

The Freethinker

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LAST MAY, the present Pope "by Divine Providence", John XXIII, issued an Encyclical Letter of a sociological, rather than a strictly theological nature. The official title is taken, as is customary in Papal documents of this nature, from the opening words in the original Latin, in this case: *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher), but the recent English translation (by the Rev. H. E. Winston, MA) as just issued by the Catholic Truth Society

(1s. 6d) bears the more elaborate title of *New Light on Social Problems*, with the still more pompous subtitle: *A re-evaluation of the social question in the light of Christian Teaching*.

Having however, now read this presumably "infallible" document, I am regretfully impelled to the negative conclusion that there is very little that is actually new in it, and that it sheds very little light upon the (as Pope John acknowledges) varied and formidable problems that mark our unprecedentedly complex era. Pope John is pretty obviously a middle-of-the-road Pontiff. He does not rank with either the more liberal Popes such as Benedict XIV (1740-58—to whom Voltaire even dedicated a play!) or Leo XIII (1878-1903) whose pioneer sociological Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (May 15th, 1891) was certainly both a much abler as well as more radical document than is this latest Papal effusion. But neither is Pope John to be ranked with such ultra-reactionary Popes as Pius IX (1846-70), the author of the notorious *Syllabus* which condemns wholesale and in unambiguous terms, pretty well every modern idea that has appeared since the Middle Ages; or Pius XI, whose own social encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno* (May 15th, 1931) held up the then Fascist Corporate State as the fine flower of modern sociology and fiercely denounced even the most moderate forms of Socialism. Pope John, we repeat, is a middle-of-the-road Pope, probably the eventual compromise nominee of the long and involved conclave at which he was eventually elected. His contribution to Catholic sociology as exemplified in *Mater et Magistra* (May 15th—the anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*—1961), is middle-of-the-road also.

"Mater et Magistra"

As rendered into English under the auspices of the Catholic Truth Society, Pope John's Encyclical Letter is divided into four consecutive parts, plus a conclusion. Of these, the first two deal primarily with the social Encyclicals issued by previous Popes since Leo XIII's pioneer document in this field, *Rerum Novarum*. Pope John (or perhaps the backroom boys of the Vatican who actually compiled this Encyclical Letter) evidently rank Pope Leo as the most important Pope in this field, and his *Rerum Novarum* as the most important and original document extant in the domain of Catholic Sociology ever to emerge from the Vatican; an opinion in which I am happy to find myself in full agreement with His present Holiness. I also think it very unlikely that Pope John's present publication is likely to supersede the work of his great pre-

decessor. For, and despite much obvious demagoguery, *Rerum Novarum* was a really remarkable document in relation both to the period at which it appeared and to the previous social outlook of the Papacy. For, up to 1891, the feudally-minded Vatican had hardly even recognised that Capitalism existed or had come to succeed Feudalism as the dominant social order, let alone given any analysis of it such as is found in *Rerum Novarum*.

Pope John does not display any such originality; the later sections of *Mater et Magistra* are diffuse, often extremely vague, and not infrequently platitudinous. I do not think that even Catholic sociologists are likely to take it seriously.

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

Pope John and The Social Order

By F. A. RIDLEY

"All Things to All Men"

If one seeks to penetrate beneath the often pompous phraseology in which this document is couched, and arrive at some positive content, one will not find the task easy. The precise sociological system or ideal form of society for which the Roman Catholic Church presently stands, is not at all clear from this authoritative epistle. The Pope repeats his predecessors' endorsement of private property and Capitalism, but hedges it with so many warnings and exhortations as to leave the whole question in a very ambiguous state. However, Pope John's marked preference for agriculture over industry runs true to the basic traditions of Catholic sociology. Pope John also repeats his predecessors' condemnation of Socialism, even of moderate (i.e. presumably non-Marxist) Socialism and upon the same grounds as Pius XI in 1931: viz. that Socialism is *ipso facto*, a secularist philosophy concerned with improving the lot of the masses in *this* world alone. However, the Pope then goes on to bewail the hard "sub-human" lot of the under-developed countries and proposes measures of "social action" to alleviate them, reforms which look remarkably like the "moderate socialism" which the Pope has just previously condemned. He has evidently no use at all for *laissez-faire* Capitalism, for there are repeated references to the right of the State to "regulate" (control) the economy, which hardly seems to square with the also repeated assertions of the sacred rights of private property. The Pope even explicitly allows (following Thomas Aquinas) that a starving man may "lawfully" steal since the preservation of life is superior to any "rights" possessed by property. We would, incidentally like to hear the relevant comments of a Catholic judge at the Old Bailey upon this Papal pronouncement, which is certainly not admitted by English criminal law. Perhaps the most obvious contradiction in this document is to be found in John's repeated insistence that wages must not be fixed by purely economic factors, should also be ethically determined, i.e. the famous but obscure concept of "the just price"; but "just" to whom, buyer or seller? But what competitive Capitalism has got to do with ethics, or how, even in Heaven's name (as enjoined by the Pope) it is possible to determine wages on a "free" (i.e. unplanned) market by purely moral con-

siderations of abstract justice, is surely something that only Infallibility can decide! How fortunate that the author of this muddled economics is in the position of possessing that power!

