

The Freethinker

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TOM TRUMAN, a Lecturer in Political Science in the University of Queensland, has, so to speak, killed two birds with one stone with his book, *Catholic Action and Politics* (Merlin Press, London, 30s.). He has given English (and other non-Australian) readers a heavily-documented account of the audacious bid made in recent years by the Australian version of Catholic Action to take over firstly, the Australian Labour Party, and finally the Commonwealth of Australia itself in the interests of political Catholicism and ultimately of the Roman Catholic Church. Con- currently he has given us a lucid, comprehensive and also heavily documented analysis of the world-wide aims and world-strategy of Catholic Action and of its ultimate director, the Papacy. The result is a very remarkable book, and a veritable eye-opener (could they only be induced to read it) for the unfortunately still numerous class of people who regard the Vatican as purely, or at least, primarily a religious organisation, and not as it actually is, a political, or more accurately, a totalitarian institution. A totalitarian institution which now, as in the past, subordinates everything to its ruthless drive towards ultimate world-domination. After reading Mr. Truman's scholarly exposure, I am confirmed in regard to the accuracy of a definition that I have before expressed in these columns: that the Vatican is *font et origo* of the Totalitarian concept itself; that it is, in fact, the only genuinely totalitarian power, since it alone possesses in its own estimation and in that of its adherents, concentration camps on *both* sides of the grave. One emerges from the careful perusal of Mr. Truman's massively documented pages with the conviction that, when compared with the totalitarian theocracy that it is still the primary aim of Rome to establish upon a world-wide scale, all modern secular dictatorships, whether Fascist or Communist, represent democratic paradises of human liberty. As a shrewd and cynical Protestant critic of the Papacy (the late Dean Inge) once aptly noted: "Red Internationals come and go, but the Black International continues indefinitely".

Catholic Action in Australia

The immediate aim of Mr. Truman's book is, as might be expected of an Australian author, to throw light upon the still largely obscure political intrigues of Catholic Action, which has split the Australian Labour Party, temporarily reduced it to electoral impotence, and which even in the early fifties came within the proverbial ace of capturing the Labour Party upon the national Commonwealth scale. Post-War Australian politics witnessed a remarkable demonstration of subterranean activity by Catholic Action under the dynamic leadership of an Australian Catholic politician of Italian origin, Mr. B. A. Santamaria, who emerges from our Australian author's pages as a most formidable political demagogue and strategist on, perhaps, the level of Dolfuss or of Salazar. Catholic Action had two Australian offshoots,

the Catholic Social Movement (or "the Movement" as it was often termed) and the National Catholic Rural Movement, of both of which Mr. Santamaria was the inspirational force and evidently a most formidable one. For, arising ostensibly to combat the also nearly successful attempt of the Australian Communists at the end of the war (when Russian prestige was at its height) to take over the whole Labour Party and Trade Union movement in

Australia, the still secret machinations of the Catholic Social Movement not only effectively frustrated the Communist bid for power, but very nearly succeeded in itself taking over the Australian Labour Party in the name, not of Moscow,

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

Rome and Australia

By F. A. RIDLEY

but of Rome. Only an energetic, last minute exposure by Dr. Evatt, the then Protestant leader of the Federal Labour Party in 1954, succeeded in frustrating Mr. Santamaria's take-over bid. Even so, the result was to split the Labour movement and consequently to cause it to lose the 1955 General Election, which otherwise it would probably have won. For the Catholic Actionists then formed their own "Democratic" Labour Party, pledged to fight Communism and Communist trends inside the official Labour Party. The Democratic Labour Party still exists and is, it appears, mainly responsible for the political frustration of formerly dominant Australian Labour. As Mr. Truman shows, the Australian Catholic hierarchy is divided upon the expediency of this political tactic, Mr. Santamaria's chief ally in the Australian hierarchy being the redoubtable Dr. Daniel Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne.

Towards A Catholic Australia

Our author produces evidence to demonstrate how Rome not only still aims at the eventual domination of the sub-continent, but how Catholic sociology deliberately plans to transform the Australian society from its present Capitalist basis into a fully-fledged Corporative State, based primarily upon smallholding agriculture as against its present basis in capitalistically-owned and operated big scale industry. In which pending transformation, the primary role is currently played by the National Catholic Rural Movement, with the ubiquitous Mr. Santamaria as directing genius. Incidentally, as our author ironically comments, Mr. Santamaria puts forward a theory (with which I agree substantially) that it is only upon a rural basis that a social order dominated by religion can be expected to endure; a point of view having much in common with the Marxist Materialist conception of History as advanced by the Communists, which Rome is never tired of denouncing.

It is towards such a predominantly rural (and religious) Australia that the National Catholic Rural Movement tirelessly works. Australian Catholicism expects a Catholic Australia, perhaps by the end of this century. It hopes to achieve this long term policy both by the superior fertility of Catholic marriages (in which, of course, family planning is forbidden), and by an organised immigration from

European Catholic lands, a policy which appears to be meeting already with much success. (Australian Catholicism owes its present strength—about a quarter of the nation—to successive waves of Irish and Italian immigration). The aims of political Catholicism in Australia may be defined as a short term policy of obtaining ultimate control of the Labour and Trade Union Movements, and a long term (and very ambitious) policy of finally transforming the industrial and secular Australia of today into the Catholic rural and Corporate State of the Australia of tomorrow—or of next century. Towards which ultimate aim, Australian Catholic Action works wholeheartedly with the direct backing of the Vatican and its world-wide Catholic Action organisation.

