

The Freethinker

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ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd, on the first page of its "Week-end Review", *The Observer* printed as an article a long extract from Sir Julian Huxley's introductory chapter to a new symposium which he has edited, *The Humanist Frame* (George Allen and Unwin, 37/6d.). Last year, as *The Observer* reminded us, Sir Julian (in a written debate with the Rev. E. L. Mascall) gave his reasons for denying the existence of a personal God, and in the recent article,

entitled rather clumsily, "Some new thoughts on how Man, without God, must face up to his role as sole agent for the destiny of this planet", he "carries the argument a stage further" by postulating an "evolutionary religion".

It hardly needs to be said that all Freethinkers will agree with much of Sir Julian's thesis, and that most of it is well presented. Man is "the highest dominant type to be produced by over two and a half billion years of the slow biological improvement effected by the blind opportunistic workings of natural selection. It is only through possessing a mind that he has become the dominant portion of this planet and the agent responsible for its future evolution; and it will only be by the right use of that mind that he will be able to exercise that responsibility properly". We can no longer "escape from the responsibility of making decisions by sheltering under the umbrella of Divine Authority". "It is necessary to organise our *ad hoc* ideas and scattered values into a unitive pattern, transcending conflicts and divisions in its unitary web". And, of course, "Our new pattern of thinking will be evolutionary-centred".

Teilhard de Chardin

With this, and much more, there can be little quarrel. Unfortunately it is not all like this. It will be recalled that Sir Julian wrote the introduction to the English edition of *The Phenomenon of Man*, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ, and thereby—as I have said before in these columns—"gave a religious book his scientific blessing". After reading *The Observer* article, one begins to wonder what influence the Jesuit palaeontologist has had on him. It is regrettable to find a distinguished biologist writing of man:

Nor is he individually alone in his thinking. He exists and has his being in the intangible sea of thought which Teilhard de Chardin has christened the noosphere, in the same sort of way that fish exist and have their being in the material sea of water which the geographers include in the term hydrosphere. Floating in his noosphere there are, for his taking, the daring speculations and aspiring ideals of man long dead, the organised knowledge of science, the hoary wisdom of the ancients, the creative imaginings of the world's poets and artists.

This is hopelessly unscientific. Man does not exist and have his being "in the intangible sea of thought . . . the noosphere in the same sort of way that fish exist and have their being in the material sea of water . . ." He exists and has his being on the "material" earth. The earth and atmosphere are man's environment, as water is the fish's.

Confusion

I think I know what Sir Julian means. He means that

man inherits a complex cultural tradition. But why doesn't he say so? Why does he invoke Teilhard's mystical — and mythical — noosphere? Why does he make an inaccurate analogy between it and the sea, using "sea" in two senses, metaphorical and material? Another bad analogy occurs later in the article. "Just as stomachs are bodily organs concerned with digestion, and involving the biochemical activity of special juices, so are religions psychosocial

organs concerned with the problems of human destiny, and involving the emotion of sacredness and the sense of right and wrong." This, again, is surprising, coming from an eminent biologist. There is no valid analogy between the stomach and its functions and religion and

its functions, and the use of "organ" in two different senses is confusing, to say the least.

Sir Julian is far too prone to metaphorical or poetic writing. It is all right in its place; but this is just not the place. It may be that he is trying to satisfy a larger public than he did with his contribution to *The Observer* debate last year, but if he does, it will be at the expense of precision. And when he talks of "the cosmic project of evolution" he comes dangerously near to teleology. Professor P. B. Medawar has said (in his review of *The Phenomenon of Man in Mind*, January 1961) that "the idea that evolution has a main track or privileged axis is unsupported by scientific evidence", and I believe this to be true. Sir Julian, on the other hand, speaks of "the existence, here and there in the quantitative vastness of cosmic matter and its energy-equivalents, of a trend towards mind, with its accompaniment of quality and richness of existence; and, what is more, a proof of the importance of mind and quality in the all-embracing evolutionary process".

"Mind"

That "mind" ("our word for the mental activities and properties of organisms", as Sir Julian has earlier defined it) is important to man and other animals that have it, is undeniable. It is unscientific, though, to talk of its "importance . . . in all the all-embracing evolutionary process", or again as "the dominant factor in evolution". Sir Julian seems not yet to have completely shed his anthropomorphism. And I confess that I can't follow him when he writes:

Thanks to the astronomers, he [man] now knows that he is one among many organisms that bear witness to the trend towards sentience, mind and richness of being, operating so widely but so sparsely in the cosmos.

If this means that astronomers have detected evidence of sentient organisms in other parts of the universe, it is news to me. Yet this would seem to be the implication of "now knows" — and astronomers as opposed to biologists. I am open to correction on this point, but I should have thought the existence of such organisms was at present purely speculative.

Near Dualism

"The earth was not created: it evolved", says Sir Julian in one of his better moments. But "moment" is an apt

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

Sir Julian Huxley and Religion

— By COLIN McCALL —

word, for we read in the following sentence: "So did all the animals and plants that inhabit it, including our human selves, mind and soul, as well as brain and body", and we are close to dualism. This is all the more surprising after the definition of "mind" cited above, which would surely link it indissolubly with the brain. Here would have been a more suitable place for Sir Julian's stomach analogy. With stomach: digestion, and brain: mental activity, he would be relating physical organs and functions. But by now it should be apparent that, consciously or unconsciously, Sir Julian is sadly imprecise. (What he means by "soul" is anybody's guess.) "Evolutionary truth", which, he says, "frees us from subservient fear of the unknown and supernatural", he also tells us, "shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality". And we have near-dualism again.