Rather surprisingly, the major problems which confront the world—and the Vatican—are scarcely touched on in this vaguely-worded Encyclical. The Pope reiterates his predecessors' interdiction of Family Planning, but he gives no clear line upon the most important of all contemporary problems, nuclear war. Nor, beyond repeating

previous condemnations, does he propound any positive policy of future co-existence with Communism. Yet this is surely a matter of life or death to the Vatican, as perhaps even to the human species itself. In view of such glaring omissions, we are very much inclined to doubt the accuracy of the CTS translator when he entitles this Papal Encyclical *New Light on Social Problems*. In fact one may apply to this latest infallible pronouncement the classic Jewish definition of the New Testament: "What's true in it isn't new, and what's new in it isn't true".

Women and God

By Dr. J. V. DUHIG

THE NUMBER OF WOMEN devoted to God and his very numerous mutually contradictory religions is far larger than that of men. I once devoted a few Sunday mornings to a rough census of congregations as they emerged from the various city churches. The lowest male attendance was at the Anglican cathedral and the highest at the Catholic. The average ratio of women to men at five city churches was about 6 to 1. At the Roman Catholic cathedral it was lower, but at the Anglican it was about 8 to 1. The relatively low number of men at the Roman Catholic show was surprising but encouraging. Talking to an ex-priest whom I helped to escape from the morally fatal embrace of our Holy Mother, I was told that without female support and the savage doctrine of Hell the Roman Catholic Church would collapse tomorrow morning. An institution built on such flimsy foundations, which relies also on its fantastically silly folklore for support, can be only living nowadays on its own fat: the £6,500 million of liquid assets and its vast real estate holdings. Intellectually and morally it is bankrupt. The low standard of its scholarship and its high rate of criminality are now known to one and all.

However, what we want to know is why so many women fall so heavily for this rubbish. I have had conversations with intelligent (*sic*) Catholic women who admit that priests are poorly educated and the morals of Catholic children inferior to those of State school children, but these ladies become hazy and evasive when I ask them if they really believe that ignorant priests can make magic. Inside themselves they really do, and nothing I or anybody else can do will convince them of the reality of the Catholic swindle, to which they quite happily contribute their husbands' hard-earned money. As I have pointed out before, these contributions direct and indirect are simply another addition to their income tax. That is, intelligent women see the financial and pragmatic moral arguments against the Church but still go on believing. One woman, very practical, told me she believed because "there might be something in it" and she did not want to miss out on anything that was going in the way of salvation or what have you. I refuted the Pascalian wager for her, but without effect.

Why is this? My explanation is that while women are intensely practical, they are more gullible than men, and rarely capable of abstract thought; all their judgments are *ad hoc* affairs. This psychology produces the ideal dupe for sacerdotal fake-magic. As they flock to fortune-tellers and play leading parts as mediums in the spiritulist hoax, they really believe that priests can make good magic.

I have known otherwise intelligent women spend as much as £5 for candles to be burnt at a shrine to get them

a husband, to pass an exam, or to reclaim a drunken husband. And despite the fact that the prayers are obviously duds and their money is wasted, they still go on shovelling out money to the priests for magic. And what these gentry make out of gullible women over long periods for masses to get relatives out of purgatory is a very nice snug income. (This special swindle is one of the most lucrative and most cruel on earth). Lourdes and Fatima have a huge appeal to women. They themselves must suffer from a serious lack of moral sense to be victims of these rackets and to refuse to accept clear evidence of the falsity of the whole Christian system. They have a compulsive obsession to stay with the mob in a belief in sacerdotal magic; they hate to appear different, they do not have the courage. This tendency to come to terms with falsehood is shown up very vividly in Catholic schools and hospitals run by nuns. As a child I went to a convent school where dogma, prayer and ritual were paramount, and lying, cheating and theft commonplace. And my experience on a Catholic hospital staff was so stunning that it helped me to get out of the Church sooner than I expected.

The result of all this is that mothers may deeply influence their children for the worse and many Roman Catholic members are obsessed with the idea of making a son a priest, with the selfish motive of having an advocate on the inside with God and thus making salvation certain. Hence the poorly educated, superstitious ignoramuses know nothing of history, literature, science. I have often heard men say they learned their religion at their mother's knee. If I were a dictator I would order that no woman should be allowed to teach her children in any but the erect posture.

Female duplicity, gullibility and queer moral sense is a serious obstacle to a high general morality and standard of conduct. A community needs these, not devout observances which are not a substitute for good behaviour. Women may be chaste and loving but their ethical sense is often unbalanced.

As a class with, of course, exceptions women are useless as abstract thinkers and dangerous in the field of religion. As the result of Catholic training in early life, one delinquent in four is a Catholic in Britain; a survey of prostitution in New York showed that a little over one prostitute in three is a Catholic; and in New Zealand one criminal in three is a Catholic.

