

# The Freethinker

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A FEW WEEKS AGO the press reported an event that until recently would have seemed to be quite incredible. Catholic Action in Spain had come out openly on the side of the coalminers of the Asturias who were staging the biggest anti-governmental demonstrations since the bitter Spanish Civil War (1936-9), which was eventually won by the military insurgent junta represented by General Franco, a military and political victory achieved

not so much as a result of the superior military strength, as to outside international assistance, not least, that of the Roman Catholic Church. Officially, the present Spanish government and the text books issued under its auspices,

still describe the Civil War as a "Crusade", a "Holy War for God and Spain against Godless Communism" in accordance with which belief, Franco and the Vatican have hitherto been as thick as—shall we say?—Siamese twins. The official concordat between Rome and Madrid signed in August 1953, restored powers to Spanish Catholicism that have long ceased to be operative elsewhere. The first clause, still endowed with current legal validity in the Spanish constitution and courts, proclaims that "The Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church" still remains the sole fully recognised legal religion in Spain.

## The Catholic Church in Spain

It is presumably scarcely necessary to remind anyone at all conversant with either the religious or the political history of Spain, how close has been the connection between the Spanish State and Empire and Spanish Catholicism. It was actually a Spanish Emperor, Theodosius, who, far more than that political opportunist, Constantine, actually established Christianity in the Roman Empire by a series of ruthlessly persecuting edicts (379-95). It was in the form of the Spanish Inquisition, that the totalitarian theocracy of the Ages of Faith assumed its most ruthless and absolute form. And again, it was the Spanish Jesuit Order which, during the era of the Counter-Reformation, virtually saved Rome from destruction at the hands of the Protestant Reformers. Nor is it really necessary to hark back to such comparatively ancient examples. For throughout the bitter struggles that have transpired in Spain since Napoleon (here expressing the liberal ideology of the French Revolution) abolished the Inquisition (1808), which was restored by the Spanish Monarchy—itsself restored by the English bayonets of the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War (1808-14)—down to General Franco's own Catholic-sponsored rising (1936-9), political conservatism in Spain and political Catholicism, Catholic Action, have merely represented obverse sides of the same medal. But for the powerful reactionary influence of Spanish Catholicism, it is extremely probable that the Iberian Peninsula would long ago have fulfilled Trotsky's prediction before the Russian Revolution, that "Europe would go red at both ends" (i.e. Russia and Spain). It is often not realised that Spain was initially one of the strongholds of the Reforma-

tion. Protestant heresy in Spain was only suppressed south of the Pyrenees by the most ruthless violence of the Inquisition and by the sword of the then newly constituted Spanish State. In his remarkable book, *Spanish Labyrinth*, Gerald Brenan has made the interesting suggestion that modern Anarchism, so powerful in pre-Franco Spain, represents the re-emergence, in a form made extreme by prolonged persecution, of the Reformation so

long frustrated and driven underground by the persecuting activities of the Spanish Inquisition.

## Catholic Action versus Franco

In view of this "auld alliance" between Spanish Catholicism and Spanish

political and economic conservatism—for the Jesuits, expelled by the Liberal Spanish Republic (1931-6) and promptly restored by Franco, are probably the richest capitalists in present-day Spain, a fact noted by George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia*—it is certainly surprising to find that the present day Spanish Church appears to be solidly behind the Asturian miners, the most militant section of the Spanish working class, in their current struggle for better pay and conditions. For Catholic Action, an immensely powerful organisation in contemporary Spain, is taking up collections on behalf of the Spanish illegal strikers; priests openly support the strike from their pulpits, whilst even that arch apostle of both clerical and political reaction, Cardinal Pla-y-Daniel, Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain, has come out openly on the side of the Asturian workers. The strike, entirely illegal under Spain's totalitarian fascist constitution, is also warmly and loudly applauded by all the (illegal) opposition parties in Spain, comprising incidentally, both the (illegal) Communist and Socialist Parties. The Spanish Church and International Communism are thus, temporarily at least, in the same camp. What has nowadays happened to the crusade against godless Bolshevism which originally hoisted Franco to power with the blessing of the Vatican and the plaudits of the entire Catholic world? General Franco may, indeed not inappropriately, complain that he and his Fascist regime have nourished a viper to their bosom. For Cardinal Pla-y-Daniel was only a common or garden bishop of Salamanca when the Franco rebellion broke out. It was because of his initial support for the Franco "crusade" in 1936 when the then revolting military junta made their temporary headquarters at Salamanca, that the present head of the Spanish hierarchy owes his present elevation to what is perhaps the most famous historic see within the world-wide Roman Catholic Church next to Rome itself. When Dictator Franco recently sent for the Cardinal Archbishop, presumably to ask him to explain his conduct in supporting the present industrial rebels against the regime in its most dangerous crisis since the end of the Civil War, one must assume that the interview was stormy. Must Catholic Action now be classed among the present enemies of that former "favourite son" of the Vatican,

