

# The Freethinker

Volume LXXX—No. 29

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS occupying contemporary political circles is the Common Market, or the six economically-federated lands in Western Europe which are: Western Germany, France, Italy, and the Benelux countries—Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg. As things stand at present, the odds appear to favour Britain's proximate entry into the six-strong economic Federation, a step which has not only economic and political aspects—at which this is not the place to direct a glance—but has also other aspects. Perhaps the most important of these, the undeniable increase in the influence of Catholic Action that must follow from such a step, certainly falls within the scope of THE FREETHINKER.

Not only is this aspect of the Common Market itself and of Britain's future relationship with it of importance in itself, it is also the least-known and the least-discussed. For, whatever may be its past and present adherence to the evangelical precepts as recorded in the Gospels, it can hardly be denied (at least by any competent student of its evolution), that the Church of Rome has always adhered to the particular Gospel axiom that enjoins us not to let our right hand know what our left hand is doing. However, though its current operations are largely shrouded in mystery (and though the popular press completely ignores this aspect of the problem) it appears undeniable that Catholic Action, political Catholicism, has never been more active than at present, and nowhere more so than in these Catholic-dominated lands which form the present Common Market area.

## The Six

Of the six states that make up this area, most (West) Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and Luxemburg, are entirely, or predominantly, ruled by Catholic Parties, while even that former bulwark of militant Calvinism, the United Netherlands, is now about equally balanced between Catholic and Protestant affiliations. In Switzerland (seeking admission) even Geneva, the city of Calvin again has a Catholic majority, while in the case of West Germany, the present economic leader of Western Europe (and so presumably, of the Market itself) its present government headed by the pious Dr. Konrad Adenauer, is so markedly subject to the influence of political Catholicism as to give rise to the ironic proverb that "The Federal Republic was conceived in the Vatican and born in Germany".

The ruling Christian Democratic Party in Bonn is predominantly Catholic, whilst the all-powerful Chancellor, Dr. Adenauer who, without a spark of Nazi melodrama is perhaps as powerful in German politics as the Fuhrer ever was, was reared and received his political training in that classic Party of German Catholicism, the old Imperial Centre Party, and was subsequently Lord Mayor of the traditionally Catholic sanctuary of Cologne.

Even the initial creation of the present Federal German Republic 1949, was largely due to that tireless master-diplomat of the Vatican, the late Pope Pius XII who, it

must be remembered was the pre-war Vatican expert on Germany, and after whom a street, Pacelli Strasse is still named in Munich where Pacelli was a former Nuncio. Nor is the influence of the Vatican much less in either France under the pious de Gaulle—a fact revealed in every issue of our valiant contemporary, *La Raison*—or amongst the ruling Christian Democrats in Italy on the Vatican's own doorstep. Indeed, an Italian Freethinker once told

me that the representatives of the Italian post-war regime were merely "the office boys of the Papacy". Nor do things appear to be much better in the smaller members of the Six. Here too, in these professedly democratic lands, Rome

wields an influence which, as in present-day Germany, is all the more potent for being concealed under democratic institutions. (In Luxemburg, cremation is still illegal.)

Perhaps however, the most sinister feature in the internal politics of the Catholic Six is to be found in the deplorable way in which the leftist parties in these countries, the German Social Democrats in particular (still the official opposition in the Bonn Parliament), have watered down their formerly militantly anti-clerical attitude and are compromising with the Churches all along the line. (In which respect the already church-ridden British Labour Party is scarcely likely to represent any improvement in the now apparently probable case of the eventual entry of Britain into the Common Market.

## United States of Europe

Perhaps the strongest argument for support of the Common Market is the political one that it represents a halfway house to an eventual European Federation—for a United Europe is something long overdue. But what sort of a United Europe? It is hardly open to doubt that a European Federation dominated by the Six (and presumably led by the German Federal Republic, its most powerful member in the parallel fields of politics, economics and of military potential), could hardly fail to be a Europe ultimately dominated by the Vatican in the religious domain and probably in the political field too.

One has only to consider the political regimes now established in the Six to see that some such kind of European society must surely develop from any European Federation set up under their auspices. Nor, apart from Britain and Scandinavia, are there any potential Protestant recruits in sight to hold the prospective balance in the projected United States of (Western) Europe. Indeed, the future accession of such European States as Spain, Portugal and Eire, could only tilt the future balance of power still further in a Catholic direction. The Pope, if not (as in the bygone Ages of Faith) the actual ruler of such a future European society could hardly fail to become its number one citizen.

In such a regime, the Vatican would inevitably become not only (as at present), the headquarters of the worldwide Black International, but could hardly fail also to become as in bygone ages, the spiritual (and perhaps also

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

## The Vatican and The Common Market

By F. A. RIDLEY

the political) capital of Western Europe. All roads would again lead to Rome. Is this really a consummation that our modern "good Europeans" can really desire?

### England, Europe and the Vatican

The proximate entry of England into the Europe of tomorrow might, or might not, be a good thing from the academic standpoints at present discussed by economists and by political theorists. But surely it can hardly be regarded as such from the special point of view with which this paper is primarily concerned. For whatever its economic and political results (whether as nowadays so hotly argued, favourable or the reverse), from any point of view dictated by rationalist, or by secularist considerations, the absorption of this island into any Continental

Federation dominated by the Vatican could only signify a sharp retrograde step; e.g., the English Parliament would eventually become effectively subordinate to a European Parliament dominated by political Catholicism, by Catholic Action. Soon it would not only be the Archbishop of Canterbury, but his secular colleague, the Prime Minister, who would be taking a return ticket to Vatican City! Perhaps even a season ticket. Catholic Action and Roman Catholicism in general, could hardly fail to benefit by a still Protestant Britain's adhesion to a Catholic-dominated Europe. We think that Pan-European Freethinkers will do well to retain their belief in future European unity, but not along the present road to the present Common Market—a road that leads ultimately to Rome!