— NEXT WEEK —

PILLAR OF SALT

By Dr. EDWARD ROUX

Billy Graham's Requirement

By COLIN McCALL

WE HAVE IT on the authority of none less than Billy Graham himself that, "There is a movement gathering momentum in America to take the traditional concept of God out of our national life" (*Saturday Evening Post*, February 17th, 1962). If this movement succeeds, says Dr. Graham, "In God We Trust" will be taken from the coins, the Bible will be removed from the courts, "future Presidents will be sworn into office with their hand on a copy of the Constitution instead of the Bible, and chaplains will be removed from the Armed Forces". "The issue of prayers in public schools is now before the Supreme Court", he adds, "and, if the Court decrees negatively, another victory will be gained by those forces which conspire to remove faith in God from the public conscience".

There is much to challenge, even in these few introductory sentences of Dr. Graham's article, entitled significantly, "Our Right to *Require* Belief" (my italics), but I will confine myself to two (related) points. Take the swearing-in of the Presidents. If the movement succeeds, Graham says (and he is never precise in delineating the "movement") a copy of the Constitution will be sworn on instead of *the* Bible. The use of the definite article which I have italicised is a device often employed by Christians to suggest conformity where it doesn't exist. As everybody knows, the present President of the United States is a Roman Catholic. At his inauguration, therefore, he swore on the Douay Roman Catholic Bible, not on the Authorised (King James) Version or any of the Revised Versions. This was a different Bible—different in its contents, that is—than had been used by any previous President. There is no one Bible, *the* Bible, there are many. There is, by contrast, only one US Constitution, a copy of which could most aptly be used at Presidential and other inaugurations.

The same criticism applies to Graham's references to "God". There is no "traditional concept of God" in American national life: there are countless concepts of God and they vary enormously. The first President of the United States, George Washington, was a Deist, as were his immediate successors, Adams and Jefferson. The last-named once referred to the Christian God as "a hocus-pocus phantasm of a God, like another Cerberus, with one body and three heads" (see Joseph McCabe's *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Rationalists*) and yet no one can deny that the author of the Declaration of Independence has had a considerable influence on American tradition. Assuming that "In God We Trust" means anything to the vast majority of Americans today, we can assert that it will mean many different things to different people. It will mean something different, for example, to President Kennedy from what it does to fundamentalist Dr. Graham, and something different again to Unitarian Mr. Adlai Stevenson. Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely.

"Most Americans", says Graham, "not only believe in God themselves but want their leaders to have faith in God". Yet it is a fact that many of Dr. Graham's fellow Baptists were fearful of the prospect of John F. Kennedy's election as President because he was a Roman Catholic. None of them disputed his belief in God, but it was a different one from theirs. For there is, in fact, not one Christian "God" but many. Graham reports the findings of Dr. Paul Bussard, editor of the *Catholic Digest*, that

"99 per cent of the American people believe in God; that 77 per cent believe in the hereafter, and that 75 per cent believe that religion is important". I personally would question the validity of these figures, and certainly would dispute their value, but even on their merits they show that the god or gods believed in by 22 per cent of the American people held no promise of a future life. Such gods are definitely not the same as the god of Dr. Graham—or that of President Kennedy. Lumping all the many religious beliefs together under the heading of "belief in God" or "our traditional faith" is misleading, and, I suspect, deliberately so.

At any rate, it is hard to exempt Graham from deliberate distortion when he states that: "Those who are trying to remove God from our culture are rewriting history and distorting the truth". Here, as throughout his article, he avoids designating "those" whom he is attacking: the "movement" that is "gathering momentum". They become "atheists and agnostics" towards the end of the article, just in time for a fear of Communism finale, but there is no personal or organisational identification, and there is no quotation. Yet allegations of "rewriting history and distorting the truth" surely call for substantiation. Perhaps Billy Graham fears even the rather elastic US libel laws.

Or maybe he just finds it easier to dispose of a vague, unspecified opponent whom he never allows to have his say, while quoting selectively to support his own case. Graham's gerrymandering may be seen in these two quotations:

Guizot, the French historian, once asked James Russell Lowell, "How long do you think that the American republic will endure?" Lowell replied, "So long as the ideas of its founding fathers continue to be dominant."

Historian Samuel Eliot Morison has said that these founding fathers came "to make over the earth in the spirit of Christian philosophy—a City of God was their aim."

I am not able to check the context of these quotations, as no references are given, but I do want to condemn the way they have been juxtaposed. Graham should not switch from Lowell to Morison just when it suits him. If Lowell is cited as praising the "ideas" of the founding fathers, we should be given his conception of those ideas, not Morison's conception, which may be different. By this method one can create totally false impressions.

Consider, for instance, Roman Catholic and Protestant attitudes to the Reformation. By selective quoting and juxtaposition it would be possible to play havoc with the truth. One might quote a Protestant rejoicing in the Reformation, then give a Roman Catholic picture of the event. The Protestant would then seem to have extolled a horror. Or one could reverse the process by quoting a Catholic condemning the Reformation and then giving a favourable Protestant description of it. Thus would the Catholic be presented as condemning something highly beneficial.