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

## Spain and Catholic Action

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

### Fascist and Catholic Dictator Franco?

It would appear that the tyrannical, outmoded, medieval regime of Franco is too out of date and out of touch with contemporary reality to continue long after the death or enfeeblement of its masterful 70-year-old centrepiece. This increasingly obvious fact is evident to all observers, who no doubt include the men of the Vatican. The question now is, what and who will succeed Franco? From the point of view of Spanish Catholicism, what is vital is that it should be a pro-clerical regime or, at the very least, one not too openly anti-clerical. Cardinal Deniel and his colleagues are currently believed to be in favour of an early restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy, deposed in 1931 in favour of the short-lived Spanish Republic. Even some left wing parties at present support a temporary restoration of the Monarchy as the

best available alternative to Franco. But perhaps a conservative republic (like present day France or Italy) might prove a satisfactory alternative from the point of view of the Spanish hierarchy. But in any case, the Church must quit the now obviously sinking Franco ship as unobtrusively as possible. Moreover, since the Spanish workers—beaten, but by no means crushed in the Civil War—probably hold the key to any future post-Franco regime in Spain, the Church must not appear to be too irreconcilable an enemy. Hence the sudden solicitude for the Asturian strikers so unexpectedly demonstrated by the Spanish hierarchy and Catholic Action.

Who was it bade us to combine “the wisdom of the serpent and the meekness of the dove”? And what human institution in recorded history has ever demonstrated this precept better than the Vatican?

## In Excelsior?

By EVA EBURY

SO, THE FOSTER FATHER of the Son of God and Patron of the Universal Church may be given one more chance to receive his rightful place in Excelsior and his name in the Canon—or so we are informed in the Roman Catholic paper *The Faith* (June, 1962). A detailed memorandum has already been presented to Rome for consideration at the forthcoming Ecumenical Council. As Pope John is himself a great devotee of St. Joseph, this neglected saint may yet obtain his due honour and have “a public cult of *dulia* in the Catholic Church and in the sacred liturgy, after the Mother of God and before all others in Heaven from now on”.

St. Joseph has always been a bone of contention to the Church. Quite simply the reason is that he was never martyred! With more human sympathy than the Church displays, some of us may feel that to be the foster father of a god and the chaste spouse of a virgin in child, might be claimed a heavy martyrdom indeed! Still facts are facts; martyrdom to death was an essential ingredient of sainthood in the early Church and Joseph, alas, died peacefully in bed. How he slipped into the Calendar of Saints at all is one of the esoteric mysteries of the Church; the very day allotted to his especial praise was probably just a mistake; a slight confusion with another martyred Joseph.

Joseph's name first appeared in a forged martyrology, purporting to be the work of St. Jerome, but as F. L. Filas, SJ (a present authority on St. Joseph) says, this martyrology “sprang up in an era when legends grew luxuriantly, and when no censure was attacked to such fabrications under an assumed name, providing they were orthodox”.

Joseph became the figure of fun in the Medieval miracle plays; a buffoon, full of jolly mirth, on every occasion busy drinking, during the “flight” attempting to barter Mary's veil and his hat for beer, or, conversely, a senile dodderer, too old to stand erect. It was not decided until 1200 AD whether Joseph did “possess paternal authority by reason of his marriage with our Lady” or was, “excluded from intimate participation in the mystery of the Incarnation, just like any other man”. Grotian, the great Canonist, said “no”, to the first contention: Peter Lombard, “no” to the second. Pope Alexander III confirmed Peter's theory, and that great theological issue was settled. Joseph began his apotheosis.