Catholic Action strategy in the southern sub-Continent is integrated within the wider orbit of world strategy; e.g., we learn explicitly that Rome desires a pro-Catholic Australia, not only for itself and as an object lesson in Catholic sociology, but equally as a future base for the eventual invasion and "spiritual" conquest of the prox-

imate lands of south eastern Asia. This fact alone makes the future conquest of Australia a most important sector in the world-wide strategy of Catholic Action as currently planned at Rome. Mr. Truman gives us fascinating glimpses of this world strategy, as also of the present and future organisation and aims of Catholic Action as a world movement. I hope to return in future articles to this important subject, one far too important to be compressed into the tail of this brief review. Founded by Pope Pius XI, upon local Italian models, as a mass-movement of the Catholic laity under Vatican direction, Catholic Action is essentially a lay movement, a mass-movement in an age of mass-movements, presenting both new opportunities and (as our author indicates) new dangers, to the essentially hierarchical Church of Rome. The subject is both an important and a little known one. Mr. Tom Truman has perhaps given us more real information about it than has any previous account, and we congratulate both author and publishers upon their timely production of this important book.

Man's Lineage

THERE ARE PROBABLY few British Freethinkers who have not at some time been thrilled by Mr. Patrick Moore's TV and radio talks on "The Stars at Night". For me they are definitely a "must", so when I saw a small book on anthropology by him, I decided that copies would make excellent presents for intelligent, inquiring youngsters. The work is concise, but I could find no inaccuracy. *The True Book About Man* by Patrick Moore, FRAS, contains only 142 pages, including appendices. In tone and style it is addressed to juveniles, but unfortunately it cannot be recommended for them. Adults, however, who are weak on this fascinating subject and can discount the author's religious bias (which I take to be Roman Catholic) would greatly profit by its perusal.

We are told that life began in the sea some 1,700 million years ago. How, we do not know, and at the moment see little chance of finding out. (Other scientists, whose eyes are not blurred by a religious creed are more optimistic.)

Mr. Moore gives a good account of the fake Piltdown man, showing how the deception was discovered and proved. He relates with gusto T. H. Huxley's retort about a century ago to the Bishop of Oxford, and we learn that Darwin showed man to be a primate descended from modest creatures which lived in Eocene trees. Men's pride was hurt. They found it hard to believe that men and monkeys are really related. Religious leaders objected strongly, and quoted the Bible to show that Darwin must be wrong. (Here comes the bombshell.) Certainly the Bible states that all men are descended from Adam and Eve, but the churchmen failed to realise that parts of the Bible, at least, are not meant to be taken literally. One asks "Not meant, by whom?" A clue comes later. We read "... the beginning of Christianity which should by now have united all mankind. The fact that it has not yet done so is entirely our own fault".

It takes one's breath away! How can a man of such Scientific learning and erudition still propagate the Christian faith after conclusively proving that the scriptures on which it is based are false? Doubtless it was indelibly impressed on his brain in childhood that believing where we cannot prove is supreme virtue, and all his subsequent studies were insufficient to eradicate the idea. How different it must be then, for men of lesser intellect and learning to attain freedom of thought!

W. E. HUXLEY.

A Freethinker's Tribute to his Wife

(Who died May 10th, 1961)

My children, grandchildren and friends, we have met here this morning to pay a last tribute to a woman who made herself beloved by all who knew her, and it seems fitting that I, her husband, who knew her better than anyone else, should offer this testimony, meagre and inadequate and perhaps unnecessary as it may be, to the beauty of her character.

I can confidently say that in all the 55 years I have had the joy of the companionship of this gentle unassuming woman, I have never known her to have a selfish or unworthy thought, or to say an uncharitable word of anyone. Her nature was gentle and tender, she was, despite her age, filled with the joy of life and took a particular delight in caring for what she called "the little people"—the so-called dumb animals.

As wife and mother she may justly rank with "the virtuous woman" of the Bible who "riseth whilst it is yet dark and giveth meat unto her household. She looketh well to the ways of her household and catcheth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband also and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but she excelled them all".

One final point. I am well aware that many bereaved people find comfort in the prospect of immortality; in a meeting again in some nebulous place and condition. Neither of us had such beliefs or hopes. Immortality indeed our dear one has, but it is such immortality of spirit as may be manifested in her children, in their children and in their children's children, who by inheritance and example must be influenced by the standard she set.

I can with confidence say that no one could meet our dear one without coming away with a strengthened belief in the power of goodness, virtue and loving kindness. It is impossible that such a woman can pass through life without leaving the world better than she found it. That is the true immortality.

She was the essential wife and mother and her motherhood crowned her like a halo. She needs no other epitaph.

WALTER ROSE (South Africa).

NEXT WEEK
THOMAS JEFFERSON AND THE
FOURTH OF JULY
By WALTER STEINHARDT

Catholic Action in Coventry

By COLIN McCALL

ONE OF THE MOST disturbing features of British life today is the increasing arrogance and influence of the Roman Catholic Church, that, and the concomitant attitude of complaisancy in non-Catholics towards this very real threat to liberty and liberal values. I know when I say this that I shall be accused of illiberality myself; of approaching modern social problems with a nineteenth-century anti-clerical outlook. And with British monarchs and Archbishops of Canterbury paying courtesy calls on the Pope; with Catholic-convert Lord Longford breathing apparent sweet reasonableness down Dr. Fisher's neck in the House of Lords ("If the most reverend Primate had done nothing else in his whole life . . . I believe he would always be remembered for what he did on that journey, and for what he tried to do") it seems almost indecent to disturb the tranquil scene. But I think with Professor Homer W. Smith that the nineteenth century was "a brilliant period for the human intellect", and I think the present tranquility is illusory.