"Religion"

Naturally I dislike the use of the term "religion" in connection with evolution, but I don't expect Sir Julian will drop it at this late date. In itself it might be unimportant and be treated merely as a personal whim, but I don't think it can be so easily dismissed in the context of *The Observer* article. Misleading at best, it becomes more so when associated — even metaphorically — with a "theology" and with "sanctify".

"Religion of some sort is probably necessary", says Sir Julian, in a remark that is likely to be quoted with approval by theologians. It is "not necessarily a good thing", he adds, but the "emergent religion of the near future could be a good thing". Knowledge will provide "what we may call its theology — the framework of facts and ideas which provide it with intellectual support . . .", and "instead of worshipping supernatural rulers, it will sanctify the higher manifestations of human nature, in art and love, in intellectual comprehension and aspiring adoration . . .". The use of "theology", here, is surely most unfortunate. "Ideology" would have been better, but neither was really necessary. The "framework of facts and ideas" etc. would have sufficed.

The plain truth is that Sir Julian Huxley is attempting the impossible task of reconciling religion and science through "the acceptance by science of the fact and value of religion as an organ of evolving man, and the acceptance by religion that religions must evolve if they are not to become extinct . . .". I concede that religions have been of some social value in the past. They have been a social handicap for many centuries now, and especially a hindrance to the development of science. But Sir Julian has long yearned for a "religion without revelation", as he once put it, and doubtless he will go on doing so

Catholic Action: The Pope's Propaganda Machine

By ADRIAN PIGOTT

PART TWO

Yugoslavia

From the Pope's point of view, this country was also very important because it contained several million adherents of the Orthodox Church whose overthrow—like the overthrow of Protestantism, Secularism and Communism—is a prime ambition of the Vatican. Some of Yugoslavia's western provinces had been formerly under the maladministration of the Hapsburgs and contained a high percentage of Romanists. So, during the 1930s, it was an easy matter for Catholic Action to collect recruits who used to train and drill in the grounds of monasteries, preparing themselves for committing their future horrible work when occasion demanded. The day came in April 1941, when the Nazis and Fascists attacked from the West. Members of Catholic Action zestfully jumped to their prearranged positions to betray their country to their "Holy Father".

Yugoslavia was quickly overrun by the Fascists, due to the treachery of the Catholic Action miscreants, but—in pleasant contrast to the Belgians and French—the Yugoslavs of the central and eastern provinces showed that they were "made of sterner stuff". Being pertinacious non-Romanist Slavs, they completely upset Hitler's plans by refusing to surrender. They took to their mountains and conducted guerilla warfare for four years. In fact their unexpected resistance was so troublesome that Hitler had to postpone attacking Russia from May 15th (as he had planned), to June 22nd. This 5 weeks' delay saved Russia, as the snow came down in December just when Hitler's legions were within sight of Moscow. Civilisation owes an immense debt to the gallant Yugoslavs who have provided a good example of the value of standing up firmly against tyranny, and not timidly compromising with it.

Opponents of Roman Catholicism ought to adopt a similar stout-hearted attitude towards the Vatican. They should not be disheartened by the fairy-stories (spread

about by Catholic Action) which portray the Vatican as being in a flourishing condition. It is very much on the defensive today, in face of the successes which are being made by progressive peoples and by the realisation by many Roman Catholics—especially in Latin America—that Roman Catholicism is several centuries behind the times. The wholesale desertions from the Church in Latin America are one of the Vatican's many headaches today.

The Harvest of Catholic Action

In the first week of the war, Archbishop Stepinac of Zagreb (the Primate of the Roman Catholic Church in Yugoslavia), acting under orders from Pius XII, had no hesitation or shame in going to the microphone and announcing that he was going to desert to the invaders. From his pulpit in Zagreb on Easter Day, he recommended all Roman Catholics to follow his example. The majority meekly obeyed—although a creditable minority had the courage to join up with the partisans under Marshal Tito in a heroic guerilla war in the grim mountains for four arduous years. But the great majority of the Romanists obeyed the Papal orders and welcomed the Nazis and Fascists into their native land. And (as if this behaviour was not sufficiently sordid), they rallied round a newly arrived "Fuhrer" of Croatia, an unusually odious Romanist named Pavelic. In 1934, he had organised the murder of his king Alexander at Marseilles, but he escaped to Italy, where Mussolini protected him as being possibly useful when World War Two broke out. In June 1941 Pavelic received a deputation from Catholic Action officials who called to congratulate him on his success. In his reply, the regicide "quisling" said, "In our political struggle, it is certain that Catholic Action played an important role". This iniquitous murderer had his representative at the Vatican Court, and Pius XII gave him an audience—and also a "special blessing". (It must be rather puzzling for Romanists when they realise that these special blessings sometimes turn out to be very

mixed blessings! Father Tiso, SJ, the "quisling" governor of Slovakia, received one of these dubious compliments. He ended on the gallows in 1945, and Pavelic had to fly for his life to Argentina, with Vatican aid.)