Nevertheless the Council of Constance, despite the im-

passioned entreaties of a great advocate, Gerson, turned down Joseph's claim to higher honours. This is hardly remarkable, the Council was in a turmoil over the vexed question of 3 popes competing for the Papal chair. The Council of Trent also passed over the claims of our saintly Joseph, but again he crept in by the back door and received a “double office” in the new missals, when the liturgy was stabilised by decree to conform to Roman usage. At the Vatican Council of 1870, Joseph's claims were again overlooked in the exigencies of more trouble in the Vatican. But later, Pius IX declared him, “Patron of the Universal Church”, omitting, however, to pass judgment on the rank of veneration requested for the saint. Although by later decree, the statue of St. Joseph was permitted to be left uncovered during March in Passion-tide; in 1873, “the Holy See did not approve of the cultus of the ‘Heart of St. Joseph’”!

Nothing daunted and with the support of 632 cardinals and bishops, among them the future Pius X, and a favourable encyclical of Leo XIII, Joseph's supporters pressed on, but on August 15th, 1892, a decree of the Congregation of Sacred Rites indicated that the Holy See wished to take no further action, stating that: “His Holiness was filled with joy because of these supplications, nevertheless he did not think fit to bestow on the Holy Patriarch a higher liturgical cultus, which would alter the status wisely established in the Church over a long period”.

Nine hundred Cardinals, Bishops and Superior Generals, supported with manifold theological theses, introduced the next petition, but Pius X, like his predecessor, did not see fit to grant it for, “the sacred liturgy and particularly the Canon, are most venerable with age, and should not be changed for any light reason”. But again, our Cerberus is thrown his sops; he receives new titles, extra feasts, commemorations. “Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse” is ordered to be inserted in the Divine Praises, and an invocation to St. Joseph is included in the special prayers for the moment of death.

The dilemma would seem to be insoluble! On the one hand there is Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, Patron in the fight against Atheistic Communism, Patron and Protector of Chinese Missions, Patron of Families, Patron of Workmen, Patron of the Poor, and Patron of the Dying, bereft of his due mede of praise, and in understandable frustration probably conceiving due penalties for his wilful flock; on the other are the infallible Popes of the Church which never changes! If, indeed, as the editor of *The Faith* believes, Pope John XXIII can cut this Gordian knot, he will deserve his triple tiara and papal cushions.

# Civil Liberties

By D. H. TRIBE

A COUNTRY IS AS healthy as its civil liberties are strong. Compared with other places Britain is tolerably hale and hearty: and much of this robustness must be attributed to the tireless ministrations of the National Council for Civil Liberties. Founded in 1934 largely to safeguard the right to peaceful demonstration by the unemployed, who were often manhandled by the police, the work of the Council has steadily expanded.

Its Annual General Meeting, held recently in London, passed fifteen resolutions, mostly *nem con*, showing the wide range of its interests. If Britain enters the Common Market, these, as the Chairman, Mr. Malcolm B. Purdie, reminded the meeting, are likely to expand even further. About 300 individual members and delegates were present — representing in all over a million members.

One of the resolutions was proposed by the National Secular Society, and secular views on a wide range of subjects were presented not only by the society's delegates, Mr. P. Turner and myself, but also by platform members of the executive committee and delegates from other affiliated bodies. As the NSS's nomination, I was elected to the executive.

Fulfilling its traditional role as national "watch committee", the Council pressed three resolutions on the police. The first referred to the Royal Commission, and called for an early consideration of its report by Parliament, and an independent system of tribunals to consider complaints by the public against the police. Two and a third years and £50,000 from its setting-up, the mountainous commission has since given birth to what the council's general secretary, Mr. Martin Ennals, has called its "mouse" of a report, paying tribute to the representation of the Council, but ignoring its major recommendations. Power to discipline all but top-ranking police officers should, says the report, be transferred to these police chiefs from watch committees of the local authorities, while legal responsibility should be vested in the authorities and not in individual police officers. While this may make it easier to secure damages after a successful prosecution for wrongful arrest or other abuse, it also seems likely to increase the number of those having a vested interest in hushing up any irregularities that may occur. But Secularists will all agree with the commission when it reports that "a law which is not easily enforceable, and the need for which is not widely accepted, tends to be a bad law because it brings the whole body of law into disrepute": and they will look askance at laws relating to blasphemy, Sunday Observance, abortions, and many aspects of divorce and private manifestations of sex. The second resolution deplored the action of certain policemen during the Committee of 100 demonstration in Trafalgar Square on September 17th-18th, 1961, and the Home Secretary's report to Parliament on the subsequent investigations. I was one of many who witnessed and reported a most unpleasant incident, caused, in my opinion, by the militarism and foreboding induced in the police by invoking the anti-rioting 1936 Public Order Act. In outdoor speaking I have always found the police efficient and courteous, doing a difficult job well—but then I'm not a West Indian living in Notting Hill, and allegations against the local police formed the substance of the third resolution.