## The Shaving of Shawpit

By MONTAGUE L'ESTRANGE

Just as a liar's punishment is, not in the least that he is not believed, but that he cannot believe any one else.

—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW: *Quintessence of Ibsenism*.

I SOLEMNLY TRUST that the shades of George Meredith and Bernard Shaw will take what is written on the lintel above in the spirit in which it is offered. Those who know Meredith's *Shaving of Shagput* will tumble to the joke, although the "Goodly fellowship" of the Shavian Society may squirm down to their smallest toe digits. A recently published book, *Bernard Shaw's Sister and Her Friends*, by Dr. Henry G. Farmer, reveals a totally different Shaw to that which is deified by the Shavian cult. Certainly their rage at the "New Angle on G.B.S.", as the subtitle of the above book informs us, is well illustrated in some of the reviews of that same book. The author himself admits that the "new angle" is a rather acute one, but surely its detractors could have worn a suitable mountaineering equipment and have geared their pace so as to overcome the stress of the stiff gradient. Instead of that they become maledictory. One lady actually boasted that she was so incensed that she threw the book on the fire. Yet abuse is of small avail in such circumstances, and the rage of that type of critic simply adds to the gaiety of nations. So childish is the abnormal Shavian attitude that one foresees the beatification if not canonisation of a second St. Bernard. Nothing short of that will satisfy the Shavians, who may then be able to claim the protection of the Blasphemy Laws, should one profane the name of Shaw.

Strangely enough, the many living biographers of G.B.S. have been discreetly silent on Dr. Farmer's criticism of the "Sage of Ayot St. Lawrence", with the exception of Hesketh Pearson who, as a born actor, waxes mortal indignation that anyone should have dared to criticise Shaw. He challenges the statement that Shaw was jealous of his sister: but Dr. Farmer points out that Shaw's jaundiced eye belonged to the days when his mother and sister alone were supplying the wherewithal for the household whilst he was positively refusing to work, which he later considered a virtue. When his sister went on the stage, eventually to become a *prima donna*, Shaw was certainly jealous that she had won recognition before he had, and when he himself had made a name for himself, he made it his business to hide her as much as possible. All that is well evidenced in Dr. Farmer's book. The latter quoted his authorities *verbatim et literatim*, with chapter, verse, and page; yet not one of his critics has had the courage to contradict his documented charges. The author, who is a historian, not only uses factual *data* in his attack on Shaw, but employs pitiless scorn and searing ridicule

against the all too gullible Shavians. "Aye, there's the rub." They cannot bear the sight of G.B.S. being bowled out, much less a "leg before wicket". Dr. Farmer posits what he calls the "Shaw Story", which he demonstrates to be a myth sedulously spread abroad by Shaw through judicious "whisperings" about his "callous" sister who "mocked" and "despised" him, as well as his "cold" and "unloving" mother who "disregarded" him. That was the story that he told his lady friends to encourage their affection and touch their pity. Stephen Winsten reveals how G.B.S. "awakened the sense of the maternal" in his feminine circle by posing as a "neglected, suffering, weary, and broken hearted mortal", all of which was due to an indifferent mother and a wicked sister. The heiress Charlotte Payne-Townshend, whom he married, hearkened with both ears to those tales of woe, and Shaw had no more worries over "siller" after that.

To readers of this journal it is interesting to note that Lucy Carr Shaw, like her brother, was a Freethinker. Mrs. Mabel Dolmetsch testifies that Lucy was "a Freethinker in religion", and says that on one occasion Lucy said: "I don't mind dying, it is only Christians who are afraid to die". Lucy's *Five Letters of the House of Kildonnel* reveals her utter contempt for religion. She writes to her imaginary grandniece:

"You will be made to absorb a fairy tale of religious instruction, of which you need believe nothing at all, as it will be administered unto you by the Governess, being made up of such questionable statements as the Creation of the Universe and all that therein is in six days; the inconceivable delights of a spectacular Heaven; the unspeakable horrors of a literal Hell; the vagaries of a plan of Salvation by which you obtain the one and evade the other."

Lucy had read most of the philosophers although she admitted that Bergson gave her the headache. Hesketh Pearson says that Lucy's will "absolutely forbade any religious service" at her funeral, and Shaw saw that carried out. The same forbiddance was expressed by her friend Janey C. Drysdale, to whom Lucy wrote regularly. In fact most of the letters in Dr. Farmer's book are those from Lucy Carr Shaw to Janey C. Drysdale. In her London days, Lucy became friendly with two prominent militant Freethinkers, Edith Vance the then Secretary of the National Secular Society, and Alma Stanley—a notable actress in her day who was praised by Shaw himself—who was a regular attendant at London Freethought lectures. In my "mind's eye" I can recall her walking up and down the aisle at the Queen's Hall lectures of G. W. Foote with a dozen copies of THE FREETHINKER which she was vending. Lastly, Dr. Farmer's book *Bernard Shaw's Sister* (Barmerlea Booksales, London), should be in every public library; for as one reviewer says: "This study becomes an essential *source-book*, a 'must' for every future critic and biographer of Shaw." (*The College Courant*, Glasgow, Martinmas, 1960).

# The Essence of "Christian Love"

By P. G. ROY

CHRISTIANITY, according to its apologists, is unique in that for the first time it introduced the doctrine of all-embracing love. Inquiry, however, shows that this is an arrogant assumption, not only in reality but even in theory. People who for so many centuries now have been steeped in the details of their god's martyrdom by impalement on the cross have become accustomed to bloodshed and cruelty, and prone to inhumanity.