One of the rights that has been fought for in Britain (to a large extent by nineteenth-century Freethinkers) is the right to spread birth control knowledge. It is a right not yet gained in predominantly Catholic countries like Eire, and the Roman Catholic Church is hindering its dissemination through United Nations' channels to other backward peoples. That is bad enough. Now we have the Catholic Church making an all-out bid to prevent the spread of such knowledge in a country where the right has been established—here in Britain.

A few months ago Family Planning Association advertisements were banned from the London Underground. They were, said the British Transport Commission, "religiously controversial"; they had been "proved" so by an unspecified number of letters (how many was irrelevant, said the BTC) from people who protested on religious grounds but—according to BTC official sources—gave no indication that those religious grounds were Roman Catholic. Roman Catholics know that the vast bulk of the protests came from their fellow-religionists; you and I know it too, and, don't let's fool ourselves that the British Transport Commission doesn't know either. It does, but it tries to keep up the pretence that it doesn't. And having made a foolish, but also *dangerously* foolish decision, it refuses to alter it.

No reasonable grounds could be advanced for calling this religiously controversial:

If you are getting married and want family planning advice
 If you are married and want to plan a family
 If you want a family and you cannot have one
 The Family Planning Association will help you—Write or call
 64 Sloane Street, London, S.W.1, or Telephone Belgravia
 7575.

Yet that, illustrated with half-tones of a young couple, a mother and child, and a smiling baby, is the poster that was banned from the London tube trains.

That success, achieved with the help of BTC timidity, might well be the signal for intensifying the Roman Catholic campaign against the Family Planning Association and the spread of birth control knowledge. Already a petition with 9,507 signatures protesting against the setting up of a Family Planning Association clinic, has been presented to the Coventry City Council. And the Council can be in no doubt that it was a Roman Catholic petition. It was presented by a Roman Catholic Councillor, G. W. Sheridan, and the Coventry *Evening Telegraph* (June 7th, 1961) stated explicitly that: "The signatures were of some of the city's Roman Catholics who said that their main

objection was the promulgation of artificial birth control. They called the service—to be provided by the Family Planning Association—"immoral". The petition declared: "We stongly disapprove its existence and would certainly oppose the establishment of further units. The intention of the family planning unit is in direct opposition to the natural law".

I have yet to hear what Coventry Council's reaction is, but I trust that the Public Health Committee will show more courage than the British Transport Commission did, and refuse to be intimidated by this latest example of Catholic Action at work. And in all seriousness I want to say that it is urgently necessary to draw attention to the Catholic menace in our midst and to squash it. Mr. Tom Truman of the University of Queensland has shown (in his book, *Catholic Action and Politics*, reviewed in this issue by F. A. Ridley) what havoc it has wrought in Australia, and we can't rule out the same possibility here. Certainly its aims are the same, and it has already made inroads into the Labour and Trade Union movements. Continuous Irish immigration increases its strength. Coventry, like all our industrial centres, has been flooded with Irishmen, and it is a safe bet that many of them will be found among the 9,507 petitioners, described by Councillor Sheridan as "among the most socially-conscious members of the community". They probably signed at the priests' request when leaving church after Mass. What politicians fear is that these same "socially-conscious" citizens will follow their "bog priests'" instructions at election time, and those instructions may be guessed pretty accurately if one party or one candidate condemns Catholic opposition to family planning.

The hope, as I see it, is public awareness. Roman Catholics are still a minority in this country, and they are not as homogeneous a body as their leaders like to pretend. Many of them use the family planning clinics when they have the chance; many take no notice of priestly instructions on voting; some even resent clerical intrusion in politics or private life. The non-Catholic population is terribly apathetic, to be sure, but I have an obstinate confidence in its sagacity, provided it knows the facts. That is why publicity is important. That is why the National Secular Society picketed the British Transport Commission offices in London on March 11th, 1961, and why it will publicly oppose Catholic Action in Coventry and elsewhere.

LOVE FINDS A WAY

THE ABBOT told himself that one day Brother Sturgeon would be famous. The man was a miracle. Brother Sturgeon never looked at women. He never made a pass at his fellow monks.

When Brother Sturgeon died, the abbot began to press claims for beatification. The authorities, having convinced themselves that Brother Sturgeon had shown no interest in strumpets or catamites during his life, agreed to an exhumation to ascertain whether the corpse had been miraculously preserved from corruption. This, in fact, the authorities regard as a standard test for saint-worthiness.

But when they opened the tomb, the trembling cardinals ordered that the monk's name should be expunged from all records. So Brother Sturgeon is forgotten; but in fact he deserves a niche in history as the first case of auto-necrophilism.

Yes, I thought you might like to know that Brother Sturgeon was and wasn't a bloody miracle! O.B.

This Believing World

The "Daily Mail" for June 1st had a leader on the "Cry of the Children" in which we were told of some of the horrible tortures inflicted on helpless children. The famous Society which deals with these—sometimes most unsuccessfully—reported that in 12 months they had dealt with 40,000 cases involving 112,000 children. "One shudders", continues the leader, "at the fiendish ingenuity of the tortures inflicted on many of these helpless young creatures". Some of us also shudder at the derisory sentences and fines given to the fiends by well-fed men and women magistrates, sentences and fines which of course are laughed at by the beasts who perpetrate these horrors.