As soon as Pavelic had got political control, the victorious members of Yugoslavia's Catholic Action then started to torture and massacre every "heretic" they could lay their hands upon. Between 1941 and 1944, over 200,000 innocent victims were butchered. It was an atrocity which had not occurred in Europe since the days of Attila the Hun in AD 450.

Priests and monks, carrying daggers as well as crucifixes, led their dupes to murder and barbarity. Nothing could be done about the cruelties which the members of Catholic Action committed at that tragic time. Most of the able-bodied patriots were in the mountain forests, and Britain was so short of air-bases that we could parachute to the hard-pressed Titoists only very few supplies. All these atrocities occurred within 300 miles of the Vatican to which Archbishop Fisher recently paid a so-called "courtesy call". He possibly shook hands with some of the cardinals who were privy to this most shameful affair.

As for Archbishop Stepinac, he was lucky not to receive the usual punishment for High Treason, i.e. death. He was tried by a special court (all members—by Marshal Tito's express orders—being Romanists, in order to stop any complaints of religious prejudice against the offender). The evidence against him was overwhelming (speeches favouring Hitler, photos of him in company with Fascists, his private diary which was captured and his position as Vicar General of the "quisling" army). He was sentenced to 16 years of limited movement. Pius XII made him a cardinal as a consolation prize. The Pope also excommunicated every member of the Court, a piece of medievalism which, needless to say, had no detrimental effect whatever on their welfare!

Britain

Our local Catholic Action zealots do not, of course, commit such elementary gaucheries as those performed by their counterparts in Latin America or Porto Rico. If, at one of the General Elections, our Romanist clergy went to their pulpits and commanded their flock (under threat of hell-fire), to vote for a certain political party, there would be an outcry at such ridiculous nonsense, and more harm than good would result.

Catholic Action always varies its methods to suit the local conditions and the standards of credulity existing. Our British fifth-columnists are far too clever to use propaganda which might work in such backward places as Peru. In Britain, their main policy appears to be the building up of the reputation of the Roman Catholic Church as being a flourishing and formidable concern which is on the up-grade.

I believe that this is not in accordance with the facts; the truth being that the Roman Catholic Church in many parts of the world is nothing like as formidable as it pretends itself to be. There is a shortage of clergy everywhere and theological colleges are half empty. The difficulties in which the Vatican finds itself today are reflected in its reduction of its customary vicious attacks upon other religions. "Courtesy calls" are now being allowed to be paid by the simpler-minded clergy of some Christian denominations, whose followers are no longer referred to as "heretics", but by the more diplomatic term "Our separated brethren". Twenty years ago, when the Roman Catholic Church was stronger, such concessions would never have been countenanced.

Methods Employed in Britain

In order to foster this fictitious picture of supposed

strength and progress, Catholic Action members in Britain assiduously use such avenues as—

- Advertisements from the Catholic Information Centre at Hampstead.
- Magazine and newspaper articles in a pro-Vatican vein.
- Pressure groups in Town Councils, libraries, etc.
- Writing letters to the correspondence columns of newspapers.
- Books, plays and films which publicise nuns and the clergy.
- Gossip writers who turn out publicity for Roman Catholicism.
- Societies and Clubs (e.g. The Catholic Radio Guild, The Apostleship of the Sea, The Sword of the Spirit, etc.).

All these items are comparatively trivial individually, but after repetition for 20 years or so, their combined effect on the British public is considerable.

Roman Catholic writers are active in presenting their side of the case favourably. The following are some of the titles of articles which have recently appeared in British newspapers and magazines—

- "Could Britain have a Roman Catholic premier?"
- "The rise of the Roman Catholics."
- "Is the English Church swinging towards Rome?"
- "Will Britain go Roman Catholic?"
- "Why can't Dr. Fisher act like the Pope?"

These articles are loaded with half-truths which are favourable to the Vatican; replies or corrections are very seldom allowed by the editors.

Thus British readers only hear one side of the case. They hear plenty about any converts to Popery, but nothing about the numerous defections from Popery. (Every day the Church of England alone acquires ten Roman Catholics, and lapsings by Roman Catholics are on an enormous scale. In 1955, it was found that half the flock in Holland had "lapsed".) Nevertheless, with our editors only presenting the Roman Catholic aspect of the case, it is only natural that, in the course of years, the propaganda sinks into our people and produces the effect desired by the Vatican, i.e. that many Britons are persuaded to believe that the Roman Catholic Church is a flourishing concern on the up-grade. Nearly everyone can be led astray by plausible propaganda. It was bad enough when so many of our people swallowed the comfortable slogan "Time is on our side"—as was purveyed by our Press barons in 1938 at the Munich tragedy. But when poison is purveyed by wily Romanist clergy, using Catholic Action as an instrument, the damage to the minds of men reaches a truly colossal dimension.

Decline—and Fall?

BILLY GRAHAM doesn't know if these are "the last days spoken of in the Scriptures" but he told 60,000 people in Philadelphia the other week that "the signs indicate it" (*Time*, 8/9/61). It is not the threat of nuclear war that prompts Dr. Graham to make this forecast, but the "immorality", "lawlessness" and "moral decadence that can only be compared to ancient Rome".

"All historians agree that what started the decline and fall of Rome was not an enemy at the gates but an enemy within — and an enemy we could label the Sex Demon". This might still be Dr. Graham, but it is in fact, another popular preacher, Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, writing in the *Nottingham Guardian-Journal* (8/9/61). Dr. Weatherhead thinks Britain is on "the slippery slopes of moral decline", and Jesus Christ is the only answer: "A revival of his religion is the only thing that can stop Britain from joining other great civilisations such as ancient Rome and Babylon which have slipped down into the limbo of the forgotten because they were instruments God could not use". It was (let it be a warning to you!) "the Demon of Sex that brought them down".