Not that Billy Graham is likely to have any qualms. Not only does he declare absurdly that American prosperity "came because we as a nation have honoured God", he asserts that "freedom . . . will evaporate if the religious foundations upon which it has been built are taken away". Then, with the utmost impertinence, he goes on:

I'm not so sure we would continue to be free if our men
(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

God and Mammon were at least partially dis-united when Courtaulds recently held a Divine Service of Thanksgiving that they had been delivered from that other share-grasping firm popularly known as ICI. This event inspired the *Daily Express* cartoonist, Osbert Lancaster, in one of his happiest and un-God-like efforts, to depict a bunch of devout believers fervently praying, "From ICI, Roy Thomson, and Charles Close, God deliver us". Vicky, in the *New Statesman*, took a different line: a clergyman praying ". . . as we forgive them that make a take-over bid against us".

★

We do not often see the "Jerusalem Times" which is published for Jordan Christians and is, in consequence excruciatingly religious. In its last Christmas number there is a typical Christmas Greeting—"Berlin is the psychic centre of the Darwinian creed of the Survival of the Fittest. Jerusalem is the psychic centre of the Christian Creed of the Brotherhood of Man and Peace". And therefore, Jerusalem "awaits the United Nations to build their home along the Crescent of the Mount of Olives and Mount Scopus".

★

Still, some of the writers for the "JT" appear to have quite a spot of allegiance to Muhammed. In very reverent tones, we are told that the "Holy Rock" upon which Abraham, "revered as the *first Moslem*", was ready to murder his son as a sacrifice, is the foundation of the Mosque of Omar.

★

What is called "Faith Healing" is now discussed in England quite as ardently as are still the "miracles" of healing at Lourdes, and no doubt believed in with as much justification. Under the investigations of Mr. Neville Randall (who "proved" in the *Daily Sketch* some months ago that "the Bible was Right") dozens of cases have been examined in the same paper. But the words, "Faith Healing", are not good enough. Instead, the articles are headed "Can God Heal?" which is decidedly blasphemous. What earthly use would a God be if he couldn't heal?

★

It appears that "the patients' own doctors examined them, and expressed cautious opinions", which is not surprising. Perhaps the fact that God was in the game somewhere made them cautious. There is one way and the only one which would *prove* faith-healing and medical miracles. It is that doctors and specialists should certify a patient as *quite* incurable. Then allow the faith healers full play to cure the patient. After which, the doctors must either admit that the patient was cured of an incurable disease, and that faith healing is a *scientific fact*, in future to be so called by all the medical fraternity in the world, or call it a fraud.

★

Unfortunately, Mr. Randall has given us some statistics which prove that God can't heal in the majority of cases. Out of 150 patients 75 dropped out to start with. Six actually *died* during the investigations. Six reported that they were worse than when God started the cure. It is true that 26 reported some slight improvement, but this may well be due to aspirins taken on the sly. And 16 reported "no change", a sorry mess if God really is responsible. But will this change anybody who believes in faith healing? Not a bit of it. Millions of people still believe in that colossal fraud, Lourdes.

"Arms and The Man"

Shaw seems to be in fashion again. New collections of his lectures and music criticism have just been issued—and the former has been discussed on the BBC. Faded or jaded, or whatever, *My Fair Lady* continues to draw the crowds, and another Shaw play that was set to music, *Arms and the Man*, is now presented at the Mermaid Theatre, London—though without the music, thank goodness!

The acting, unfortunately, is not good (Sally Smith as Louka is best) but the production is fresh (like most on the Mermaid open stage), and Shaw's humour and satire wear well. Weapons of war may have changed, but attitudes to war have remained much the same. There are still many who relate it to chivalry, vest it with nobility and consider it a crusade. Shaw's comments still have pungency. C.M.C.C.

AUSTRIAN REPORT

On February 17th/18th, a conference took place in Vienna convened by the Austrian League of Freethinkers, with the object of making the voice of citizens without denominational ties heard at last. As a result, a co-ordinating Committee of the Association of Austrian Citizens without Religious Denomination was set up, consisting of three groups of agnostics in the country. The day after, the Committee called at the Federal Chancellery to hand in their demands, viz.:

1. Creation of the legal basis giving citizens without religious denomination the right to act as a public and legal body.
2. Realisation of Article 68, section 3 of the State Treaty of St. Germain, 1920, i.e. the recognition that this legal body is entitled to payment out of public funds such as the recognised religious communities receive, and in relation to their ratio of the population.
3. Restitution of the assets of the Freidenkerbund (League of Austrian Freethinkers) which, by decree of the Nazis, was plundered in 1933. So far, the priest-ridden Austrian Government has refused to restore these assets of about 1m. Austrian shillings, equivalent to 24m pre-war Pound sterling.

At the same time, the new committee protested against the "clericalisation of Education", including the use of public funds for the purpose of denominational private schools, and requested the strict separation of State and Church, and Church and School.

They requested the cessation, in public, of defamation of citizens without religious denomination, and the democratic right to an adequate proportion of time on Radio and TV programmes. O.W.

BILLY GRAHAM'S REQUIREMENT

(Concluded from page 99)

in public life had no faith in God. I'm not sure that atheists and agnostics would be quite so zealous to preserve the Bill of Rights or the writ of habeas corpus or the two-party system or the right to trial by jury or the legal innocence of a man before he is proved guilty.