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But there is one thing which is most discreetly and successfully hidden about these child torturers. They are all good Christians—with very few exceptions. They were all brought up in the Christian Church, and they all would contemptuously reject any idea that they do not believe in God. They all hope to be saved in the blood of Jesus. When brought before the courts, they always take the oath—"S'elp me Gord". We do not say these fiends become child torturers because they believe in Christianity—but what has this religion done to prevent their appalling crimes against helpless children?

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Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge certainly had a field day chatting on ITV (June 2nd) with Miss Muriel Spark, blurbled as "one of the most original writers today". What interested him mostly was Miss Spark's conversion to Roman Catholicism, but he found it difficult to extract her reasons for going over beyond the facts that the Church "was in her bones" so to speak, and that it helped her to write her novels. The "theology" part she left rigorously alone. This was a pity. Merely to believe in the Assumption of Mary, that an Angel actually came to Joseph "in a dream" to say that Mary was having a baby through the Holy Ghost, that the Devil, who knew perfectly well that Jesus was both God and the Son of God, tried to "tempt" him, and so on would have been more interesting if properly explained. However, her next book is all about "a Christian Jewess". We hope the following one will be about "a Christian Atheist".

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According to the London "Evening Standard" a Mrs. Battrick was converted to the Baha'i faith a few weeks ago, and is now going on mission with others to convert the world. It ought to be a very easy job for it hopes, at one fell swoop so to speak, to settle two problems which are so far quite unsolved. One is "the unity of mankind", and the other "the unity of all religions". We particularly like the religious problem, especially if the Pope is approached to hand over the Vatican and all its treasures and personnel to the representatives of the Baha'i and so help in religious unity. One thing distinguishes Mrs. Battrick—her daughter "will be the first Baha'i believer on the British stage". If that doesn't make the Vatican succumb, what will?

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We have never quite understood the attraction which some Oriental religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Theosophy, are typical examples—have for Western minds except on the ground that some people *must* have a religion. We believe that even well known Humanists have fallen for Baha'ism which no doubt is splendid stuff for Persians. The idea that it will promote the unity of mankind and the unity of religion is just a silly dream.

Now that the Rev. B. Graham has been evangelising at full blast, we cannot help wondering how many Christians he has converted to Christianity in the North of England? The *Daily Mail's* pet theologian, Miss Rhona Churchill, has called Manchester the "The Sin City" which is very curious considering it has been always known as a Christian city. She points out that the Rev. Billy preached to 1,336,500 Britons in 1954, but takes good care not to tell us what proportion of these Christians still actively practise Christianity. Let us admit that the evangelist is quite sincere, and really believes he is helping his fellow Christians—bringing them back to Christ is of course his speciality. But why is he so very shy trying to convert Freethinkers?

THEATRE

"The Andersonville Trial"

AS THE LATEST war crimes trial drags awfully—and I fear monotonously—on, we have the chance, at the Mermaid Theatre, London, of seeing a dramatic reconstruction of the first one, held after the American Civil War. "Eichmann is enough for me," you might say, but I would dispute it. I would dispute it as one who feels very uneasy about the Eichmann trial. For in *The Andersonville Trial*, author Saul Levitt has not only given us a historic—and highly dramatic—episode; he has illumined the present. And he has posed a terrible question that we all need to ask—and to answer if we can.

Captain Henry Wirz was in charge of the Andersonville prison camp in which fourteen thousand Union prisoners of war died. He denies causing them undue suffering, and his defence is that he was carrying out the orders of his superiors. It was his duty, he maintains, to obey orders. "The chief crime I committed was that I chose the wrong side." We have the testimony of a survivor of Andersonville (printed in the excellent free Mermaid programme) that Wirz was more contemptible than villainious: "Gnat-brained, cowardly and feeble-natured, he had not a quality that commanded respect from anyone who knew him". Maurice Denham presents him to us as a broken man with no concern for his own life (he has attempted suicide) but wanting to vindicate himself in the eyes of his children. In short, Mr. Levitt gives Wirz a fair trial, and in this he is aided by the President of the Court (played by John Woodvine) who is scrupulously concerned with justice.

But justice for whom, and in what context? Purely for Wirz, and simply within the letter of the law? Against this stands the Judge Advocate (finely presented by William Sylvester) who looks beyond the law to the morality of the case. Is it sufficient to say I was obeying orders? Isn't there a time to disobey orders? "Why, inside yourself, couldn't you disobey?" he asks Wirz, who replies: "I could not. I did not have that feeling in myself; did not have that feeling of strength . . .". The Judge Advocate likes to feel that he would have disobeyed orders if faced with Wirz's situation. Had the Union and the Confederacy been reversed on the slavery issue, he would even have had to fight against the Union—to have followed the dictates of his own conscience.

He is, of course, our conscience, too. He poses Mr. Levitt's great question: would we have had the strength? would we have disobeyed orders? And I can't imagine anybody seeing *The Andersonville Trial* and remaining quite the same afterwards. It is a deeply disturbing play with quite a sublime ending.

C.McC.