This Believing World

Thank God — at last we have discovered a parson who tells us how he was converted from being "a high-stepping undergraduate of decidedly ungodly and agnostic behaviour-patterns" — whatever this means — to Christianity. He is the Rev. T. Beaumont, and in the *Daily Express* (September 7th) he tells us exactly what happened. "What converted him from Agnosticism?" he was asked. And pat came the answer. "I don't know", he said, "nothing dramatic, no sudden vision, no road to Damascus stuff . . . I felt that I ought to be ordained before I was intellectually convinced of the truth of Christianity". The operative word here is no doubt "intellectually".

★

Naturally, he did not fall for the Church of England at once, for he came to the conclusion that "bogged down by worn-out traditionalism, it was failing in its missionary purpose". So he decided "to fight the Devil in his own noisome territory outside the cloistered hush", for "what is wrong is that the Church of England is still largely a one-class Church". Perhaps Mr. Beaumont believes — if he believes anything — that if the Church of England were a two-class Church, all would be immediately right both in Heaven and on earth.

★

According to the Rev. A. Perry, the vicar of Penkhill Parish Church — it must be *very* important — the Precious Message of Christianity, if we are to have Peace in our Time, is "Unity", a word which all Christians use, and which has produced something like 300 Christian sects so far. All we have to do is to "ask God that the Church may joyfully serve him in a peaceful world when that very Church is so divided". The best advice we can give to Mr. Perry is to fall into the lap of the Church of Rome where "Unity" means simply the abolition of *all* other Churches. There would then be no need praying to God Almighty to perform another Miracle.

★

The "Edinburgh Evening News" (September 4th) had a flaming headline the other day — "Christianity on the Defensive", as if it hadn't been on the defensive for a long, long time. Indeed, so much has it been on the defensive, that not so very long ago heretics were put to death or tortured or imprisoned or mutilated.

★

However, it is now very much on the defensive in Africa for it appears that instead of acknowledging Jesus as their Saviour, Africans much prefer Islam as a religion. Not only is it converting them to Islam, but many orthodox African Christians are deserting it for the religion of Muhammed. And here the new translation of the Bible ought to turn the tide if only Africans would read it. Or perhaps it wouldn't.

★

The Rector of Bermondsey wants 50 beds for a "mission" team which will visit the parish for a fortnight this month, and has got a brilliant idea to accomodate them. In spite of the large number, he claims that, "if we approach the matter with prayer", they will be given the answer. We would dearly love to hear the answer from some of the Bermondsey people if asked to accept a prayer for bed and breakfast. And we are quite sure the Rector won't like to hear the answer!

★

We note that one slogan suggested for the Churches' new advertising campaign is "*Prayers Please*", which is a very good adaptation of the well-known cigarette advertisement. It has moreover one definite thing in its favour. Prayers

cost *nothing*. But supposing they cost as much as cigarettes . . . ?

★

All the virtuous and pious bores in the Mothers' Union have risen up in one concerted shriek at the Bishop of Worcester and his wife for daring to question their Christian devotion to the teachings of Jesus on divorce and re-marriage. The Bishop, doing his best to instil a little civilised thought on the burning question into them, has asked them to show more "of the Christian spirit", meaning not exactly what the Christian spirit has been throughout history, but what is meant these days by tolerance for other people's views.

★

The Mothers' Union has replied rejecting any attempt to civilise them. They are all out for the "sanctity" of marriage basing this on Jesus. But in spite of them and the Roman Church, it cannot be too strongly emphasised that divorce *is* allowed by "our Lord" (see Matthew 5, 32, and 19, 9) and there isn't a member of the Mothers' Union who can deny it. But they and the Roman Church always hope that these verses are unknown. In the case of most Roman and Anglo Catholics and members of Mothers' Unions their ignorance of the Bible is *vast*.

Flying Saucer Convention

THIS WEEKEND THE Aetherius Society which it seems has "stations" in London and Los Angeles, is holding "The Second British Flying Saucer Convention", in the Russell Hotel, London, at which, it is clear from the programme, the Society's founder and chairman, the Reverend George King, will be the dominant figure. Most appropriately, too, for he is, says the programme, the author of the "most outstanding and revealing Flying Saucer book of the Century".

At 4.30 p.m. on Saturday (and it should be noted that "All lectures will commence promptly" and "All those attending must be seated at least 5 minutes before the commencement of a session") Mr. King is to speak about "Life on Other Planets", and who is better qualified to do so, unless it be his wife who will report on "My Journey in a Martian Spacecraft" at 3.15 p.m.?

Who, that is, among the inhabitants of earth? Clearly it would be even more convincing if "Life on Other Planets" should speak for itself. That has been arranged too. Not only will five Londoners, two Lancastrians, a Birmingham man and an Australian tell the Sunday audience about "The Space People's Appeal to Earth", but this will be supported "With Tape Recorded Extracts from actual Transmissions from Interplanetary People".