This led naturally to the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which the National Secular Society has opposed since

it was first mooted. Perhaps the general clamour against this measure caused a reduction from 5 to 1 year in the period of its initial operation. Let us hope that it will then be killed stone dead. With profound regret, however, the NSS did not feel able to support our NCCL colleagues in the next resolution, calling for legislation against racial discrimination. Not because we do not find such behaviour abhorrent, but because of the above quotation from the commission report. On grounds of impracticability, we find ourselves in the somewhat dubious company of a Lord Chancellor, a retired Field Marshal and an Anglican Bishop who took this stand when a bill of this sort was recently submitted to the Lords. Such legislation seems more likely to harm free speech and social honesty than benefit those it seeks to emancipate.

Resolutions 6 and 7 referred to security, notably the recommendations of the Radcliffe Committee, which the NCCL has analysed in a very useful pamphlet, *Security and the Individual* (obtainable from headquarters, 293 New King's Road, London, S.W.6). Since 1956 those engaged in any work or negotiating conditions of work held to be "secret", have found themselves subject to security procedures if they have been "associated with Communists or Communist sympathisers". Now "character defects" have alarmed the committee, and anyone suspected of "insobriety, financial instability, untruthfulness, irregular sexual or marital relations, or family connections behind the Iron Curtain" are all set for the high jump. "Suspected" is the operative word, for there are no specific allegations, and therefore no opportunity for specific defence.

The next resolution was prompted by further Government abuse of the Statute Book in the prosecution of 6 members of the Committee of 100 under the anti-spying Official Secrets Act. Resolution 9 called for an inquiry into civil liberties in Northern Ireland; and number 10 sought greater efforts in achieving the political emancipation of the High Commission Territories of South Africa. Then came a demand for independence of the Press Council from the press; so that Fleet Street takeovers with centralisation of editorial opinion, and various social abuses like sensationalising, often in a highly prejudicial way, the life stories of murder and other suspects, may be adequately investigated. Both the NCCL Executive Committee and a district Trades Council submitted a resolution to implement the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report, and this was, of course, supported by the Homosexual Law Reform Society.

Secularists will welcome a section of deliberations at the AGM called "Religion and the Law", and including two resolutions. Members and delegates were told of the way in which certain magistrates and judges discriminate against witnesses who wish to affirm; how entry into the youth, probation, and prison service are virtually restricted to those who profess a religious belief; how school teachers are unlikely to gain promotion to headships or deputy-headships unless they undertake to lead corporate worship, even in county schools; how police officers and other custodians of the law seem to find it expedient to take the oath rather than affirm when giving evidence; how Admiralty Regulation 1827 enjoins a witch-hunt against unbelief on all officers and men; how natural parents, who have to renounce all other rights over their

(Concluded on next page)

## This Believing World

The well-known comedian and singer, Mr. Harry Secombe, has let himself go in the *TV Times* (June 17th) on "Why I am a Christian". There need be no surprise that comics and pop singers are devout believers; but whenever this is known, we can be sure that one or more of our journals will triumphantly tell us so. The only reasons we could discover in his article are that he belongs to the Actors' Church Union, that he doesn't go to church often enough—though he knows other entertainers who do—that he was brought up in the Church of England, and that "many actors have relatives in the church". Perhaps also that he has a brother who is a vicar, and because he himself was a choir boy.

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In the whole of the page article there is not a word which shows that he has ever questioned a single item of Church doctrine or history. He has swallowed everything told him—and that is mostly the position of religionists. By believing without question, one is saved a lot of trouble *thinking*. And this is exactly why the number of Christians runs into many millions.

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What is the position of cricketers regarding the Christian religion? Most of those responsible for "records", if interviewed, rarely discuss the question of religion. The one big exception these days is the Rev. David Sheppard, who was favoured with a big write-up in the *Daily Express* (June 21st) headed "God—and the man fielding at gully". Mr. Sheppard was, and probably is, still a fine cricketer, and he now has discovered that God is also interested in cricket—in fact in everything. The picture of the Almighty waiting anxiously for the result of a test match—as if he didn't know beforehand—is most intriguing. When Mr. Sheppard was bluntly asked whether God really is "interested in cricket" his reply was brilliant—"Yes . . . but Jesus was a carpenter and my Faith is that He wants to enter into every part of life . . ."