Origen affirmed that the converts to Jesus were called "The Poor". In its beginning, Christianity was the community of the poor, disinherited *proles* and slaves: "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?" (James 2, 5). In Luke 6, 20, the poor are blessed since as reward for their earthly sufferings they will inherit the Kingdom of God: those who hunger now will be filled. Yet not only did they starve, their whole life was a continuous struggle to stave off their growing indebtedness.

The civilisation of Antiquity considered "*caritas*", i.e. care for the bare necessities of the indigenous poor, as a social duty of the community as such. Land was periodically re-allotted, and whoever felt hungry was allowed to take his fill from the surplus of his clan-mate. Rome bought corn and gave it away at a nominal charge (*lex frumentaria*): in 62 BC some 320,000 applicants received, at less than the normal market price, a corn dole which cost the state 20 per cent of its revenue. The *Lex Clodia*—to bribe the urban rabble away from Cato and boost Caesar—did away with even a nominal charge and distributed the corn dole free, a gratuity which absorbed more than half of the new revenue accruing from Pompey's conquests. This in connection with the ever-growing volume of slave labour accentuated the pauperisation of the Roman proletariat, and when they were no longer able to have their cereals processed, the Emperor began to distribute already baked bread (the flesh of the sacrificed animals had always been left over for the poor).

In Christian lands neither the state nor the Church cared for the needs of the poor; the Church even thrived on human suffering, and at best monks and nuns ladled out a daily cupful of watery soup.

The Old Testament decreed that land must not be sold for good, but should return to its former owner every 50 years; the hungry could pluck ears with his hand in other people's field (but not use a sickle) or eat grapes (Deut. 23, 24-5); similarly Matt. 12, 1, where Jesus and his disciples were hungry when going through a field "and began to pluck the ears of corn". In Christian times men who could no longer endure seeing their children starve were, when caught stealing a crust of bread, often cruelly punished or even killed.

A residue of the primitive redistribution of wealth at certain intervals was in Antiquity the remission of debts, and whoever wanted to woo the masses promised such remissions. Deut. 15, 1, similarly, states that, "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release", i.e. wipe the slate clean of debts and discharge such slaves as are Jews. The early Christians expected the same boons from their saviour, therefore the daily prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread—and forgive us our debts . . ." (Matt. 6, 11-12, in the Vulgate: *panem quotidianum . . . et remitte nobis debita nostra*). The genuine unadulterated meaning of this sentence was remission of debt, and not forgiveness of trespass. It was only after the community

of early Christians had ceased to be a Community of the Poor that an Alexandrian writer at the time of Julian the Apostate promised that Christ would remit the debts overdue to the tax-collectors and at the same time satisfy both the private and public creditors. In the 2nd century Tertullian cast doubt on whether *debita* should be taken literally and opined, it was rather our debt towards God, incurred through the commitment of sins. With this syllogism he freed the Christian authorities from all responsibility for effective *caritas* such as had hitherto existed in pagan communities. The high-sounding requests in the Old Testament remained on paper only as mere appeals to the wealthy who, the more a cycle for the remission of debts wore to a close, simply refused to lend to the poor.

Apart from a few genuine idealists and dreamers, the majority of the early followers of Christ were desperate slaves and *lumpenproletariate*, i.e. *declassés* and ruffianly loafers jumping the bandwagon in the hope of bettering their lot soon. There is never much love and concord among poor downtrodden people; the Emperor Julian likened the Christians to leeches who suck the polluted blood and leave the healthy blood in the system. The Epistles give a vivid enough description of the kind of people the "Circle of the Elect" comprised. There was not one wise man amongst them able to "judge between his brethren" when they continuously had quarrels and brawls with each other (I Cor. 6, 5-11). They were drunkards, louts and knaves, and yet "washed in the name of the Lord". St. Paul or whoever wrote this letter, stated (4, 13), "We are made as filth of the earth, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day". He did not want to publicise their shame, but only to warn them that it was time to cleanse their community of "the fornicators . . . the covetous . . . extortioners", etc. The pagan sodalities carefully selected their members, and to be found worthy of initiation into their mysteries was tantamount to being accepted nowadays into a select club or the Freemasons. Only the Christian community accepted the outcast and the riff-raff who were unable to love each other, let alone outsiders. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5, 15) and the letter-writer tries to impress upon these quarrelsome people that there is only one remedy: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself".

In this quotation from the Old Testament the operative Hebrew word is RE'EH = friend, mate, with the basic meaning of "to eat (together)" as did the members of a phratry or household; further: to associate, to have intercourse (in primitive communities where the sexes keep strictly apart at meals, eating together is the decisive symbol of marriage, cf. wedding banquet). Consequently the circle of those it is man's duty to love is very narrow. Has Christianity altered this?

The Vulgate gives "neighbour" (re'eh) as *proximus* i.e. the one living next or nearest to oneself—being the superlative of an obsolete form *propis* = near. *Proximus* is a being with whom we have the most intimate connection and not just everybody—as is explicitly stated in Lev. 19, in particular in verse 18, "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people," etc. (e.g. the discrimination in the treatment and discharge of slaves of the Jewish and non-Jewish faith). The passages in the New Testament make it clear that the request to love one's "neighbour" only

(Continued on next page)

## This Believing World

Not only has the New English Bible sold 2,500,000 copies in four months, but the Gospel of John can now be had on a set of long-playing records for only £5 19s. 3d., a beggarly sum when one considers its actual worth. We wonder whether these records will reach the two million mark—and if not, why not? In any case, the New Testament is going to appear on a number of long-playing records. If these Divine assaults on the complacency and apathy of modern Christians will not make them toe the line in abject submission to the Mercy and Justice of the Lord—in heaven's name what will? We give it up.