Two of the Londoners, Messrs Curtis and Holdaway, will already have proved the existence of Interplanetary Communication in the early afternoon of Saturday and will have dealt with "Operational Forecasts and Confirmation". Lest, however, there still be some sceptics left by Sunday evening, let it be known that they are veritably due to be silenced. Will not the Rev. George King be there? "In view of the fact" of his presence, the programme informs us, "the Space People have agreed to give a Transmission which will start at 9.00 p.m. precisely" — and for that you must be in your seats a quarter of an hour earlier.

We can hardly doubt that the members of the Aetherius Society will be seated by 8.45 p.m. Who among them would dare to miss hearing "Mars and Venus Speak to Earth"? For the occasion, Mr. King will go specially into "a Positive Yogic Trance [to] enable INTELLIGENCIES FROM OTHER PLANETS TO SPEAK TO YOU !!! Caps and exclamations are in the original.

THE FREETHINKER

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THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One year, £1 17s. 6d.; half-year 19s.; three months, 9s. 6d. (In U.S.A. and Canada: One year, \$5.00; half-year, \$2.50; three months, \$1.25). These rates to take effect from October 1st, 1961.

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

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute Cinema, Paradise Street, Sunday, September 24th, 6.45 p.m.: Prof. P. SARGANT FLORENCE (Emeritus, Birmingham University), "Family Planning and Religion", Questions answered by Mrs. LELLA FLORENCE. (President, Birmingham F.P.A.)

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.) Sunday, September 24th, 3 p.m.: "Annual Reunion", Guest of Honour: A. FENNER BROCKWAY, M.P.

Notes and News

FOLLOWING F. A. RIDLEY'S "Views and Opinions" article last week, we received a copy of a letter printed in the *Newcastle Journal* (16/8/61) over the name of "Mispah". It mentioned Canon Collins's objection to the election of the new Bishop of London because "the latter had declared that it would be better to have a nuclear war than to permit Communist domination of Britain". The former, said "Mispah", "would destroy the body", but "Communism sets out deliberately to destroy the soul". Presumably, then, the Bishop is right — according to "Mispah".

"HOW WELL DO YOU REMEMBER?" That is the heading above five questions on page 131 of an American Roman Catholic school textbook, *Progress in Arithmetic Grade 4* by Sister M. Paulita Campbell, IHM., published by William H. Sadlier, Inc., of New York in 1957. Here are the questions, taken from a photographic reproduction in *Church and State* (September 1961): 1. There are 37 boys in our room. Each boy says the Rosary every day. How many do we say in 20 days? 2. Each time we say the Rosary, we say 53 Hail Marys. If 40 fourth grade girls say the Rosary, how many Hail Marys do they say? 3. There are 240 girls and 274 boys in our school. If 1/2 of them say the Rosary in their homes, how many say the Rosary? 4. During one week in October many people came to church to say the Rosary. On Monday 350 people came,

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged, £100 18s. 9d. S. Hessey, 10s.; Anon, 2s. 6d.; H. G. Goldsmith, £1 5s.; R. V. Ross, £1 13s. 7d.; J. M. Bellamy, 4s. 6d.; F. B. Bolton, £3 5s.; P. Kay, £1 1s.; M. Evans, 3s.; F. Allman, 2s. 6d.; J. Coffey, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. N. Henson, £1 10s.; E. Swale, £1 5s. 6d.; Anon, £1.; M. Beesley, £1.; J. Wilson, £3. Total to date, September 15th, 1961, £117 3s. 10d.

on Tuesday 450, on Wednesday 425, on Thursday 480, and on Friday 500. What was the average daily attendance? 5. In the Holy Name School, 135 children say the Rosary every night. In the Holy Child school there are 4 times that many children who say the Rosary. How many children in both schools say the Rosary every night? It is interesting to recall that "Mathematics" is one of the subjects that Cardinal Spellman claims entitles parochial schools to receive public subsidies.

IMAGINE THE ECSTASY with which the Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of Our Lady, High Street, Deptford, received a "Relic of the actual Cross on which Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ died". The Relic (the Church Bulletin insists on the capital letter) was brought from Rome by an anonymous donor, and it is "cased in a magnificent gold and silver reliquary made in the form of a Cross and worked with intricate filigree . . ." On Sunday, September 10th, the Relic was received on behalf of the Parish and carried in solemn procession around the church and placed on the high altar during Mass. After, there was "a solemn veneration of the Relic" and "every parishioner" had the opportunity of "Kissing this most treasured Relic".

TESTIMONY TO THE AUTHENTICITY of the Relic takes the form of "a special document signed by a High Dignitary in Rome" and the church is "happy to possess such a document to bear witness that our Relic is indeed certainly part of the true Cross on which Our Lord died". All parishioners are asked to "pray very specially" for "the generous person" who presented the bit of wood. "A great French authority", we are told, "has sought out with great care the whereabouts of all Relics of the True Cross and has drawn up a catalogue of them". They are "reckoned to amount to about one third of the whole Cross", but the basis of reckoning is unfortunately not given.

FOR THE CONVENIENCE of readers, the Pioneer Press has obtained a number of paperbacks that have at various times been well reviewed in THE FREETHINKER. Among these we may mention, *Common Sense* and *The Crisis* by Thomas Paine (Dolphin Books, New York, 8/-), *Miss Lonelyhearts* and *A Cool Million* by Nathanael West (Penguin, 2/6d.), both double volumes, Diderot's *Memoirs of a Nun* (Bestseller Library, 3/6d.) and *Children of the Sun* by Morris West (Pan Books 2/6d.). Another Bestseller Library book of interest is Maxim Gorky's *My Childhood* (3/6d.). When ordering please add 8d. for postage.