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To make his position clearer (if possible) Mr. Sheppard hastily added that "this doesn't mean that before a match I pray to make a century. I believe that I am serving the glory of God just as well if I score a duck". Perhaps so, but the average cricket fans wouldn't like it if a duck (or a "pair") was all we got from David Sheppard in a test match.

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Among the many records the Bible holds is the fact that it has been translated into nearly 900 languages, some parts even into 1181 languages. Many of these translations are in what are called "native" tongues, and it is a pity that it is most difficult to find out what exactly is the reception of a complete Bible in the language spoken in some of the remoter parts of Asia, Africa and South America. Surely we ought to learn of the joy and happiness of "natives" who find most absorbing the first verses of John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God . . ." If a Papuan or a Dyak or a Waraus did not accept it as the veritable Word of God, would he be consigned at his death to Hell?

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As these Bibles in "native" languages are only used by missionaries, it is interesting to note that the Church Missionary Society has had an income of £762,662 in 1961, not at all a bad sum. But apart from paid missionaries, the CMS is finding it very difficult to find "lay" people to work for "goodwill", which probably means for nothing.

What a pity it is that some of the people who feel that Almighty God will bless them for giving of their best in money, don't help also in the mission of goodwill. They should try and impress the "natives" with the teaching of Jesus in Luke 14, 26.

### CIVIL LIBERTIES

(Concluded from page 211)

child when it is adopted, are able to "specify the religion in which it shall be brought up, thus limiting the chances of adoption of some children through a lack of adoptive parents of a specific faith, and the possibility of respectable non-religious people from adopting". Clearly many of those present were hearing of these scandals for the first time. Not that this is surprising. For too long abuses by religious organisations or the State acting on their behalf, have flourished unchallenged on the specious grounds that any criticism might offend the religious susceptibilities of their adherents. The Council gave an overwhelming vote of protest against all these injustices brought to its notice.

At the end of the meeting Mr. Brunel asked for a report on the executive's investigation into Consistory Courts. This expressed grave concern about the absence of a jury system, vagueness of talk about introducing some degree of legal aid, and proposed abolition of the right of appeal in discipline cases to the Privy Council; but it considered that the statutory position of these courts was tied up with Establishment, and as such was beyond the scope of the NCCL. I then read out a letter sent to me by a member of the House of Laity of the National Assembly of the Church of England. "Several of us", it said, "spoke and voted against the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction measure but to no avail and it now seems likely to go on to Parliament . . . we would agree with you that the whole measure contains several wrongs that need correcting". Surely this was a supreme indictment of the Church of England; and on this as well as other civil liberties grounds it may be highly appropriate to bring in at an AGM in the not too distant future a resolution calling for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church. This suggestion seemed to be well received.

At a time when the forces of reaction and repression are banding together throughout the world, it is essential for those of progress, liberty, and reason to be no less co-operative. The National Council for Civil Liberties, composed of a great mass of men and women of all politics, creeds, and religions, and, it would appear, an increasing number with no religion, holds one belief in common, that soars across the chance boundaries of individual ideology:— that the rights of all must be safeguarded, or the rights of all are doomed. It needs, and deserves, increasing support in the years ahead. I hope that all Secularists will do their utmost to encourage affiliations by any local party, trade union or other organisation they belong to. Those who lack such contacts can equally help. Individual memberships are a vital support, both of financial stability, and moral commitment.

### PENGUIN "BRITAIN IN THE SIXTIES"

Education for Tomorrow by John Vaizey, 2s. 6d. plus 4d. postage.  
Communications by Raymond Williams, 3s. 6d. plus 4d. postage.

—NEXT WEEK—

EMILE ZOLA

By H. CUTNER

# THE FREETHINKER

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Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1. Inquiries regarding Bequests and 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 Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m. MESSRS. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD, D. H. TRIBE, J. P. MURACCIOLE, J. A. MILLAR.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Platt Fields), Sunday afternoons. (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday evenings.

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: L. EBURY.

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

### INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, July 8th, 11 a.m.: DR. J. A. C. BROWN, "The Pursuit of Happiness".