★

At the same time, the British and Foreign Bible Society which has been more or less resting on its pious laurels, has recorded that in the past four months it also sold 1,000,000 copies of a paperback edition of John for only sixpence each, but this is the dear old Authorised Version which is, according to the translators of the NEB, unintelligible to modern readers. Nothing daunted, Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode (who have a licence to print Bibles) have issued 10,000 copies of John, the NEB version, in a paperback edition which, we are told, "the booksellers have lapped up".

★

But this is not all. No fewer than 1,500,000 copies of Canon Phillips's translation of the New Testament have been sold in the past three years and—it is with pain that we report it—this translation is actually preferred by many misguided but devout Christians to the New English Bible. It took 17 years to finish. Theologian Rhona Churchill wants to know (*Daily Mail*, July 4th) "who is buying all these Bibles and why?" And she confidentially answers her own question—"Just about everybody". The Bible has become "a fashionable possession", and it is going to be "a best-selling Christmas present". Yet ask the average Bible-reading Christian what is the Precious Message of Philemon or Hebrews, and he will be unable to tell you. Could Miss Churchill tell us off-hand.

★

We are always being told that Christianity as a religion kept the torch of learning alive in Europe—particularly during the Dark Ages—but we have never been able to understand why so often some obscure religious sect these days forbids its adherents taking a degree, as do the Plymouth Brethren or the Close Brethren. This was the fate of a student at Aberdeen University who won an MA degree, but the Close Brethren (we have never met any) forbade her to take it. Was this because "oud Lord" himself hadn't a University degree?

★

Continuing his exciting adventures in "Psychic News", the ex-Pope of Fleet Street, Mr. Hannen Swaffer, appears to be a Spiritualist who has experienced literally everything that Spiritualism can offer. He seems to have met everybody who was anybody in the secular world, and to have called them up from the mighty deep when no longer living. He has experienced apports, materialisations, spirit messages, trumpets—in fact the whole lot, without the slightest difficulty, in his flat. It is true he cannot be pinned down on any of them, or even on the little matter of evidence—but then what is evidence among Spiritualist friends?

★

Incidentally we note that he even met Mr. Maurice Barbanell, the Editor of the *Two Worlds*, when that gentleman was seventeen—and was naturally, a convinced Agnostic. It is wonderful how many Christians and

Spiritualists were such thorough unbelievers at a tender age and how quickly they were converted to the most credulous nonsense as they grew older.

### TRIBUTE TO E. A. McDONALD

My old friend Eric McDonald—Mac as he was known to his friends, passed away suddenly and peacefully at the age of 75 years. In accordance with his expressed desire, his body was cremated at the Johannesburg Crematorium without the accompaniment of the ceremonies, proceedings and sentimental maunderings that characterise the average Christian funeral service.

Mac and I had been intimate friends for thirty-three years and throughout this period I had always found him a most congenial companion. He invariably contemplated with equanimity those national and international events which militated against his extreme humaneness or clashed with his views on religion and politics. Never did he evince any intolerance towards those whose opinions on any subject were not in accord with his own.

During the past few years Mac lost his wife, and subsequently his step-daughter, Mrs. Connie Allison, with whom he resided until her death. These bereavements, together with failing health, contributed in no mean degree to occasional spells of mental depression. He, however, confronted these adversities with remarkable courage to the end.

With the passing away of Eric McDonald, Freethought in South Africa has bidden farewell to an old and unswerving Freethinking stalwart, a man who was never a militant campaigner in the movement, but nevertheless sincere in his disavowal of belief in God, Immortality, and the outworn and antiquated doctrines of Christianity, and a silent worker for the cause.

D. MATTHEWS.

### THE ESSENCE OF "CHRISTIAN LOVE"

(Continued from page 227)

encompasses the believers in Jesus, i.e. people who by way of baptism are fellow-initiates, whilst it is a duty to exterminate the idolater and non-believer; this goes together with the eschatological explanation that Christ when he returns in glory will recompense the believers whilst he will punish "with everlasting destruction" those who deny him (2. Thess. 1, 7-10). Romans 12, 10th. entreats the members of the community to be kind to each other in "brotherly love", "preferring one another" and contributing to the necessities "of saints". "If it be possible . . . live peaceably with all men . . . Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him" (verses 18, 20). Unless taken out of its context, this is quite clearly a request to live in peace, if possible, and to bear no grudge against those among the brethren, with whom you have fallen out, and who may need your help. Such labours of love will be acknowledged by the Lord. However, "that which beareth thorns . . . is rejected" and will "in the end be burned" (Heb. 6). Remember also to entertain strangers "for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13, 1-2).

The Emperor Julian (4th cent.), whom the Occident called the "Apostate" when in horror and disgust he made public his conversion to paganism, declared, *inter alia*:

"I have found less hatred for man amongst the wild beasts of prey than there is amongst the Christians . . . Temples and altars you have pulled down and killed not only those of us who remained loyal to the religion of our forebears; you have even massacred as heretics such among your own people as lament the dead Jew in a somewhat different way."

And the French ex-priest and professor of Church History, A. Loisy, avers:—

"In sober truth neither the revelation of Divine Goodness nor the value of the soul, nor the law of love, nor the dignity of the poor has the eminent place in the primitive Gospel which many in our time would assign to it. These are the elements of the Gospel which, more or less magnified when seen from our point of view, happen to be for us the least worn out of time. But, for the historian the sum and substance of the Gospel can always be found, and must always be found, in the eschatological idea of the Kingdom of God, all the rest being subordinate to that." (My italics, P.G.R.)

And even this eschatological idea was nothing new.

# THE FREETHINKER

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1  
TELEPHONE: HOP 2717

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One year, £1 15s.; half-year, 17s. 6d.; three months, 8s. 9d. (In U.S.A. and Canada: One year, \$5.00; half-year, \$2.50; three months, \$1.25.)