THE FREETHINKER

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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. (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, D. H. TRIBE and H. A. TIMMINS.
- 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

- North Staffordshire Humanist Group (Guildhall, High Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme), Friday, June 23rd, 7.15 p.m.: A Meeting.
- Southeast and District Humanist Society (Leigh Community Centre), Saturday, June 24th, 7.30 p.m.: DAVID ALLEN "Christian Origins".
- South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, June 25th, 11 a.m.: STEPHEN SCHENK, B.Sc., "Social Change and Modern Fiction".
- Sussex Branch NSS (Peace Statue, opp. Embassy Court, Brighton Front), Sunday, June 25th, 3.30 p.m.: J. W. BARKER, A. H. CONWAY and F. PEARCE.

Notes and News

WHILE DR. BILLY GRAHAM went to work on Mancunians, Eric Hutchings—"Britain's Billy Graham" as the *Sunday Express* described him—descended on Nottingham, determined to convert the city to Christ. Among the sinners who went to hear him was our contributor, Robert W. Morrell, who found things "all too conventional". There was a little excitement though. One of Mr. Hutchings's fellow-Christians began to heckle; Hutchings demanded that God should "silence this outcry"; and a horde of stewards descended on the lone offender, who was removed by two policemen. The interruption broke the emotional spell, said Mr. Morrell and, though there were several appeals to come forward, he doubted whether the number "saved" exceeded 150, "and this included many from the choir".

IN A NEW BOOK, *The Religious Factor* (published in USA by Doubleday), an Associate-Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan, Gerhard Lenski, studied a carefully selected sample of 656 urban and suburban Detroiters belonging to the four major socio-religious groups: White Protestant, White Roman Catholic, Negro Protestant and Jewish. We haven't yet seen this interesting work, but, according to *Newsweek* (29/5/61), Lenski found that "of all four groups Catholics take the most negative attitude

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged, £84 17s. 3d. C. Merrifield, 2s. 6d.; Anon, 1s. 3d.; Wm. Craigie, 5s.; Miss J. Barnes, £1; Mrs. D. Behr, 10s.; G. Beddoes, 5s.; Mrs. M. Evans, 8s.; J. Parnall, 10s.; "In memory of Wm. Ingram Winnipeg", £2. Total to date, June 23rd, 1961, £89 19s. 0d.

toward work and that those who have had a Catholic education enjoy their work even less. Part of this attitude, he suggests, may come from the historic Catholic position that work is a necessary evil, 'a consequence of Adam's fall and a penalty for sin.' In the competition for good jobs, says the author, Catholics are at a distinct disadvantage because of such traditional values as attachment to family (which limits geographical mobility) and the habit of obedience to authority (which limits originality). And, he says: "In view of the social heritage of contemporary Catholicism, it seems unlikely that in the foreseeable future any devoutly Catholic state will become a leading industrial nation". Indeed, we may see a slow-down in material and perhaps scientific progress with the growth of the Catholic population in America.

WHEN NEWS reached the Right Rev. Bernard Wall, Roman Catholic Bishop of Brentwood, that Ilford Maternity Hospital and local schools are running mothercraft lessons for 15-year-old girls, he asked: "Why must girls of such a tender age be told so much about such a delicate matter" (*Daily Express*, 12/6/61). "Bless you, Bishop, your heart's in the right place", exclaimed the *Express* reporter Joyce Bowman, "but how wrong you are".

TWO SHORT NOVELS, *Miss Lonelyhearts* and *A Cool Million* by Nathanael West (an American who was killed in a car crash in 1940) have just been issued in one volume in Penguin Modern Classics (2s. 6d.). *A Cool Million* is a satire in the manner of *Candide*, telling, despite a certain preciousness. *Miss Lonelyhearts* is the terrible story of an agony-columnist and his correspondents. Here is the first letter we read: "Dear Miss Lonelyhearts—I am in such pain I don't know what to do sometimes I think I will kill myself my kidneys hurt so much. My husband thinks no woman can be a good catholic and not have children irregardless of the pain. I was married honorable from our church but I never knew what married life meant as I was never told about man and wife . . . I have 7 children in 12 yrh. and ever since the last 2 I have been so sick. I was operated on twice and my husband promised no more children on the doctors advice as he said I might die but when I got back from hospital he broke his promise and now I am going to have a baby and I don't think I can stand it my kidneys hurt so much. I am so sick and scared because I cant have an abortion on account of being a Catholic and my husband so religious. I cry all the time it hurts so much and I don't know what to do. Yours respectfully, Sick-of-it-all." If the Right Rev. Bernard Wall were to read this book, would he be moved by that letter? Or would he dismiss it as just fiction?

"GOATS ARE BEING imported from Eire for ritual killings by Indians in England," according to the *Daily Herald* (12/6/61), and Mrs. Evelyn Ardagh, Secretary of the RSPCA in Dublin is quoted as saying: "It is a horrifying thought. The animals are bled slowly and painfully to death". One Nottinghamshire cattle-dealer who is importing the goats "in increasing numbers", said he would have arranged for them to be killed in Ireland but "when customers want them alive you must fall in with their demands".

Those "Screwtape Letters"

By H. CUTNER

SOME OF THE most humorous books I have ever read are those called "Christian Apologetics". Give me one for instance entitled, "Why I am a Christian", or "The Bible is True", or "Infidelity Shattered", and I can always look forward to a good laugh. The writers are so very solemn, very cocksure that they know all about God Almighty, or what Jesus and Paul meant, and so on, while in reality they know no more than the most ignorant "savage". One simply cannot help laughing at their puerile "arguments". And let me here add that this does not only apply to more or less unknown apologists, but to the big guns as well. I have sometimes been astonished at the rubbish which emanated from the great Cardinal Newman. In fact, I doubt very much whether he believed in his own "apologetics" sometimes—no matter how much he would have protested.