## Notes and News

THE UNITED STATES Supreme Court ruling on June 25th, that prayers in New York State's public (state) schools violated the Constitution was a splendid re-affirmation of the principal of Church-State separation. American Freethinkers have long been disturbed by religious inroads into the secular education system, and in this instance the New York State Board of Regents had instituted the following prayer to start the day: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon thee, and we beg thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country". Five parents complained that the practice was unconstitutional and the Supreme Court has upheld their view. Mr. Justice Black, writing the Court's majority opinion said: "We think that by using its public school system to encourage recitation of the Regents' prayer the State of New York has adopted a practice wholly inconsistent with the established clause" of the US Constitution (*The Guardian*, 26/6/62). Several analogous cases from other states are due to come up before the Court.

THERE HAS BEEN much conjecture on what parts of the Pilkington report the Government will implement. One suggestion that we hope they will note is that non-religious groups should be allowed their fair time in controversial broadcasting, outside periods specially set aside for religious broadcasting.

IT WAS refreshing to read Penelope Gilliatt's film column, "A Bad Week for the Atheists", in *The Observer* of June

## The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged, £206 0s. 4d. W. H. Day, 2s. 6d.; G. Beddoes, 10s.; In memory of Wm. Ingram, £2; O.A.P., 8s. 6d.; Anon, 2s.; Wm. Craigie, 5s.; K. Graham, 11s.; H. W. Goldsmith, £1 2s. 6d.; A. W. Coleman, 14s. 6d.; J. Telfer, 5s.; T. Walmsley, £1; Pius John 23, £1 13s. 6d. Total to date, £214 14s. 10d.

24th. "Public moralists are always swift to leap into positions of outrage about works like *Viridiana* and *The Making of Moo*", wrote Mrs. Gilliatt, "on the grounds that they offend some people's religious convictions. I have often wondered why no one ever brings up the question of the works that may be offensive to the equally sincere irreligious convictions of the other half of the country". And she pointed out that, as two of the major films of the week, *Leon Morin, Priest* and *The Power and the Glory*, required "real sympathy with the ethics of the priesthood, it has been a punishing time for atheists". Mrs. Gilliatt has, of course, raised a very real grievance. Christianity has long had legal protection in this country (the Blasphemy Laws are still on the statute book) and it is still considered "bad taste" to criticise it. The reason why no journalist ever writes a complaint of offence to the irreligious is the unlikelihood that it would be printed. The newspapers are too timid. Now that Mrs. Gilliatt and *The Observer* have given the lead, perhaps one or two others might follow.

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THE EXTENT of the attitude of "don't offend the Christians" may be judged from our own experience this week. One person, an atheist, argued strongly against our criticism of the Lord Chamberlain's banning of the exclamation "Jesus!" from a new English translation of *Heddu Gabler* (Notes and News, June 29th). "Nothing is gained by hurting people's feelings", he told us.

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COLIN MCCALL'S Views and Opinions of March 9th. "Marghanita Laski and Jesus", was adapted by J. G. Rausch, Netherlands representative on the Committee of the World Union of Freethinkers, and published in the Dutch Freethinking paper *Bevrijdend Denken*, of which he is editor. It gave rise to an interesting discussion with a liberal Reformed clergyman, Dr. A. de Wilde and a good deal of correspondence from readers.

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THE PUBLICATION of Peter de la Cherois Crommelin's article on "Freedom of Thought" this week, gives us the opportunity to remind readers that this charming ex-Roman Catholic priest and his wife have a little art and craft shop in New Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. Freethinkers holidaying or passing through the area will be welcomed, and will find many *objets d'art* for sale at reasonable prices.

### WITHOUT COMMENT

The congregation of St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, London, was invited to take part in the hymn singing last night and seconds later the church was filled with the sounds of barks, woofs, whistles and mews, for the congregation included 70 animals and birds, who were attending with their owners, the third annual RSPCA animal service.

The service began with "Dancing Toby" who walked down the aisle on his hind legs, did a waltz on the altar steps then sat down cross-legged, watched by his master, "Uncle" Charlie Tomkins of Kingston, a clown.

Another Toby, eight-year-old singing star of TV and radio, owned by Sir Alfred Munnings, sang one of his own canine compositions to music conducted by Lady Munnings.

—*The Guardian* (25/6/62).