PERHAPS WE WERE a little unfair to our readers last week when we corrected an unconscious error in typesetting. "The Lighter Side of the Law" might well have been lighter still if we had left the 7 year old boy "alleging that he had been bitten on the ankle by a god", and not altered it to "dog".

NEXT WEEK
INTERNATIONAL FREETHOUGHT
CONFERENCE REPORT

The Secret Sayings of Jesus

By F. A. RIDLEY

UNDER THE ABOVE HEADING, a selection has been made of some of the Apocryphal sayings of Jesus to be found principally in Gnostic writings of the 2nd century, including certain pseudo-apostolic writings by allegedly, the original disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, such as Ss. Peter and Thomas. *The Secret Sayings of Jesus*, edited by Robert M. Grant and David N. Freedman (Fontana Books, 2/6d.) includes in particular, the Apocryphal Gospel of Thomas (in full), plus extended references to other Apocryphal Gospels such as those of Peter.

Throughout this compilation, its American editors write from the standpoint of orthodox (Protestant) Christianity. Hence, according to the standpoint which they accept and here seek to demonstrate, these Apocryphal Gospels represent distorted pictures of the historic Jesus as viewed through Gnostic eyes which correspond in part with the canonical Gospels as accepted by the Christian Churches since about 200 A.D., but which display their heretical nature chiefly by presenting Jesus as a Gnostic teacher of a secret religious cult accessible only to the chosen initiates of an esoteric gospel.

Unlike the canonical Gospels, where Jesus is represented as speaking openly to all and sundry in unequivocal language, Thomas and others, try to pass him off as a kind of theosophical Mahatma revealing the essence of his spiritual message only to an esoteric cult. As our editors indicate, it is this basic point of view which, even more than their contents (which are actually often similar to, even if not actually identical with those of the Gospels) that — or so our editors argue — eventually induce the Christian Church from the 3rd century on, to dub them as apocryphal and their contents as heretical.

It is now a fact known to and accepted by all scholars Christian and non-Christian alike that primitive Christianity started as (in modern phraseology) a "revivalist" movement that originally possessed no inspired writings of its own but which used the Old Testament (i.e. the Jewish Bible) exclusively. The hallowed comment, "It is written", that guaranteed canonicity of the ensuing quotation did not appear in connection with any specifically Christian document until well on into the 2nd century. Indeed, the first New Testament (i.e. Christian Bible) emerged outside the orthodox Church towards the middle of that century, and was edited by the Gnostic heretic Marcion. Between about 150 and 200 A.D., the Catholic Church codified its own New Testament and in particular, the evangelical records of the life and teachings of its alleged founder, Jesus Christ. By about 180, four canonical Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, had become accepted as the only canonical Gospels, in which capacity they are first mentioned by Iranaeus in his treatise, *Against Heresies*, towards the end of the 2nd century A.D.

It does not however, seem to be the case that the four uniquely inspired canonical Gospels were at first accepted universally, for there does not seem to be much doubt, both that many other Gospels were already in existence by this time, or that several of them (e.g. the Gospel of Peter were actually accepted as canonical by local Churches, in some cases perhaps until after the Council of Nicaea in the 4th century. In its process of ultimate selection, the Church seems to have utilised a species of exegesis in which theological considerations usually pre-

vailed over a scientific critique, sometimes with surprising results. Since when, all rejected Gospel competitors in the race for canonical recognition have been officially dubbed as "Apocryphal", i.e. either wholly or partly fictitious. Indeed, so effective has proved to be the censorship exercised by the Church on suspected writings throughout the Ages of Faith, that only fragments have been preserved down to quite recent times, when archaeological research has recovered some of these rejected Gospels, chiefly in Egypt, the warm sands of which have preserved so many literary and archaeological treasures. *The Secret Sayings of Jesus* (i.e. the Gnostic Gospels which contain them) mostly represent finds disclosed by modern archaeology.

These so recently discovered manuscripts, with only one possible exception (The Gospel of Peter), add little to the knowledge of Jesus Christ that we derived from the already accessible canonical Gospels. Where Thomas etc., differ from these is usually in the direction of a more extravagant mysticism, of which many examples are recorded here in these apocryphal writings. On the whole and judging from the "Secret Sayings" recorded in these Gnostic Gospels, we must concur with the considered judgment of the brilliant French historian of comparative religion, Solomon Reinach, that the Christian Church must at least be accorded the credit for having made the best selection open to it under the circumstances. The canonical Gospels are, in general, more intelligible in their contents and less extravagant in their mysticism than are the Gnostic Gospels. One can perhaps add that (at least if we are to judge from the surviving texts) had these "Secret Sayings" been left undisturbed beneath the sands of Egypt, no great loss to either literature or humanity would have ensued. For Thomas and Co., carry to even more bizarre lengths the already pronounced mystical streak evident in the canonical Gospel according to St. John; a Gospel perhaps originally also a purely Gnostic composition before being edited to bring it into line with Church orthodoxy. Indeed, our editors themselves point out the obvious resemblance that exists between John (but not the three Synoptic Gospels) and these banned Gnostic Gospels of the 2nd (and later) centuries.