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. G. H. MILLS 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-u-Lyme), Friday, July 21st, 7.15 p.m.: A Meeting.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, July 23rd, 11 a.m.: W. EDWIN COLLIER, M.A., "This Business of Loving Our Enemies".

## Notes and News

"ONE TREMBLES for young people growing up in a society in which from every bookstall papers and novels reek of sex and violence." How essentially Christian! How typically Methodist! Dr. Maldwyn L. Edwards, in fact, new President of the Methodist Church, speaking at the Methodist Conference in Bradford (*Daily Herald*, 4/7/61). And how lacking in perspective! We tremble for young people growing up in a society in which from every bookstall papers perpetuate the cold war; from every radio and TV, Kennedy threatens Khrushchev and Khrushchev threatens Kennedy; and both threaten the world with virtual obliteration. We say, with full consideration of our words, give the youngsters the "sexiest" and most "violent" novels you can find, but remove the shadow of the H-bomb. They will be better off.

★

A RECENT EXAMPLE of the notorious independence of mind displayed by some French priests occurred in connection with the placing on the Index of a *Life of Jesus* by the Vicar of Notre Dame (Paris), the Abbé Jean Steinmann. The book, which had received the *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* of the Archbishop of Paris and had been highly praised by the Dominican *Revue Biblique*, was condemned by the official Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano* as "showing an image of Jesus so confined by human limitations that none of the evangelists would recognise him" (*The Guardian*, 6/7/61). When the Abbé read of the banning he remarked with some irony: "It would be desirable that our 'wise masters' should come out of

## The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged £89 19s. 0d. Anon, 10s.; C. H. Saunders, 9s.; J. Buchanan, 5s.; R. Brownlee, £1 2s. 6d.; Mrs. N. Capps, 3s.; J. Barron, £1; A. R. Williams, £1. Total to date, July 14th, 1961—£94 8s. 6d.

their cells and learn that millions of pagans of the atomic era do not think at all like the contemporaries of Titus. For them the healing of the possessed, for example, requires some explanation".

★

WE LEARN from a London reader that a letter from an unbeliever was read on BBC Woman's Hour on July 4th and that some answers to it were quoted on July 10th along with others in support. Fair enough, but our reader also tells us that listeners were warned before the reading of the unbeliever's letter that if their feelings were liable to be hurt they should switch off for 6 minutes.

★

ON JUNE 2ND, Colin McCall concluded an article on Billy Graham: "his permanent effect is negligible . . . the permanent 'converts' are not converts at all, but regular churchgoers already". On July 3rd, *The Guardian* quoted Canon H. Hodkin of Manchester Cathedral writing in the *Manchester Cathedral News* on the same subject, as follows: "Imagine his (Dr. Graham's) disappointment when he discovers that 99 per cent of those 'converted' are church members of good standing, Sunday school teachers, church officers whose faith and piety were never in doubt and who stood because they thought that such an act of witness was required of them and would encourage others".

★

THE SUPREME COURT of Canada has ruled that unattended coin laundries musn't be used by the public on Sundays, a ruling which, said *The Vancouver Sun* (28/6/61), will cause direct hardship in thousands of homes which can't afford automatic washers. It points out that Canada's Lord's Day Act was not passed to protect machines and asks what the Supreme Court would do if some provincial Attorney-General "authorised prosecution of owners or operators of the scores of other businesses operated on Sundays—from juke-boxes to public golf courses, stamp-vending machines to symphonies in the park, parking facilities to soft drink stands on the beaches". The Attorney-General of British Columbia had, in fact, compared the "laundromats" with cigarette-vending machines in declaring them legal, and the *Sun* agrees with him. In any case, it says, the A-G holds discretionary rights given to him by Act of Parliament that can't be filched by any court and "This is a safeguard against unreasonable application of an unreasonable law".

★

ON APRIL 28TH, our Canadian correspondent reported that a criminal law judge, Judge Coté, former Secretary of Quebec Province, had disputed a radio statement by Jacques Godbout, that an unbeliever can't be a witness before a civil tribunal in the Province, if he declares his unbelief. The Judge asserted that Mr. Godbout was ignorant and subversive. We hear now that the young Freethinking editor of the magazine *Liberté* filed a suit for damages against Judge Coté on June 23rd.

★

FOR THE BENEFIT of those who keep track of such things, we report that the melancholic picture of the Virgin was recently taken by air from New York to Montreal, where it is on view in the new Greek Orthodox Cathedral. The picture was seen to shed a tear "from the corner of the left eye" by Mrs. Peter Koulis of Long Island Sound, NY, on April 12th, 1960, and later wept solidly for five weeks.

# Under The Roman Catholic Church

By GABRIEL COCA

## 1. THE SACRIFICE

THE BRITISH PEOPLE can never imagine what it is like to live in the Twentieth Century under the absolute rule of the Catholic Caudillo who, "alone is responsible to God and History", as the Law of Fundamental Principles of the Falange Movement has it. What chance has a nation with such a dictator, where the Roman Catholic Church enjoys the freedom that she did in the Middle Ages? In the course of twenty-two years of folly and corruption the superman has been revealed as something of a sham, surviving only through the moral and material help of the United States, and now President Kennedy holds the key to Spain's future, but in the years 1939 and 1940—the time about which I write—in the Porlier Prison of Madrid one didn't think of twenty-two years hence.

In 1940, press and radio were busily engaged on picturing a Franco Imperatore, the Providential present to Spain through whom she would recover her lost empire. The new, prodigious Caesar outlined his mission. "We are thirsty for our empire, and we will have it"—Andorra, Tangier, Gibraltar, Oran, the Philippines. How hysterical it sounded in the environment of a Roman Catholic prison! What therapy it was for us on whom the Church was wreaking its vengeance and enjoying a monstrous resurrection of the Spanish Inquisition.