It is worth reminding readers that James Madison, fourth President of the United States and "father of the Constitution" seems, as McCabe says (*op. cit.*), "to have been on the Agnostic side of Deism". But this is not the sort of thing to restrain Billy Graham. A reference to Castro, tyranny and dictatorship, and a quotation from the President's special assistant, Brooks Hays ("The person who holds public responsibility and does not believe in God can rationalise any unjust social or immoral action") leads to the conclusion that, "Whether he intends to, the American atheist administering a public office has essentially conceded the battle to Communism".

But the alleged atheistic threat to the Bill of Rights, etc., is the lowest spot in an altogether disgusting article, and it is pertinent to ask two questions. Was Senator Joseph McCarthy an atheist? Is Robert Welch, who founded the John Birch Society? Of course not. McCarthy was a fervent Roman Catholic: Welch is a Baptist, like Graham himself. It is necessary, too, to recall the title of Graham's *Saturday Evening Post* article. "Our Right to *Require* Belief". Is that in the Bill of Rights?

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

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

INDOOR

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Tuesday, April 3rd, 7.30 p.m.: MISS K. JOHNSON, "The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren by Iona and Peter Opie".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, April 1st, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY, "The Historical Jesus and Theological Christ".

Marble Arch Branch N.S.S. (The Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, April 1st, 7.15 p.m.: HECTOR HAWTON (Editor, *The Humanist*), "Humanism and Sexual Morality".

North Staffordshire Humanist Group (Guildhall, High Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme), Friday, March 30th, 7.15 p.m.: A MEETING.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), April 1st, 11 a.m.: REGINALD SORENSEN, M.P., "Lord Snell in Politics and Religion".

Tyneside Humanist Society (100 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, 1), Wednesday, April 4th, 7.30 p.m.: F. R. GRIFFIN, "Sex and Morality".

Notes and News

ON MARCH 19TH, Pope John XXIII created 10 new cardinals at a secret consistory and—we were informed in *The Guardian* (20/3/62)—condemned the "new servitude" to "Godless, materialistic doctrines" in many parts of the world. Might he not have used the occasion for welcoming and wishing success to the Geneva disarmament conference?

★

CHESTERFIELD (Derbyshire) Council's decision to give unmarried couples the same chance of a council-house as married couples "angered" the Archdeacon, the Venerable Dilworth Harrison who (the *Daily Herald* informs us, 16/3/62) is Chairman of the Chesterfield Archdeaconry Moral Welfare Association. "I don't agree with it at all", he said. "I shall certainly take it up with the council". "It is a most extraordinary thing for the council to do", said the Rev. Alan Gordon, vicar of Old Brampton, "and only legalises immorality". But Housing Manager Mr. Thomas Pickering insisted that the council was not a court of morals. "We do not feel we can deprive a child of a good home just because its parents are not married", he said.

BASIL SMITH of Manchester College, Oxford, is "appealing to ministers and priests in the Scottish Highlands to help him build up evidence of genuine mystical experiences" (*Scottish Sunday Express*, 18/3/62). He wants people to give him information about three types of mysticism: a feeling of the presence of God "in a person or coming through a person"; a feeling of the presence of "mind" in nature à la Wordsworth; a feeling that we are all really one mind. When he gets his information, Mr. Smith plans to write a book and we don't doubt that it will have a good sale.

★

TWO THOUSAND people crowded into the Winter Gardens, Blackpool on Sunday, March 11th, to hear Charles McDonald of Dublin "tell how he rose from a stretcher at Lourdes in 1936, cured of multiple TB that doctors said had put him beyond medical aid" (*The Universe*, 16/3/62). Mr. McDonald spoke for nearly an hour to an audience which included the Mayor of Blackpool, who is a Methodist lay-preacher, and other non-Catholics. Perhaps the most significant remark, however, came from Father Henry Martindale. Wary of miracle-cure claims, this well known Jesuit suggested that "Whether Mr. McDonald's cure was a miracle did not matter". "The main miracles of Lourdes", he said, "are in the hearts and souls of the pilgrims". A very safe statement, it will be noted. One can't debunk "miracles" in hearts and souls.

★

THE SAME ISSUE of *The Universe* contained the interesting but completely unsupported report that: "Recent astronomical calculations and historical research indicate the probability that Christ was crucified on Friday, April 7th, in the year 30, states Fr. Josef Blinzler, a theology professor in Vienna and author of *The Trial of Jesus*". Few readers of *The Universe* are likely to ask which "astronomical calculations and historical research" as few are likely to inquire which doctors told Mr. McDonald that he was "beyond medical aid".

★

THE "Legions of God" fought their first election at Pontefract on March 22nd, under the "Independent" tag. Their incarnation, Mr. Russell Eckley, a 39-year-old clerk, was described (*The Guardian*, 19/3/62) as for hanging, corporal punishment, unilateral disarmament and the elimination of all fortunes over £50,000, and against the Rent Act, racial discrimination, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and the moral degeneration of Britain. He has no ecclesiastical allegiance but, he said, "We want to make the Legions of God an international thing for decency and to give the whole world a new kind of ideology".

★

THE MARBLE ARCH BRANCH of the National Secular Society is rounding off its very successful season of meetings with a social on Saturday, April 14th in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, the headquarters of our friends, the South Place Ethical Society. The Marble Arch Secretary reports a good sale of tickets and asks those who want to attend to apply as early as possible. The price is two shillings and the name and address are, Mr. W. J. McIlroy, 140a Hornsey Lane, London, N.6.

