimed Mr. Maitland, "it will be a lovely world indeed!" (THE FREETHINKER, April 21st). Since that was written, we have witnessed a military uprising in Algiers with the avowed intention of overthrowing the French Government in Paris and keeping Algeria French. Whether MRA adopted a positive attitude on the Algerian coup, I don't know. I often doubt if MRA adopts a "positive" attitude on anything, despite its emphasis on the word itself. A letter in the *New Statesman* (5/5/61) from Mr. Maurice Capel of Cardiff has reminded us, however, that Edmond Jouhaud, one of the four ex-generals involved in the coup, has long been an ardent champion of MRA and of "'positive' world peace through ideological courage and individual change".

Perhaps it is unfair to hold a movement responsible for its errands, provided always that MRA regards General Jouhaud in that light. All movements have their delinquents, and they should be viewed in perspective. But MRA is rather a special movement—at least in its claims. It claims so much—nothing less than being the only hope for the world—and it boasts so often and so loudly of its converts—sometimes against their knowledge (witness Welsh rugby footballer Bryn Meredith and champion runner Herb Elliott recently)—that it can hardly complain if we apply rigorous critical standards towards it. After all, Buchmanites avowedly follow God—and Frank Buchman—in practising four virtues: "absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love". No ordinary people, you will agree, though last year, a leader in *The Guardian* (13/6/60) and a letter in *The Times* (27/6/60) showed Dr. Frank himself to be sadly deficient in the first "absolute". (He referred to two newspaper headlines proclaiming his movement. One paper, he said, was "read by the leaders of Washington", and it turned out to be the Bethesda-Chevy Chase *Advertiser*, a weekly given away free. The Editor of the other paper, *The Times of India*, pointed out that the banner headlines were part of a paid advertisement such as we have seen in England lately.) And if "absolute love" involves admiration for men like Adolf Hitler, which Buchman publicly expressed before the War, most of us would prefer something rather more relative. But the 82-years-old ex-Lutheran minister is not easily deterred. "Stones of criticism are so bracing", he told the American magazine, *Newsweek* (1/5/61), "they just set you up for the day". So here are a few pebbles.

Newsweek reported the MRA conference at the European headquarters, Mountain House, Caux, Switzerland, which was attended by four hundred people. They heard the usual round of confessions from recent converts, one of whom was Leonard Kibuthu, "a stocky Kenyan who spent three years in prison for Mau Mau activities". "I hated all white people," he shouted, but "In prison I listened to God, and I found out that the real issue was not colour but character. I have asked forgiveness of those I hated."

Whether Dr. Hans Globke has asked similar forgiveness, I can't say. Dr. Globke, in case you haven't heard

of him, was an official in Hitler's Ministry of the Interior and is now State Secretary in the (West) German Government and personal adviser to Dr. Adenauer. Documents from the Nazi archives have "proven without a shadow of doubt", claims the East German *Democratic German Report* (28/4/61), that "Dr. Globke was the author of the Nuremberg Laws, the nazi racialist legislation". And further documents reveal new evidence of his racialism. "Since the final solution of the European Jewish problem will lead to a general deportation of the Jews from Europe, it will be necessary to demand that the French Government agrees to this . . .". "The penetration of coloured blood into Europe cannot be longer tolerated . . .". "It will be necessary to conclude an agreement with the French Government on the possible deportation from Europe of Gypsies and Gypsy half-breeds." (All these documents are available for inspection, says John Peet, Editor of the *Democratic German Report*, Friedrichstrasse 167/III, Berlin, W.8.)

I don't know if Dr. Globke himself has accepted the "ideology" of Moral Re-Armament, but his Chancellor, Dr. Adenauer, is one of its shining witnesses. And we know quite certainly that Dr. Adenauer is aware of Dr. Globke's record. Perhaps the Chancellor exercised "absolute" forgiveness in appointing a racialist to such a high position in his Government. There is some reason to think, indeed, that Dr. Adenauer's capacity for forgiveness, if not quite absolute, is quite extraordinary, at least where ex-Nazis are concerned. Back numbers of the *Democratic German Report* will reveal an alarming number of prominent West German politicians and military leaders who have successfully switched from Nazism to Christian Democracy, from Hitler to Adenauer. The April 28th issue enlarged on a short Reuter news item printed in *The Times* and several other English papers on April 15th, that Johannes Breyer, aged 70, a former Nazi judge, had been sentenced at Schwerin in East Germany the previous day to 8 years' hard labour, with 10 years' loss of civil rights, for the murder of more than 60 Poles during the war.