We know that John only won its place in the original canon after much opposition and perhaps, much editing. In the case of the Apocryphal Gospels recorded here, the opposition was evidently prompt and successful. As early as the time of Origen (c250), Thomas etc., were already on the prescribed list of Christian orthodoxy.

The only exception that has to be made to the lack of real interest found generally in these Gospels, is in the Gnostic Gospel of Peter, a literary product, in Reinach's opinion of the same Egyptian "factory" that produced the two Canonical Epistles of Peter alone apparently amongst the Apocryphal Gospels, which has two points of permanent interest to the critical student of Christian origins. It is positively the *only* Gospel (canonical and otherwise which gives a first hand account of the Resurrection, Jesus is depicted actually emerging from the Tomb, followed by the Cross — which does all the talking. Further, though the Church eventually condemned this Gospel presumably as heretical, one Article of Faith in the 4th century Nicaean Creed is directly derived from it. In reply to a

query, the Cross (sic) tells the Witnesses of the Resurrection that Jesus had "preached to those who slept". This belief that Jesus "descended into Hell", entirely unknown in the canonical Gospels, later (4th century) became, and remains today, a dogma of orthodox Christianity, presumably upon the solitary testimony of the unknown Egyptian Gnostic who impersonated St. Peter in this literary apocrypha. One is perhaps entitled to inquire whether the less precise accounts of the Resurrection given in the four Gospels are any better authenticated. I do not know of any other Apocryphal Gospel which has similarly left

such a permanent trace upon orthodox Christian doctrine.

It may perhaps appear to be somewhat irreverent, but really what benefit do these "Secret Sayings" confer upon anyone, but for the fact that they are ascribed to the dubiously historical founder of what is still a world-wide organisation with a vested interest in anything appertaining to him? They contain little of value either from a literary or historical point of view. If the open sayings of Jesus recorded in the canonical Gospels fail to convince a modern reader, his "Secret Sayings", as recorded here, are still less likely to do so.

The Church and Advertising

THE REMARKABLE THING about the call to bring in modern advertising "to popularise the Church" recently made by the Suffragan Bishop of Bedford, the Rt. Rev. Basil Guy, is that he appears never to have heard of the previous attempts for the same pious cause made by the Publicity Club of London. It was my luck to attend two of them, and they were, in a way, complete fiascos.

At the first, we had the usual call to Christ made by a parson, and how this call would be helped by a series of carefully planned newspaper advertisements. People would respond to these just as they did say, to tip-top advertising of patent medicines. The parson seemed quite sure. However, when I asked in the subsequent discussion how would advertisement writers prove the existence of God and the miracles of Jesus considering that the 19,837 books by famous theologians written during the past 50 years—nobody challenged this figure—had so utterly failed, the Chairman hastily cut short my little speech. Anything so irreverent as mine could never be allowed before a—more or less—distinguished Man of God.

At the second meeting, we had a well known parson who was also a clever journalist and knew a good deal about advertising and what it could do. This time the Chairman allowed me to finish my speech—and it was obviously heartily disliked by the hard-headed publicity men and women present. I pointed out that the Churches had been advertising their God for nearly 2000 years. They had to help them some of the most beautiful buildings for their representatives ever designed. They had commissioned the greatest musicians and writers to puff up their goods it was possible to discover. They had formulated laws to *compel* people to hear their divine advertising talk. They had for many centuries made parents baptise and confirm their children under threats of Hell and eternal damnation. And the result of all this and much more was the most appalling apathy for the Churches and their message. Did anybody really believe that the average advertising man could build a church like St. Paul's, write like Luke (in the Authorised Version), or compose a hymn like Schubert's Ave Maria? And I finished by asking how would any copy-writer make people believe in the Virgin Birth? I emphasised my doubts that anybody believed in this now—and the fireworks came on! When the noise subsided a little, I asked whether anybody at the meeting believed it and—believe it or not—there was a unanimous yell, "We all do!" Out of over a hundred present there was not one who sided with me. Even a Jewish young lady after the meeting spoke indignantly to me about it, and said that though she herself, alas, was not allowed to believe in the Virgin Birth, I had no right to say nobody believed it. Needless to add of

course that the members of the Publicity Club of London were heartily for advertising Christianity at whatever cost. I quite understand that. But according to a speaker on the radio the other day, advertising the Churches now does not mean trying to get people to believe in God or the miracles of Jesus. All that was wanted was to *remind* people that they ought to go to church, for this was a kind of heavenly duty enabling them to worship God. Although this was not actually said—as far as I know—there was now no necessity to prove any theological dogma. All or most people were convinced in the existence of God, they all believed in the Virgin Birth and the miracles of Jesus, and as there was no doubt whatever that the Resurrection was true and therefore Jesus was the only Son of the Living God, why bother convincing people of things that they were all convinced about already? Church advertising would remind people what their duty was—to go to church and worship God.

Cassandra of the *Daily Mirror*, who once had been an advertising man, could hardly be more contemptuous of this idea "to popularise God". In his paper (August 22nd) he claimed that this was a most formidable and possibly maybe a dubious task", but perhaps that was because he did not think much of the particular advertising agency which would be doing the job, even though it "offered to render unto God their services without payment".