WITHOUT COMMENT

7.50 LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS

"Christian Space Research"

Talks by the Archbishop of Cardiff, the Most Rev. John Murphy.
3: The mind of an angel.—*Radio Times*.

Ways and Means of The Catholic Church

By ROBERT W. MORRELL

IT HAS OFTEN been pointed out that the Roman Church is very wise in the ways of this world. She knows that while keeping the end in mind, the ways used to attain it can differ from place to place, from time to time. In short, the Church is very flexible. In a democratic nation the Church is a democratic institution, or so the public image it seeks to create in such a society would indicate. To further its ends it turns to various "underground" methods, if and when these make headway so it grows bolder, though often still officially remaining in the background. In its campaign in this country lay members of the Church play an important role, and while it can be argued that these individuals are not themselves seeking to overthrow the democratic institutions we have fought for and obtained, one must take into consideration the important fact that these people who further the Catholic cause so diligently do not direct that movement.

It is in organisation that the Church can often defeat the most valiant watchdogs of democratic institutions. A Chinese Communist leader once pointed out how weak are those without organisation. The Church knew this long before Communism was heard of. To further its ends it has organised a multitude of societies and guilds, catering for and directing the activities of Catholics in various trades and professions. In our educational unions Catholics have an important say. Not so long ago a Roman Catholic was elected President of the National Union of Teachers (this is an annual election so the president is changed annually). The National Association of Schoolmasters, another teachers' union, shows strong pro-Catholic leanings. The Church runs 12 teachers' training colleges in England and Wales. Catholic nurses working in our hospitals are organised into a Catholic Nurses' Guild, while other guilds cater for trades and professions as diverse as transport and civil servants. Catholics working in radio and television are well organised. There is a Radio and TV centre, one publication of which looked so much like the *TV Times* that I was taken in by it for a while.

The activities of Catholics in the trade unions are well known. It should not be thought that just because they are Catholics they are insincere. I do not think that at all. But I do think they are misguided, that their loyalty to their Church comes before their loyalty to their unions. And Roman Catholics hold important positions in our trade unions. Mr. W. Carron, President of the AEU, is a Catholic, as is Sir Thomas O'Brien, Secretary of the NATKE. Mr. George Woodcock, Secretary of the TUC, is also a Roman Catholic, as is Mr. John Byrne, the new General Secretary of the ETU. There is a Federation of Associations of Catholic Trade Unionists of Great Britain, the Secretary of which is a local government officer, to direct the activities of Catholics in the trade union movement.

Roman Catholics are almost as active in politics as in trade unions, and indeed the two often go hand in hand. On local and national levels Catholics hold important political positions. To cover the local level would for the present be asking too much, but on the national level we find some 24 Roman Catholic Members of Parliament, divided into 12 Tory, 11 Labour and one Independent (ex-Labour). This last member, Mr. Alan Brown, is a recent convert; he only went over to the Church last

Christmas. In the House of Lords there are 47 Catholic peers, a further peer being too young to take his seat. On the Queen's Privy Council there are eight Catholics. Catholics are therefore in an important position to see that legislation which is not in the interests of the Church or which runs contrary to her doctrines is watered down or if possible suppressed completely. An example of how the Church works can be drawn from the action taken at a women's meeting held in Nottingham (where I live) about four years ago. Pamphlets were distributed to those present (Catholics only except for the press) giving details about how to go about getting on to local councils, etc. Copies for the press were refused.

Such, in brief, is how Catholic Action works in this country, through politics, trades and professions, the trade unions, press, radio, etc. By getting the right people into the right place the Church ensures that her view is voiced, if possible to the exclusion of different opinions. She seeks to get the maximum results from the minimum number of activists—for not all Catholics are active despite their Church. As pointed out above, the activities of Catholic Action are co-ordinated on a national level, as are the activities of Catholic trades unionists or transport workers or students. To ensure even greater coverage the Church has organised various societies of a more wider appeal. Such a society is the Knights of Columba. The aims of this Order are clear as to its function, I will quote three: 1. To be an organisation of Catholic men giving *entire* loyalty to the Apostolic See and to the Hierarchy and Clergy in all things appertaining to the Catholic Faith. 2. To be ready at *all times*, when called upon by authority, to participate in *any* work in connection with the Apostolate of the Laity, and to promote the interests of Catholics generally. 3. To *co-operate with all* Catholic organisations in the spirit of the fundamentals of the Order (my italics).

The Catholic Church is out to win this country over, to do this she will use all the means at her disposal. It is sad that most Catholics, lay and clerical, do not understand the full implications of their Church's doctrine—as priests who have left the Church will testify. It is our duty to tell Catholics just what their Church aims at, and to point out its political nature. Only when Catholics know the true picture will the Catholic tide be turned, and I have not the slightest doubt that it will be.