One of the "apologetics" (or whatever you like to call it) which eluded me when it was first published was *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis. It appeared in 1942, and was received with such a paean of praise by the "critics" that I was most anxious to read it. It was supposed to annihilate "infidel pretensions", not in the usual way of argument but through a burst of satire so powerful that Atheism and Agnosticism were literally wiped out of existence. I would have done my best then to read the book, but, alas, Mr. Lewis came on the radio and told us how he was a complete unbeliever when *very young*; as he grew older and began to weigh the arguments for Christianity, he went boldly and bodily right over to the Faith.

Now it happens that few things intrigue me so much as to learn that a very young person was an out-and-out Atheist once, but became a Christian as he (or she) grew older. I always wondered what were the arguments which made a youngster an Atheist, and how he answered them when he became a Christian; and I was most curious to know how Mr. Lewis really answered Atheists. What he said on the radio did not enlighten me. For this reason, I made no attempt afterwards to read *The Screwtape Letters*.

In the meantime, edition after edition was called for, and by 1944, no fewer than thirteen editions appeared. And at the recent Exhibition of Christian Books here in London, it was most prominently displayed.

And now I have at last read it. And I can only express my profound astonishment. This, the great Christian masterpiece? This, the "wonder book" which would help to demolish unbelief and to make Freethinkers in droves return to the Faith of their Fathers? I am not only astonished—I am dismayed. There was once a Dean of the Christian Church named Jonathan Swift, and he could *write*. Some of us still remember a Roman Catholic named G. K. Chesterton who could also be pretty good when he liked; but how anyone can read *Screwtape* without laughing—not *with* it, please, but *at* it—surprises me.

Mr. Lewis begins with two quotations—one from Luther and the other from Sir Thomas More. Here they are:—

The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn.

The devill . . . the prowde spirite . . . cannot endure to be mocked.

Now the interesting thing about both these quotations is that they are simply *not true*. Luther claimed to have thrown an inkwell at the Devil, but we know that though

he may have thrown the inkwell, it could *not* have been at a Devil. There are no Devils. They are merely *literary* personifications of "evil"—whatever is meant by the word. "God" likewise is merely the literary personification of the word "good". In other words, no one has ever seen a "Devil" or a "God". Whether therefore the Devil is "mocked" or "jeered at" it can only be done at the *word* Devil, and certainly not at a *person*. On the other hand, it is a very easy thing to jeer and mock at the religion of Christianity; and it is true to say that few things can make a Christian so savagely angry as to do so. To guard against this, Christians have made it *crime in law*, and have in the past severely punished anybody who had the audacity to ridicule the Word of God. Hence the infamous Blasphemy Laws which even now are upheld by most of the Members of Parliament on both sides of the House—much to the gratification of all sincere Christians.

Knowing all this, Mr. Lewis has cleverly quoted Luther and More rather than the truth. Actually, we all more or less laugh at the Devil with his wings and his tail and his horns and, as far as it is possible to judge, the Devil doesn't care two hoots. How can he when he is pure myth? But try laughing in public or "blaspheming" at Christianity and see what happens.

As far as I understand *The Screwtape Letters*, it is about a Devil called Screwtape giving instructions to another Devil called Wormwood who has to deal with a Christian "patient" who is not responding to the devilish treatment he ought to get as a preparation for going to Hell. Wormwood seemed to be making an awful mess of things, and Screwtape was trying to put him right.

Screwtape was written during the War, and here is a delightful passage from him to Wormwood:—

Pray do not fill your letters with rubbish about this European War. Its final issue is, no doubt, important, but that is a matter for the High Command. I am not in the least interested in knowing how many people in England have been killed by bombs. In what state of mind they died, I can learn from the office at this end. That they were going to die sometime, I knew already. Please keep your mind on your work.

Is not that delightful and scintillating humour?

The "patient" is a doubtful Christian, and with wonderful wit, Mr. Lewis makes Screwtape implore his young Devil to see that Christians should be "Christians with a difference". If, says Screwtape—that is, Mr. Lewis—"men become Christians at all", they must be kept in "a state of mind I call 'Christianity And'" such as "Christianity and the Crises, Christianity and the New Psychology, Christianity and the New Order, Christianity and Faith Healing, Christianity and Psychical Research, Christianity and Vegetarianism, Christianity and Spelling Reform". In fact, "substitute for the faith itself, some Fashion with a Christian colouring", and "work on their horror of the Same Old Thing".

The idea behind all this is (I surmise) that there is something called "the faith itself" which stands invulnerable, which comes (exactly as Mr. Lewis himself sees it) from Almighty God; and to disparage it with moans about "the Same Old Thing" is thoroughly devilish. What we are never given, as far as I understand *Screwtape*, is what is "the faith itself", whether it is the "Same Old Thing" or not.

When we Freethinkers come to examine Christianity and its "interpreters", we find there is no more unity among the latter than there is between the USA and

Russia. There are a hundred interpretations, and neither Screwtape nor Mr. Lewis could possibly tell us which comes from "our Lord". And there is not a line in the whole book which gives us the slightest clue.