In other words, with or without payment, God could not be popularised as is face cream, detergents, instant coffee, and the other commodities known so well through good advertising. But why not? If there is a God and he insists on being worshipped, why should not advertising do it as well as theologians? After all these people have signally failed. They cannot even agree which is the better of two infallible proofs—the *a priori* or the *a posteriori* way of proving he exists. They have never convinced all Christians why the 200 or 300 sects of Christians we are plagued with so strongly disagree with each other, or why there should be so many.

In any case, if there is anything in the gentle art of prophecy, I personally would like to take over the mantle of a prophet, and forecast the complete failure of any advertising scheme "to popularise" God. All religions have been or will be found out. They are simply not *true*.

H. CUTNER.

★

FIRST *The Times*, Now the Church. One by one, this country's most venerable institutions are forced to leave their ivory towers and hawk their wares in the marketplace.

Ah, what a degenerate age we live in. These are the times that buy men's souls. These are the days of ingrates.

What more blatant sign of our spiritual bankruptcy could there be than the spectacle of the editor of *The Times* and the Archbishop of Canterbury jostling each other in the doorway of an advertising agency? The British Empire has gone. I tremble for the British Commonwealth.

The idea of advertising JESUS is at first so distasteful it hardly bears thinking about. Imagine a great detergent battle between Omo, Persil, and the Precious Blood. Picture to yourselves a TV song and dance routine based on John 3, 16, or Elvis Presley shouting about the Rock that doesn't roll! I suppose we shall grow used to it. We shall come to look forward to the display ads in *The Pic* and the 15 second spots on AR. Presently in our prayers we shall be including a fervent plea that millions will follow the latest JESUS press campaign, and that there shall be no break in transmission during the JESUS commercials on Saturday night.

As someone brought up on JESUS, and able to give personal testimony to the pharmacological properties of this heavenly panacea, and, more importantly still, someone not unfamiliar with the labyrinthine advertising world, I offer my services as copywriter to any account executive who takes on JESUS. Below is a sample of my work.

This is by way of being softening-up copy for a preliminary campaign. It aims at putting across the general brand-image. At a later stage there will of course be specially slanted blurbs for the various sub-brands, e.g. *Catholic* in the industrial areas of Liverpool and Glasgow, *Protestant* in the mining valleys of Wales, and *Anglican* for the coloured glossies.

Do you feel

Nervy,

Rundown

Out of Sorts?

Then why not try JESUS?

Whatever your condition

JESUS will put you right.

Made from a secret formula developed in the Orient 2000 years ago, JESUS has been a world's best seller ever since. Millions of satisfied customers have died with the life-giving name of JESUS trembling on their lips.

You can be one of them!

Mrs B. V. M. of Stoke-on-Trent writes: "My late husband always swore by JESUS, but I just wasn't interested. Then one day he persuaded me to give JESUS a try, and to humour him I did. I'm happy to say that JESUS has made a new woman out of me. JESUS is simply marvellous. Wherever I go I'm never without JESUS. In the big new economy Christian Unity packet, JESUS is so cheap too!

JESUS comes in 3 exciting flavours!

There's the exotic *Catholic* flavour from Italy

There's the exciting *Protestant* flavour for those with a sweet tooth
And there's the wonderful elusive *Anglican* flavour that you don't quite know how to describe.

Take JESUS with a glass of Holy water morning, noon and night!

For everlasting life — Take JESUS! ! !

(Ask at your local authority for a list of authorised JESUS agents in your area. *Genuine* retailers of JESUS have rate-free premises.

Look for the *Sign of the Cross*.)

D. H. TRIBE.

THEATRE

Exit Joan Littlewood: enter the National Anthem! Sitting alongside my Dutch Freethinking friend, J. G. Rausch, for those few minutes while the rest of the audience dutifully stood, I wondered if there would be other changes for the worse at the Theatre Royal, Stratford, London. I took heart from the press statement that *A Whistle in the Dark*, by a young Galway school teacher, Thomas Murphy had "won an all-Ireland amateur drama festival two years ago, but the prize was withheld on the grounds that it was too controversial ever to be presented in the theatre". What do I think now?

I certainly don't consider it very controversial, unless one cares to argue whether even brutish Irish louts could be as brutal and ignorant as these, and I have no wish to do that. It has vigour — too much for my taste, and of the wrong kind — and it is well

acted, but something more is needed. Wit might have saved it, but I recall only one line: "Did you ever read Ulysses? A Dublin lad wrote it". What *A Whistle in the Dark* really lacked, was humanity and subtlety, and no play can do without both.

C. McC.

CORRESPONDENCE

SOMETHING OR NOTHING

Great freethought articles, great freethought writers, shoot their great cannon into empty space: achieving nothing or little. This course might follow my writings too, such as, *Three Main Phases of My Life: A Monk, A Catholic Priest, and A Protestant Minister* — and several others — which I do not care to publish.

Readers of freethought papers delight in reading good articles because of finding them in consonance with their own feelings. The inconsistency of religions with reason is the usual target. But where is a tendency to improve life, morals, in a proper direction?

Progress of evolution to more perfection should be the logical basis. Even intelligent, thinking people go to church to hear preachings of doctrines in which they do not believe. Rather something than nothing — they say. I would like to see something in progressive thought to better life and morals, what religions can claim to be their own realm.

G. KORNEL, (Virginia, U.S.A.)

"AN UNUSUAL WILL, 1961"

I must send a line to say what a wonderful Will you published on August 25th. It said so much that I think, but can talk to no one about. I am ninety.

(Miss) A. MUSPRATT.

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