FREE ADVERTISING

ONE OF OUR READERS, D. R. Davies of Bristol, recently wrote to an outdoor advertising firm, Mills & Rockleys Ltd., asking who was financing a "Come to Church" poster that they were displaying outside his house. In their official reply, dated March 1st, the advertising firm said: "Our Trade Association have an arrangement with the National Council of Churches to exhibit free of cost poster displays 'Come to Church' on poster sites which become vacant either for short or long periods. As far as we are aware this is a combined effort by one and all concerned and as we say there is no charge whatsoever for exhibiting these posters, but whether there is a printing charge we would not like to say. It does, of course, give us much pleasure to exhibit these posters and we do try to keep them on display as long as possible."

What is the Establishment?

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is the first of a series of simple, yet factual statements on topical problems, prepared by the National Secular Society in response to requests. It is intended that each one should be issued as a leaflet.*

IN A POPULAR SENSE the Establishment is an unofficial club of top people, associated with English public schools and/or the older universities, which exists to safeguard the privileges of its members and obstruct general progress. These members wear a variety of badges, such as stockbrokers' top-hats, peers' coronets, and bishops' gaiters. They all deny that the club exists.

There is an official use of the word "Establishment". It refers to the Church of England (and to a lesser extent the Church of Scotland), the "spiritual" wing of the social Establishment.

This means that the Anglican Church is the official Church in England (and the Church of Scotland in Scotland), and has a special relation to the State. In one sense, everyone in England is a member of the Church of England until proved otherwise: though it is not technically the business of English law to foster the growth of the Church of England, or even of the Christian religion.

What does Establishment entail? It means that the Sovereign and the Lord Chancellor must be Anglicans. Diocesan Bishops have seats in the House of Lords. Church Courts, like the unjust but legal farce that tried Bryn Thomas, have the same authority as ordinary Crown Courts. The Church of England conducts all State religious services, such as Coronations. Its clergy are the

official Chaplains of State institutions like hospitals, prisons, and the armed forces. It enjoys lands and other endowments granted to it by the State throughout the centuries. Parliament has to be consulted about any proposed changes in its form of worship, and the Prime Minister advises the Sovereign on the appointment of its higher dignitaries like bishops and deans.

Lately has come from inside the Church of England protest about the last-mentioned condition—the influence of Parliament and the Prime Minister. Certain Church appointments have triggered it off. We have been told that in Parliament there may not be a majority of Anglicans, and the Prime Minister may be an atheist. The National Secular Society has said this for a very long time, but we used to be told there was no such thing as an atheist (until the Vatican set up a college to study this nonexistent object).

Anglicans certainly have a case here. But what they are trying to do is to get rid of Parliamentary control, while hanging on to the idea of Establishment and the consequent endowments. They ought to lose the lot.

Of over 47 million people in this country, fewer than 3 million are on the parish electoral rolls. Anglican communicants make up about 7½% to 10% of the population. Very much in the minority. Yet the Church of England enjoys millions in revenue that ought to go to the State.

Another point, with Britain likely to enter the Catholic-dominated Common Market, the talks in Rome on "Christian Unity", and the ambiguity of the Thirty-Nine Articles, we might find ourselves officially associated with a more unpleasant sectarianism than Anglicanism.

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OBITUARY

When the National Secular Society President, F. A. Ridley, went to speak at Brighton on Sunday, March 18th, he was met at the station by the Sussex Branch Secretary, J. H. E. Ritter, and its genial founder, Walter Perkins. Before leaving the station, Mr. Perkins was taken ill and died from a heart attack. As he would have wished, the meeting was held, but there was naturally an air of shocked sadness in the hall. This was, in fact, the first indoor meeting of the Branch at which Walter Perkins was not present.

Of course we knew of his complaint, but we had got so used to his activity that we seldom gave it a thought: it certainly didn't interfere with his enjoyment of life or his interest in Freethought, and he wrote a critical letter on religion to his local paper only a week or so before he died—and promised to let us know if it was published. But he regretted his absence from the Annual Dinner because his health wouldn't stand up to travelling in the cold weather. He was particularly sorry because his old friend Tom Mosley was the Guest of Honour.

A secular service was conducted at Brighton Crematorium on March 23rd by the General Secretary of the National Secular Society.

Frank Pearce, former Secretary of Sussex Branch writes: "It is an indication of Walter's love of the movement that he died on his way to a Sussex Branch meeting on March 18th. He founded the Branch eight years ago, and he played a large part in building it up to its present strength. I went to a Humanist meeting with him a fortnight ago to hear Kingsley Martin, and afterwards we called at the Temple Bar, Hove, for what was to be a final drink together before I drove him home. He said that the cold weather was affecting his heart complaint".

CORRESPONDENCE

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

Dr. Browne asks us to open our eyes to the facts and then makes a couple of half-baked assertions which bear no relation to fact. Firstly, Esperanto has not been a complete failure, as witness its recognition by UNESCO and its increasing adoption in the language programmes of many schools in Europe.

Dr. Browne's other rape of the truth is his statement that English is easy to learn because it has spread in countries hitherto considered uncivilised and illiterate. Where has English spread,

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except in English colonies or colonies of her colonies? And even if it has so spread, is Dr. Browne entitled to infer that it is easy to learn?

I'm afraid that he completely misses the point about an international language. It should be neutral, which English can never be. If English is used as an international language at least two undesirable things will happen. Those who use English as their mother tongue will retain a feeling of moral ascendancy over those who can only express themselves with more or less difficulty, and people won't understand each other properly anyway, because a person who uses his mother tongue will expose meanings in it, owing to his cultural and social background, which will not be fully comprehended by one who has a different cultural heritage.