In the late thirties Breyer was a legal officer in the Poznan courts and came under the influence of a man named Karl Boemmels, who had joined the Nazi party in 1933. "I wanted to be appointed judge", said Breyer in his testimony to the Schwerin Court, and "Boemmels told me that I would have a much better chance if I was a member of the party". Asked by the judge if he knew what Boemmels was doing today, Breyer said: "Yes, he is Presiding Judge in Saarbruecken Provincial Court in West Germany". And the *Democratic German Report* added: "Boemmels is not the only one of Breyer's associates back on the bench in West Germany. Dr. Hucklenbroich, who presided in the special court in other cases tried by Breyer, is today judge in the Wuppertal Provincial Court, West Germany; Dr. Junghans-Konopa, who sat as associate judge with Breyer, is a judge in Balingen, West Germany; Dr. Fritz Rudolf, nazi prosecutor in the Poznan Special Court, is today public prosecutor in Frankfurt/Main, West Germany".

Yes, Dr. Adenauer must be a very forgiving man. Could Frank Buchman's claim be true that, "The minute Dr. Adenauer met Frank Buchman, the history of Europe took a decisive turn"? If so, the big question remains: in what direction?

A Catholic Novelist

By Dr. J. V. DUHIG

MANY YEARS AGO I read a short story by Graham Greene but I found it so unpleasant, not so much in subject as in treatment, that I did not bother with him again. He reminded me too much of another Roman Catholic novelist, François Mauriac who, like Greene, is totally obsessed with God, Sin and Evil generally. But all my life I have had a professional interest in Hansen's Disease, formerly called Leprosy, the Biblical misnomer. Reading of Greene's latest book about it, *A Burnt-Out Case*, I secured it. It is competent novel-writing, but not nearly as good as V. S. Pritchett's transports of delight led me to suppose: I must say I still prefer Conrad, Forster and Henry James—and Wells, if only for the immortal Mr. Polly. Apart from tricks of construction which irritated me, Greene's work betrays a hopelessly muddled mind. He canvasses so many phases of belief in a tentative floundering way that he seems quite lost. He is a little boy who has run away from home, from a father he cannot trust, but still seeking a father image.

To get a line on Greene properly I consented to read *The End of the Affair*, which is a striking revelation of Greene's wandering "soul". In this book he eventually wants to get himself and us all back to his God via the road to Rome. This book is piddling nonsense. It is a crude description of the private life of a married woman, intimately shared with a lover; a woman meant to be a glowing symbol with a luminous halo of all the virtues, chastity, apparently, not being one of them—she is loved by all. This theme and its treatment must have been an embarrassment to Greene's ecclesiastical superiors. We learn of this woman's character through a diary allegedly written by herself, but which I believe was forged by a man named Graham Greene. And the diary comes into the hands of the lover by a deliberately planned theft committed by an adultery-evidence collector paid by the lover. Actually I am inclined to regard *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* as a Sunday school text beside this mass of mealy-mouthed chicanery and corruption. In the diary, Sarah, the adulteress, has, in the person of Graham Greene, long arguments with God, that imaginary God, in Greene's worst burst of bad syntax, "whom Sarah thought had saved my life"; and all through Greene is pursuing the father image right up to the billowy broad bosom of Holy Mother Church.

On the way he meets a Rationalist public lecturer who is irresistibly and inevitably "tub-thumping", like, I suppose, a hell-fire Redemptorist priest giving a suburban "mission". This man Smythe who, though created by Greene, has to submit to the charge of snobbery because of the "y" and the "e" in his name has a big naevus on one cheek, a strawberry birthmark which Sarah the adulteress kisses sacramentally, only the god of novelists knows why. This is the silliest and sloppiest thing I have ever had the misfortune to read. I suppose it is the sacramental kiss that redeems him, but not knowing about the ways of God I couldn't be sure.