There is no doubt in my mind that the morbid pleasure in inflicting pain derived from sexual perversion. But I was not then in speculative mood. Life was insignificant and shadowy, with scarcely a vestige of humanity left.

I was but one of 5,700 prisoners in the Porlier, and in Madrid alone there were twenty-two prisons for men and four for women, not counting the concentration camps. 5,700 was not, of course, a constant figure, but was roughly maintained by the influx of new prisoners as vacancies occurred through death—often from beatings. No, there was little time for philosophising in that Catholic hell.

But I remember a few days I spent in the infirmary where my room-mate, Louis Pérez, had died the previous night, destroyed by torture. I was standing in the middle of the room when the door opened and I was confronted by none other than the director of the prison, don Amancio Tomé and the Papal Nuncio in Spain, the powerful Monsignor Cicognani. Both were beaming: don Amancio with his flourishing beard, the Monsignor with shining spectacles and silks.

"Oh!" said the Director, as he saw my pale face, "you are ill. Why are you so ill?" "Because I have received a terrible beating at the hands of the young Roman Catholics", I replied. The two men were taken aback; embarrassed in spite of my insignificance and their lofty poise, but as they left, the Director said my beating was because I had not been willing to tell the truth. Proud of his position in charge of a large prison, he was unhappy that it had become a huge slaughter-house for men.

I remember, too, the days of religious festivities, the Nativity, Corpus Christi, Good Friday, etc. The prisons prepared holocausts exceeding the regular executions. Corpus Christi 1939, was one of those gory jamborees, with the Porlier Prison fitted out as a chapel to prepare for execution, not only its own condemned, but those of other local prisons. Instead of twenty-six prisons each staging its own commemorations, there would be only five, elaborately organised to match the blessedness of the day. The condemned outsiders were brought by night in

vans to join those from the Porlier, Dame Fortune bestowing on some of them the only joy that remained: a son met his mother, a husband his wife, a brother his sister. A copious bevy of priests who had settled around, disturbed the composure of the condemned with fanatical admonitions. Then, at dawn, as the condemned were carried to vans in pairs, the right arm of one bound with wire to the left arm of another, there was a sign of pleasure on the faces of the priests. Only fifty or so out of 215 condemned had accepted their services and the East Cemetery was an appropriate place for the rest.

But shortly before the convoy departed, a young man about to be shot confronted an acolyte of the priests. "Learn how an atheist who never wronged anybody can die", he said. "My pulse is normal and I haven't the pallor of fear".

"Look, my friends," laughed the young Roman Catholic, "the ghost is talking on the edge of the tomb! Shut your mouth! Your face will be whiter than paper in half-an-hour".

"Not my face," said the young condemned, as the vans started their motors with hellish thunder, "but my corpse".

Then the vans were gone and the yard was filled with a deathly silence, to be interrupted by the vociferous priests, ready to set up their idols and their altars for the high mass. The warm sun of Spain was now already in the blue sky and into the prison yard came the military parade with drums and trumpets.

"Well my boys", said the senior priest, "I trust you will play your most cheerful reveille. Today is a day of glory and rejoicing for Spain and for God".

"No!" said don Amancio. "Here, to day is not a day of rejoicing. Corporal, play your ordinary reveille."

The gala came later, with the mass band, chorus, soldiers with bayonets, around 5,700 prisoners, the swarm of priests, of course, and then, the Minister of Justice and the Papal Nuncio, two who could offer to their God on His own day, the bloody sacrifice of thousands of Spaniards.

## R.I. What is Right?

"YOU'LL TEACH Religious Instruction, of course, won't you?". This casually-phrased question, so obviously expecting an affirmative answer, is put by a member of the Regional Education Committee to every prospective teacher during his interview. But is it a fair one to put to a young man entering such an esteemed profession? What if he is an atheist? What if he objects, from an educational point of view, to the implications of the phrase "religious instruction" (if it means anything in an educational sense)? What if, without being militantly Christian, he believes that the particular religion which is required to be "taught" is neither logically nor morally preferable to other religions which the term "religion" in the Education Act does not appear to cover? What if he wishes to make a life-long career in teaching?

The crux of the matter does not wholly lie, as a cynical reader might suppose, in the mention of the word career. Those who have some distrust of society are not necessarily Machiavellian. Yet even if the prospective teacher has been publicly assured by a Member of Parliament who happens to be an honorary Fellow of the Educational Institute of Scotland, as the author has been, that the

## King Solomon v Psychology

By VERONICA ROBERTS

Slap the baby if he cries,  
And slap him if he sneezes,  
He only does it to annoy,  
Because he knows it teases.

THE PRACTICE of child-beating has been the subject of song and rhyme through the years, but has now become a controversial issue.

Solomon is accredited with the axiom "Spare the rod and spoil the child". He lived in an "eye for an eye; tooth for a tooth" period when revenge was the order of the day and discipline a rough and ready affair. And doubtless he had many offspring on which to practise his theory.

Beating the Bounds was a ceremonial practice in rural England. In order to impress the boundary upon the minds of the inhabitants, especially the children, a yearly visit to the village boundary was made where one of the events of the day was the beating of a child; thus the villagers knew that so far and no farther could they go without trespassing on the adjoining village. This probably was a gala occasion when a good time was had by all!

Undoubtedly of ancient vintage is the nursery rhyme: "There was an old woman who lived in a shoe, who had so many children she didn't know what to do. So she gave them some broth without any bread, then whipped them all soundly and sent them to bed". No mention of the "old man"! Was he at the Shoe-string Arms? If so, who could blame him?

This might be considered a case of too large a family in a restricted space, with a bread shortage. The old woman solved her problem with the strap and bed after feeding them as best she could. The rhyme undoubtedly typifies the condition of the rural worker of the day, who, on a small wage reared about a dozen children in a tiny cottage. If the harrassed mother used the heavy hand of authority she could plead excuse of ignorance and circumstance.