MICHAEL GARNETT.

[This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.]

ATHEISM AND RATIONALISM

Mr. R. Underwood is making a fundamental mistake when he asserts that "the atheist is a freethinker" and "The atheist is a rationalist" (see "What is an Atheist?" THE FREETHINKER, 9/3/62, page 79). Some of the German Nazi leaders were atheists, but they can hardly be termed freethinkers or rationalists. The same applies to such philosophers as Nietzsche and Sartre. A distinction must be made between what people think and how people think. In religious matters rationalism will usually lead to atheism or agnosticism since reason and faith are by definition incompatible. And yet a person may even be a rationalist until the moment of his conversion, although from then on faith will take the place of reason as a guiding light. I am thinking of the case of Sir Arnold Lunn who was converted to Christianity because he sincerely believed in the historicity of the Resurrection. What led him to this belief were arguments based on reason which he has set out in his book *The Third Day*. The trouble with his arguments is that they are full of blunt errors and easy to refute. But since in the meantime faith has taken over it will be useless to think of a reconversion of Sir Arnold Lunn to agnosticism on rational arguments.

To return to the article in question, I presume Mr. Underwood was giving a picture of what in his opinion (and also in mine) an atheist should be. But this is quite a different matter.

G. WAPPENHANS (Spain).

While rejoicing that Mr. McCall should rebuke Mr. Snook for those hysterical lapses which occasionally mar the pellucid clarity of his free thinking—more often perhaps with him than with any others of your contributors; may I venture to suggest that he is not the only hysteric amongst them.

Take, for instance, Mr. Underwood, whose concern is to enlighten us as to the true nature of the true Atheist. With a robust logic which would have merited the approval of Moore, he begins by defining the true nature of the true Theist. Yet the odd thing about his definition is that it can be applied with equal cogency to the Atheist. He says that the Theist is a person "whose concern is to rake up all the support he can for primary assumptions which are totally unverifiable".

Could Mr. Underwood state one primary atheistic assumption which is not "totally unverifiable"? (DR.) RICHARD HOPE.

WISHLIF THINKING

I am sorry I feel unable to agree with the contention of your contributor, Dr. Duhig, that religion "must end in a modern world" and that happily Christianity in particular is decaying. This sort of wishful thinking is harmful, as it gives a distorted picture of the real state of affairs and detracts from a more militant attitude, such as is called for on our part. Ironically, the adjoining item, on the "Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme", gave the lie to Dr. Duhig's pink picture of the "Twilight of the Gods". So long as it appears cheaper for the powers-that-be to indoctrinate people with religious obsessions than to assure their all-round well-being, religious superstition will be fostered and artificially maintained. Religion is the last refuge of the political scoundrel, scared of losing his prerogatives. We know it is a lie, but as already the infernal Dr. Goebbels knew: a lie repeated over and over again is eventually accepted as truth.

But religion is not a matter of pure reason, otherwise men like Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Jacques Maritain and François Mauriac would not be its champions.

P. G. ROY.

MYTHOLOGY

Pious parasites in the various eras of man's history have called their pious predecessors fakers and classed their beliefs as mythology. Thomas Jefferson said: "The day will come when the account of the birth of Christ as accepted by the Trinitarian Churches will be classed with the fable of Minerva springing from the brain of Jupiter" (see *Thomas Jefferson, Champion of Religious Freedom, Advocate of Christian Morals*, by Henry Wilde Foote, Beacon Press, Boston, page 49). N. E. S. WEST.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

What, oh what, is the meaning, if any, of the farrago of nonsense under the name of Oswald Blakeston on page 87 (16/3/62)? It baffles me. Such a waste of valuable space.

E. CHEVERTON.

I should like to say how much I enjoy the contributions of Oswald Blakeston. His book reviews are always interesting and his short stories intrigue me. "Ever Been Had?" (9/3/62) was simply delightful and "Time—the Great Highbrow" (16/3/62), though it may not have been to everybody's taste, was most sensitively and subtly developed.

G. THOMAS.

HISTORY v. MYTH

Mr. John Christopher's article on this subject in the issue of March 2nd seems to me to suggest false antitheses. Is not all ancient history in the main myth? What reason is there for believing in the Greek gods, the Roman gods, the Egyptian gods, the Hebrew and Christian gods, or any other type of god one may care to reflect about? It is strange to me that so many millions of people are apparently content to pass through the world believing stories of these to be true. It is an alarming reflection that professors at universities go on teaching this type of nonsense, generation after generation, and that vast sums of money are expended on putting up edifices of all kinds in which these myths are held out as beneficial truths.

It is further obvious that, as our modern historians profess to believe that one form or other of these myths is true, the foundations for history seem very shaky indeed. Coming to contemporary times, anyone who has really watched the events of his own time and then examined the historians' account of them can only be staggered at the amount of falsehood which is forced down the throats of the young and unsuspecting in our schools and universities. One visit to the London Planetarium should be sufficient to demonstrate to any intelligent mind the falsity of the religious stories that are related by religious teachers the world over.

C. H. NORMAN.

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