After making Screwtape write that rubbish about the war, Mr. Lewis tries to avoid its implications. Screwtape "meant of course" something else. Wormwood was "singularly obtuse". This is so typical not only of the "devilish mind", but of the Christian one. After hearing one day an extravagant claim by a Christian about the utter sinlessness of "our Lord", I asked why did Jesus tell us to hate our parents? And the obvious answer was that I did not *understand* the beautiful text. It really meant something else! It always does.

To try and "answer" *The Screwtape Letters* point by point would be a sheer waste of energy and time. There is literally not a word in it which touches the Freethought position. There is not a line in it which could possibly

be called a reply to the difficulties with which Christians, fighting to retain "the faith itself", are constantly faced. The book is talk, talk, and still more talk. What about? I haven't a clue.

If Mr. Lewis really wants to meet Freethinkers with his version of "the faith itself" why does he not do so? Why, for example, does he not take up Paine's *Age of Reason* and do his best to answer that? So far, it has not been anything like answered. And we Freethinkers have gone much further than Paine.

And finally. Does Mr. Lewis really believe that even Christians who are with him on "the faith itself" actually believe that the Universe was "created" in the year 4004 BC, that a real angel came to Joseph *in a dream* to tell him by whom Mary was pregnant, or that Jesus flew straight up to "Heaven", after visiting "Hell", after his Resurrection? To put it another way—what *now* exactly is "the faith itself"?

Religious Education

By Dr. J. V. DUHIG

IN MY State of Queensland there is from time to time a considerable amount of kite-flying in the Press for State aid to religious schools. The pressure usually comes from the Catholics but in the last year or so the Anglicans have joined in. Surprisingly enough the other Protestant sects are opposed to it, for the correct reason that it is unconstitutional. As I said recently Catholic propaganda stopped abruptly when I publicly exposed the huge rake-off in rates and tax exemption they already enjoy. A recent Anglican synod again demanded State aid, and the morning paper in Brisbane gave a full page to the Church of England Archbishop's impudent case for a hand-out. This paper is run from Melbourne by a Catholic group closely connected with Archbishop Mannix, notorious trouble-maker, and the executors of a deceased Catholic millionaire. And, of course, if the Anglicans get aid, Roman Catholics must get it too. There is no end to what can happen in a thieves' kitchen. I have made repeated attempts to get newspaper publicity for the opposition, but naturally a Catholic-dominated paper will not tolerate freedom of expression on a topic about which their directors have made up their Catholic minds—or what they call such.

One of the noisiest advocates is the Anglican bishop of North Queensland, one Ian Shevill. To give an idea of this gentleman, I relate an incident which started last Christmas. In an attempt to solve the—to me—insoluble problem of making the alleged Massacre of the Innocents fit into a rational system of chronology he started twisting the knobs to get on to a chronological wavelength that would bring the birth of the alleged Jesus to a date before the death of Herod the King. He made a nasty mess of the job. I wrote to him, pointing out his errors, even if I were prepared to admit that Jesus ever existed. I then went on, making a few quotations in French to test his linguistic knowledge, to direct his attention to Professor Prosper Alfaric's *Les Origines Sociales du Christianisme*, and offered to lend the book to him. His reply was a masterpiece of typical religious evasion. He said he did not wish to be *immersed* in French Rationalism, and was content to believe what Christians had been in the habit of believing for the last 2,000 years. I had not asked him

to be "immersed" but to read just one book, to me a most important work; but, I warned, possibly damaging to his faith. (His reply indicated he could read French.) This was terribly disingenuous, as the book would take less than a week to read. Any man who bases a belief solely on what has been held true for a long time is foolish. A belief is not necessarily true just because it has been held for a long time as witness the flat earth and geocentric universe theories. And if the bishop came to me for treatment of Diabetes and I treated him on the basis of what, say, St. Paul taught about it he could rightly have me removed from the Medical Register.

Now this is the man who asks me, a taxpayer, to give him money for teaching young people the piddling rubbish he himself believes and teaches on a Sunday, for ruining their minds as critical instruments and, what is far worse, for teaching them a deplorable code of ethics. A man who says, "Believe, children; this is 2,000 years old" should not be teaching. And, of course, Catholic ethics are still more deplorable. Their deliberate and successful raid here on the public purse by an infamous political pact—a barefaced swindle worked by the Catholic Church—that gave the churches total exemption from all municipal rating a feeble token of corruption. To give them the money to teach children to believe demonstrable lies and to enable the clergy to live in totally unproductive, slothful and luxurious idleness, seems to me treason to the State and an affront to all elementary decency.

The terrible thing is that I have sent the heads of Churches and the Press irrefutable evidence of the evil and indeed criminal results of religious teaching but they all prefer to live happily with their sins than to be honest.

The clergy and the Press make fat livings out of the frauds of religion; that is all that counts, for them.

ALSO FROM QUEENSLAND

Can you please find a few lines space to tell the Freethinking world that even the islanders of the S. W. Pacific, many of whom were but cannibals yesterday, at their newly formed convention, have renounced the fable of Santa Claus? It looks as if the missionaries have overdone their teaching. S.W.

CORRESPONDENCE

MY CRITICS ARE WRONG!

Your recent correspondents, Messrs. Webster and Birkby (9/6/61) appear to have misunderstood both my own meaning and that of Napoleon on the social purpose of religion.