The light-hearted song "Schooldays" glibly accepts the rule of physical punishment as an aid to learning: "Reading and writing and rithmetic, Taught to the tune of a hickory stick". The stick is now allegedly not used for inability to learn; if this is so we have advanced some way beyond barbarism.

Robert Ingersoll, in an address given before the New York State Bar Association in 1890 said "All nations seem to have had supreme confidence in the deterrent power of threatened and inflicted pain. They have regarded punishment as the shortest road to reformation. Nations have relied on confiscation and degradation, on maimings, whippings and brandings. But curiously enough, the fact is that no matter how severe and painful the punishment, crime increased".

D. P. Wilson, a Professor of Psychology attached to the Fort Leavenworth Penitentiary, speaking of a convict whom he called "Punch" said: "I asked about his own youth. On this he was voluble. I learned that he was beaten all through his childhood mercilessly, regularly and senselessly, and then forbidden recourse to tears. When I learned about Punch's childhood, I was reminded of the theory held by many psychologists, and supported by many case histories, that most of the sadistic criminals of history have been beaten and mistreated as children. Beatings may subdue a wilful child, but they do not always produce a gentle adult."

Gradually, more humane methods are superceding the

Education Act is foolproof, and any form of victimisation for dissenters impossible, he may still have his doubts. In the author's experience, the MPs defence of religious education in schools, when the chairman finally allowed the question, seemed to him very naive, and he was not entirely convinced that the MP's estimate of town councillors on the Education Committee, and their unique ability to be free from human prejudices did not suffer from the same ostrich's viewpoint. As an Honours graduate, too, at a time when Scottish education is ostensibly suffering from a lack of similarly qualified men, the author's position, as a Freethinker, would seem free from perplexity, and justify a refusal.

Morally, or, rather, idealistically, I suppose one should refuse to perpetuate an absurdity. It must seem ridiculous even to theistically-minded teachers that pupils should walk out of one classroom where the result of creating a vacuum in a petrol can is demonstrated by removing the air from the can, or the use of the subjunctive in Final Clauses is shown by referring to a passage in Cicero, and enter another where, as Dr. Duhig has said, they learn that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Ghost because "this has been believed for two thousand years". Ridiculous, if this is in fact what they learn, but from colleagues in the profession this is hardly the impression the author gets, though they would not admit this other than confidentially. Marking the register, correcting the exercise-books, or reading detective thrillers, are the stock occupations for the period, it seems.

This being the case, a prospective teacher with atheistic views cannot be sure that mere negative objection is really in the interests of society at the present time. If his worldly-Christian friends can abuse, why cannot he use, the period? He could not proffer "instruction", but substitute "discussion"—of whatever Biblical passage the syllabus enjoins—and, I think, he could justify accepting a class for a religious period. Let us be frank. The Secular Education League by the very nature of things is powerless to stop religious education in schools at least this century. (Freethinkers are powerless to expunge that quaint Blasphemy Law from the Statute Books, and there is a great deal less woolly thinking about cursing, in which the adult personally indulges from time to time, perhaps with some enjoyment, than about sending one's child for religious education, in which the parent does not play a part, and which, no doubt, the parents think will give their child some of the moral virtues which they themselves are too busy watching TV to try to develop for him.) Now many children, even at twelve years old, are beginning to think for themselves. Certainly by the time they are fifteen they must be very conscious of the discrepancies they meet in the Bible, and in everyday dog-eat-dog Christian behaviour and the Christian ethics they learned at Sunday School. What they lack, as the author remembers lacking at that age until he came upon the Thinker's Library, is someone in an authority which they recognise, to let them know, if no more, that they are right to have these doubts.

This is surely valuable: the critical faculty cannot be encouraged with moral questions on Hamlet's behaviour towards his family, and conveniently shelved or bottled-up if the same question is put about Jesus. But whatever is right, one thing assuredly is *not* right, the present Education Act.

NEXT WEEK

THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE

By H. CUTNER

"eye for an eye; tooth for a tooth" method. When J. Caleb Boggs, Governor of Delaware, a year or two ago, vetoed an attempt to legislate for the flogging of boys and girls who committed thefts with violence, he received letters of support from many parts of the world.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### "PLEASE READ AND PASS ON"

So requests a note under the title of a duplicated Freethought broadsheet, which its editor, Karl Küster, of Bremen 1, Delmestrasse 144 (W. Germany) sent me, called *Der Funke* (Spark). In the main, it is a monitor of articles and publications pertaining to our cause; the July issue contains, for instance, the précis of an article setting out that much vaunted Christian martyrs under Nero and other Roman emperors fade into significance in comparison to the acts of bestial inhumanity meted out by Christians themselves, from Constantine and Charlemagne to Hitler. And Dollfuss, Austria's Miniature Dictator, brought into the open the terror of the Roman Catholic hierarchy (Clerico-Fascism): a Roman Catholic who wanted to change over to Protestantism had to submit to an examination of his state of mind. As late as 1937, Cardinal Pacelli—later Pope Pius XII—declared forcefully that the Nazi régime was a "power in the interest of order".

Not only did the Churches do nothing to oppose the acts of bestiality perpetrated by their adherents against Marxists, Romanis, patriots and Jews; the latter were exterminated like vermin in a crusade for the Protection of Christianity.

When at last the Reich crashed to its doom, Dr. Globke—Dr. Adenauer's right-hand man—disappeared, lying low in a German monastery of the Dominicans. Father Laurentius Simer, its superior, was until his death one of the most influential clerics of the German hierarchy; and when the phoney de-Nazification actions had come to a full stop, he started his protégé on a public career again: first as Vice-President of the Provincial Court of Accounts in Düsseldorf, then in 1951 as "Ministerialdirektor" of the Federal Chancellery. And Adenauer would be the last to desert a select protégé of the Holy See.