Anyway Greene disposes of Rationalist Smythe by having his angioma cured by a miracle wrought by prayer, and thus puts him on the way to Our Father which art in Heaven; it's as easy as that with Rationalists, apparently, who can believe something if you are on the level of a Lourdes pilgrim to the site of the world's worst swindle. This cure and conversion of a real Rationalist is *prima facie* unbelievable, but if true it is absolutely untypical; this incident seems like a rationalisation of

Greene's desertion, apparently conscious, of reality; a defence mechanism of the morally, mentally and rationally lost.

It might be truthfully said that Smythe is a sketch for a self-portrait. In the appalling mass of corrupt humans in the book—the weak sex-impotent husband, the faithless wife, the emetic bibulous mother, the sadist repulsive lover, the coarse peasant priest, the slimy adultery-tracker, his belly-ache of a son, the near-prostitute or at least enthusiastic amateur, Sylvia, the pimply horror, Waterbury—Smythe, the Rationalist, is the only character who comes out at least clean. He is basically honest and kindly and seems to represent Greene's yearning for truth and his fatal drag away to the spurious certitude of superstition. He is Greene's own schizoprenia.

Now what I would like to ask Graham Greene is this: What do you mean by the word God? If you have evidence for the existence of such, what is it? Why does it fail to convince universally? Why are believers in general of inferior intelligence? If you have to go back centuries for help in belief, why do you stop at 2000 years and a demonstrably fallacious system? In what way, for example, is your coarse peasant, Father Crompton, superior to Pericles and Lucretius? Is a Catholic *ipso facto* superior to an atheist Chinese? If so why? Does your Catholic moral code regard murder as wrong? If so, do you think God was right to put into his eternal plan the murder of millions of Jews by Hitler? And was it right of Cardinal Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII, to make a pact with the meanest criminal in history, Von Papen, to enable Hitler to come to power? When Catholics in their ritual cannibalism eat the body of Jesus Christ, do they become Christlike? If so by what test is this made manifest? Do you not believe that organised religion and armaments are the worst evils of the world today? Should not the money wasted on them be used for better purposes?

To me the further expression of Graham Greene's psychology will be of supreme interest. His Catholicism, I think, is only fire insurance against eternal damnation; he is just not taking any risks.

MECHANICAL PRAYERS

The following time saving suggestion is taken from a pamphlet, *To Be Free*, issued by Tolerants, San Antonio, Texas.

With prayer so integral a part of so many religions, and with the belief common that many prayers are more efficacious than just a few, and with the further common belief that thought is not necessary for prayer (thus that one best prays for oneself when he has suppressed all thought into a state of mysticism, and that others can readily pray for one), the efficiency of mechanised prayer, as offered by the "PRAY-ERS" organisation, becomes a great boon. Adapting ancient mechanical praying methods to modern Western needs, inventively achieving such efficiency with equipment and methods now bearing Patent Office Application Number 63-932 as to offer to pray 10,000 prayers for any individual contributor per dollar contributed, this also promotes freedom . . . For, to the extent that one can be confident that his religious obligations are so taken care of even more than adequately, one is freed from fears of being remiss; and, as only ten thousand prayers would otherwise require fully a hundred hours of one's time—time saved with the PRAY-ERS methods—one has much more time for more enjoyable and more mundanely productive pursuits.

NEXT WEEK

OUR EIGHTIETH YEAR

By H. CUTNER

CORRESPONDENCE

"OLD NICK"

Apart from Butler in his *Hudibras*, I know of nobody who brought "Old Nick" in any connexion with Niccolo Machiavelli. In fact, the term goes back to "nickel" (copper-nickel), a name to a deceptive ore which was expected to yield copper but never did, in spite of its colour. Therefore it was called "nickel"—spiteful Demon, derived from Anglo-Saxon *nicor*, Icedandic *nykr*, German *Neck* (and fem. *nixe*)—all fabulous water goblins (c.f. Sanskrit *nāgās*).

In antiquity the ocean was considered to ring the flat earth; it was symbolised by the snake (or dragon) and considered the arch-enemy of mankind. The Devil, in particular, is the Great Serpent. Fearing the magic power of gods and demons, superstitious people dare not call them by their proper names but use substitutes deprived of such verbal magic. Besides "Old Nick" we have "Old Harry", which is perhaps the "Old Hairy".