With regard to Mr. Webster, to infer (as I did) "a marked capacity" on the part of Christian theologians, in no way implies acceptance of their beliefs. However, if your correspondent will read carefully such *magna opera* of Christian theology as, say, Calvin's *Institutes*, Butler's *Analogy*, and Newman's *Development of Christian Doctrine*, he will, I think, agree that these old authors presented their case with great logical acumen and

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dialectical skill, which surely implies "marked capacity" on their part. The fact that their basic premises were mystical and not either scientific or historical, must be ascribed to the times in which they lived; as was also the case with, say, the old astronomers (like Aristotle and Ptolemy) who described geocentric astronomy, but who were often men of great ability. As my friend Mr. Cutner has aptly noted, it is both an intellectual puzzle and an intellectual tragedy that so obviously fallacious a creed as Christianity should have been able to enlist so many able writers and scholars.

Mr. Birkby obviously fails to grasp the purpose of Napoleon's acute observation. The Emperor was referring specifically to the social role of religion (of the belief in immortality in particular) as a soporific for the impoverished masses—an obvious religious role later defined by Karl Marx (who may have got the idea from Napoleon) as "the opium of the people". Your correspondent's suggestion that the masses are restrained by fear of the penal code (which notoriously exists to protect the propertied classes) is really pointless. Fear of the criminal law may restrain individuals, but is usually powerless to restrain great popular uprisings such as the French Revolution, of which Napoleon had first hand experience. Contrarily, the illusory promises of "pie in the sky" as offered by religion have often actually had this effect, as Napoleon so trenchantly noted. F. A. RIDLEY.

"THE DIAGNOSIS"

Please refer "Francis Walsingham" to other medical opinion that the mother was a case of infantilism and vaginismus.

At the post mortem there was no confirmation of the previous found. The latter finding undoubtedly accounts for some of the phenomena which were inaccurately reported. There is still some doubt as to whether to attribute the other phenomena to intermittant pyrexia, which is commonly found in such cases, or to ascribe them to tuberculous meningitis, both are equally probable. The body was disposed of before the latter item could be ascertained.

Again I wish to draw his attention to a report that a well-known strip-tease artist of that time required a local gang-land leader to "bump off" a similarly affected person and produce evidence of his crime as a proof of his rejection of perversion before she bestowed her favours.

Prior to this case, there was the case of A.H., in which tuberculosis was reported, also paranoia and association with homosexuals and perverts generally. GEORGE LEVIN.

The satire of "Francis Walsingham" contained in "The Diagnosis" (p.178) is delightful. No praise could be too high. I chuckled with delight.

I also learnt a six lettered English word which is new to me, although its derivatives are common. It is very sound and should be in more common use. It does not appear in any of our dictionaries (for Home and Office use) but I am confident it will be in the large Oxford Dictionary. I refer of course to "Debile". W. E. HUXLEY.

[Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary gives "debile—weak, feeble".—ED.]

INFORMATION WANTED

In an old Pioneer Press booklist we see the following item: Bandelier, Adolf F. A. *Journals* (no date given). We should be glad if any of your readers could give us some information about it and an idea where we might be able to obtain it. We shall be grateful of your help. (Mrs.) ELLA ROBINSON, Librarian, Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, USA.

JOMO KENYATTA

Mrs. Matson quoting his *Defending Counsel* as evidence of Mr. Jomo Kenyatta's good character: is the funniest thing that has happened since the USSR recently demonstrated their moral superiority by extending the scope of the death penalty. W. E. NICHOLSON.

[This correspondence is now closed.—ED.]

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

On June 8th the press reported that when giving evidence at the Eichmann trial the writer Yehiel Di-Noor fainted and had to be taken out on a stretcher.

His best known book, *House of Dools*, about a concentration camp brothel, published under his pseudonym K-Zetnik (Katzetnik) meaning "concentration camp inmate", is the most horrid story I have ever come across; the book ought to be included in Secondary School curricula all over the Christian world. It depicts a degree of human depravity, not only in professing Christians, but by induction, also in their Jewish underlings, which is a crushing accusation against the ethical value of monotheistic

morals. Such degradation has never in history been matched by the so-called heathen.

There is also food for thought for those who believe that reason and sensible argument may suffice to cure the religious obsession of a brainwashed mankind. The impotence of their god, Jahveh, could not be more glaringly demonstrated than in the indescribable suffering of the Jews, and yet they in their majority still stick to their stone-age beliefs. Who then are the floggers of the proverbial dead horse? P. G. ROY.

OBITUARY

The death recently of Charlotte Lucas, of Leeds, widow of the late Harry Lucas, takes from the Freethought movement the second of a pair of stalwart Freethinkers, whose allegiance extended over many years. Mrs. Lucas, who was 80, was in her younger days a militant worker for women's suffrage, and her husband was equally active in the early Socialist movement. Their joint contribution to progressive thought in the Leeds area was considerable. Mr. F. J. Corina conducted a secular service at the cremation of Mrs. Lucas at Lawnswood, Leeds.

Members of the Merseyside Branch of the National Secular Society will learn with regret of the sudden death on June 2nd. of Frederick C. Wykes, at the age of 79, as will many friends who came to know him by his regular attendance at the Liverpool Pierhead meetings. Mr. Wykes had been associated with the Freethought movement since the days of G. W. Foote, and he often recalled the figures of the past.

A Secular Service was conducted at Anfield Crematorium on June 7th, by Mr. W. C. Parry. We send our deepest sympathy to Mr. Wykes's nieces and other relatives.

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