There is also a report of conditions under the crosier in Sicily where 284,000 families with an average of 7 children never get normal employment; the remaining 243,000 families work from 80 to 120 days during a year. A poll taken amongst 350 inhabitants showed that they went to elementary school for a total of 650 days (i.e. approx. 2 years), but spent in jail, 3,000 days altogether, i.e. about 8 years!

O. WOLFGANG.

### DOUGLAS REED

Your correspondent Mr. A. Gregory, asks if any of your readers has read any of Douglas Reed's books. I have read nearly all of them, and I think if Mr. Gregory does the same he may come to the conclusion as I have done, that Douglas Reed really has an obsession against Jews.

Of course I am quite unable to prove whether the figure of 6 million Jews having been killed is authentic or not, and I do not think that anything would now be gained by trying to prove how that figure was reached to satisfy Mr. Gregory. But I do think that he should read all Douglas Reed's books and they may give him a clearer picture of the subject.

(Mrs.) S. MULLER.

### THE JEWS

The Nazis regarded themselves as a superior race, while the Jews have proclaimed themselves the chosen people. No one can forgive the horribly brutal Nazi treatment, but it is worth indicating that the two groups have much in common.

The Nazi atrocities, of course, took place in our own time, but, if we can take the holy books at their face value, similar horrors were perpetrated by the Jews, with the co-operation and approval of their God. To give one example, the sun and moon are supposed to have stood still while Joshua and his God murdered and destroyed to the last man.

Indeed, the history of both the superior race and the chosen people are black spots in human history. We condone neither.

N. E. S. WEST (U.S.A.).

### WAS NAPOLEON WRONG?

Correspondent E. V. Birkby (9/6/61) was correct in criticising your statement (12/5/61) that only the "hope and belief in a future life restrain the poor from cutting the throats of the rich in this one". But he was in error in stating that the "chief deterrent to throat cutting is simply the penal code". The chief deterrent, I contend, is cowardice—the same cowardice which causes some people to run for any succouring shelter against real

or surmised dangers, and the doubt which causes them to wonder how their neighbours or allies would respond to an act. I will temper my criticism of Mr. Birkby's statement if he will agree to include vendettas, kangaroo courts, and mob action as part of his "penal code". We should realise that some people and nations will not alienate their "allies" through fear of jeopardising some academic phrase (read, for example, sphere of influence) even when these allies are murderers, tyrants, imbeciles—anti-humanists (read Spain). However much we detest this practice we must recognise its reality, and when it is applicable voice it as the reason. An anti-humanist acts for only one reason: he thinks he can scare his victims, that he is "stronger" than they. Unfortunately, history and penal records prove that this is too often true, and that penal records or platitudes never veer an anti-humanist from his course. No, Mr. Birkby and Editor: only people who are strong for humanity will restrain the anti-humanists.

GEORGE E. STRICKLAND,  
(U.S.A.).

[Credit—or otherwise—for the statement in question must go to Napoleon, not us. Mr. Strickland had probably not, at the time of writing, seen F. A. Ridley's reply to Mr. Birkby on June 23rd.—ED.]

### BETTER THAN EVER !!

NEW REVISED FOURTH EDITION

Adrian Pigott's **FREEDOM'S FOE: THE VATICAN**  
A collection of Danger Signals for those who value Peace and Liberty. Now available, 3/- (plus 6d. postage).

**A SHORT HISTORY OF SEX WORSHIP.** By H. Cutner. Price 2/6; postage 6d.

**THE DOLLAR AND THE VATICAN: Its Character, Methods and Aims.** By Avro Manhattan. 3rd. Edition—Revised and Enlarged. Price 21/-; postage 1/3.

**ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING.** By Chapman Cohen. Series 1, 2, 3, 4. Cloth bound. Price 7/6 each series; postage 7d. each.

**THE BIBLE HANDBOOK (10th Edition).** By G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball. Price 4/6; postage 6d.

**AGE OF REASON.** Thomas Paine's masterpiece with 40-pages introduction by Chapman Cohen. Paper cover 3/6, Cloth 5/-; postage 7d.

**THE THINKER'S HANDBOOK** By Hector Hawton. Price 5/-; postage 7d.

**HUMANITY'S GAIN FROM UNBELIEF.** By Charles Bradlaugh. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

**ROBERT TAYLOR—THE DEVIL'S CHAPLAIN.** By H. Cutner. Price 1/6; postage 4d.

**PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE.** 18 of Chapman Cohen's celebrated pamphlets bound in one Volume. Indispensable for the Freethinker. Price 5/6; postage 8d.

**CATHOLIC IMPERIALISM AND WORLD FREEDOM.** By Avro Manhattan, 528 pages, paper cover Price 20/-; postage 1/3.

**LECTURES AND ESSAYS.** By R. G. Ingersoll. Paper covers, 5/-; Cloth bound, 8/6; postage 10d.

**FAMILY PROBLEMS AND THE LAW.** By Robert S. W. Pollard. Price 2/6; postage 6d.

**MATERIALISM RESTATED (Third edition).** By Chapman Cohen. Price 5/6; postage 7d.

**MEN WITHOUT GODS.** By Hector Hawton. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

**FREEDOM'S FOE: THE VATICAN.** By Adrian Pigott. Price 3/-; postage 6d.

**THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE.** By Ernst Haeckel. Price 3/6; postage 8d.

**THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF GOD.** By Grant Allen. Price 3/6; postage 8d.

**THE CULTURE OF THE ABDOMEN.** By F. A. Hornibrook. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

**THE LIFE OF JESUS.** By Ernest Renan. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

**THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION.** By Lord Raglan. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

**PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN THOUGHT.** By Chapman Cohen. Paper cover 3/-; postage 4d.