P. G. ROY.

I was surprised to read that Mr. Ridley attributes the title "Old Nick" to Niccolo Machiavelli. I have always understood that Old Nick was the more sinister side of St. Nicholas which is synonymous with the Devil.

St. Nicholas, Sankt Nikolaus (German), Sunner Klaus (Low German), Santa Claus (Modern English), appears in various guises, from the patron saint of commerce and navigation, to the red-coated benevolent old gentleman with the sack on his back. The sack is full of toys these days, but it was not always like that. Santa Claus used to have some very antisocial habits, which are referred to in an old German rhyme. Here we are informed that St. Nikolaus knocks on the doors, bringing gifts for all the little children, and putting the big ones in his sack!

Sankt Nikolaus de grosse Mann,
Klopft an alle Türen an.
Kleinen Kindern bringt er etwas,
Grosse steckt er in den Sack.

In the early history of the Catholic Church, canonisation was such a wholesale and indiscriminate process, that even the Devil seems to have been bundled in.

SIDNEY H. HODDES.

MISGUIDED

From time to time some misguided person sends me unsigned letters, heavy with sarcasm, sometimes vulgarly abusive. His latest one he signs "Veritas". Almost invariably he includes a copy of THE FREETHINKER, so I take it he is one of your crew. Since he hasn't the guts to come into the open I cannot answer his childish arguments direct. Perhaps if you publish this letter he will read it and declare himself.

As a result of his generosity I have read many editions of THE FREETHINKER, and as a result of this I am left wondering if there are any among your writers whose thoughts are anything like free. I am reminded sometimes of a little boy whistling in the dark or of another little boy in a naughty mood trying to shock his governess by shouting out all the prohibited words he knows. Your writers are all so sure that there is no God. They giggle at the "stupid notions" of the believers. But they are just as dogmatic in their unbelief. If the believer cannot prove there is a God neither can the unbeliever prove there isn't. Their colossal efforts to disprove what cannot be proved and what no one with any sense would try to prove seems to indicate that they are not too happy about their unbelief. Personally I prefer to keep an open mind on this great question which has exercised mankind since he first learned to think and this, I should say, is as near to freethinking as one can get.

R. WALSH.

POPE'S TITLES

I wonder if readers are aware of the various titles held by the Pope? They are:

1. The Bishop of Rome.
2. Vicar of Jesus Christ.
3. Successor of St. Peter.
4. Prince of the Apostles.
5. Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church.
6. Patriarch of the West.
7. Primate of Italy.
8. Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province.
9. Sovereign of the Temporal Dominion of the Holy Roman Church.

H. A. TIMMINS.

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OBITUARY

Sidney Charles Denning of Six Bells, Abertillery, a member of the Wales and Western Branch of the National Secular Society, collapsed and died in his garden on Tuesday, May 2nd (he was 68 years of age and had only recently retired from his work as a chartered accountant). Known affectionately as Charlie, he was a founder-member of the W. & W. and regularly made the 50-mile round trip down the valleys to branch meetings in Cardiff.

Although he had suffered from a measure of ill-health for several years (he was "given up" by the doctors ten years ago), he was very active and had only recently returned from a visit to his married daughter in Canada (he and his wife were planning another visit).

A keen controversialist, he had many letters published in local and national newspapers and was a member of the local discussion group organised by the Vicar of Abertillery (who attended the funeral and told me he had had many friendly arguments with "Charlie" over the last few years). Dr. Denning had specified in his will that his funeral was to be a non-religious ceremony and that I was to officiate and his family carried out his wishes to the letter.

At their request I gave an address at the home before the journey to Croesyceiliog Crematorium where 70 or 80 friends and relatives witnessed the committal on Saturday, May 6th (the National Secular Society was also represented by Wales and Western treasurer A. E. Chappell).

Our sympathies go to Mrs. Denning, two daughters and a son and the other relatives.

DAVE SHIPPER.

The cremation took place at Lawnswood, Leeds, on May 2nd, of the late Mrs. Jane Yettram, wife of Mr. A. L. Yettram, of Headingley Road, Leeds, a secular service being conducted by Mr. F. J. Corina, of Bradford. Mr. and Mrs. Yettram had only been in Leeds about six months, and were much better known to Dublin friends, as they had lived in that city for many years, and previously in London. Mr. Yettram hopes to become better acquainted with West Riding Freethinkers and the work of the movement in the area.

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