# A Scientist Re-Writes Genesis

By COLIN McCALL

DR. BRIAN PAMPLIN of Durham University is, we have lately been told by our newspapers, "a scientist". What kind, we don't know: the most we have learnt is that he lectures in applied science. No matter, it is the portmanteau term that carries weight in popular circles today, particularly if that weight is thrown on the side of religion. And Dr. Pamplin, "an active member of the Church of England", has done just that in a new pamphlet, *The Book of Creation*, which he describes as an attempt to write "a scientifically accurate" account of the Creation on the basis of evolution. I haven't yet seen a copy of the pamphlet, and the first edition has already been sold out. My comments must therefore be based on the newspaper reports, and especially on those in *The Sunday Times* and *The Guardian*. But these are, I suggest, sufficient to discredit Dr. Pamplin's effort.

First, the introduction, where Dr. Pamplin says that "we now know a good deal more about God and His Creation" than did the authors of Genesis, "and that the time is therefore ripe for a more consistent account" (*The Sunday Times*, June 17th, 1962). If this is simply intended to mean that we now know more about nature, which Dr. Pamplin obviously regards as God's Creation, then of course it is correct. But presumably more than this is intended. The assertion is that we know "a good deal more about God", as well as about "His Creation". And this is just not true. Dr. Pamplin knows precisely as much about God as did the authors of Genesis, namely nothing at all. Nobody, in fact, *knows* anything about God. His existence is not only undetectable; in usual theistic form it is impossible and in neutral or pantheistic form, superfluous.

Dr. Pamplin's account may indeed be "more consistent" than Genesis. It could hardly be less so, since there are two differing accounts of "creation" in Genesis. But he has gerrymandered to make it so. Openly in the case of the Garden of Eden, which he has omitted (and of which, more later); less openly in his treatment of the order of creation.

"There need be no clash between the revealed truth of Genesis and the discovered truth of evolution", he says. "The order in which things were created as told in Genesis is the order in which they would develop by evolution". Again this is untrue. Even if we ignore the two creation stories in Genesis, and deal only with the six-day affair in Chapter 1; even if we ignore such absurdities as night and day being "created" before the sun and moon; there is one particularly glaring denial of Dr. Pamplin's statement. It is the creation of the earth with grass and trees (1, 11-12) before the creation of the stars and the sun (1, 14ff). One would like to hear Dr. Pamplin, as "a scientist", defend that order of creation as "the order in which they would develop by evolution".

It is also necessary to expose the suggestion that there can be two "truths" about the same thing. In a sense, of course, there are many "truths" about everything: each phenomenon is complex; it has many features or aspects; but no phenomenon can have contradictory features. We cannot, in other words, admit there are contradictory truths. Now Genesis and evolution *are* contradictory (as even Dr. Pamplin concedes in the case of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden) and the attempt to put them into different categories of "truth" — the "revealed" and

the "discovered"—is inadmissible. There is, in fact, an inevitable clash between Genesis, which is not true, and evolution, which at least is supported by all the facts we have.

According to *The Sunday Times*, Dr. Pamplin's new version begins: "In the beginning God thought out the pattern of creation. The Lord God said let there be Light, Energy and Matter. And God said let Matter and Energy form Atoms and let Atoms combine and condense to form solids and liquids, and let Stars and Planets evolve in their millions; and it was so." And the next excerpt given reads: "these living things competed with each other to overcome the physical world from which they had evolved." Here, "overcome" is inappropriate, whether referring to plants or animals, unless Dr. Pamplin is using it in its archaic meaning of to cover or overspread, which I take leave to doubt. Clearly the physical world must have been favourable to the emergence of living things in order to bring about their emergence. Once emerged, they would have to struggle to survive in face of competition inside and outside the species, climatic conditions, etc., but this would involve utilisation of the "physical world" rather than overcoming it. The best descriptive word is adaptation, certainly not overcoming.

However, Dr Pamplin continues: "so man evolved, male and female, from the higher animals by the Spirit of God." Male and female, but apparently not Adam and Eve. The "whole idea of Adam and Eve won't fit in with evolution", he told *The Sunday Times*. "The Garden of Eden is scientifically unacceptable . . .". It was, he believes, "intended as a fable showing how God intended man to be." And although *The Guardian* later (June 20th) reported Dr. Pamplin as saying, "I agree that the idea of the Garden of Eden must go into the story", it isn't at present in his book. He had "second thoughts" about it after Durham's Professor of Old Testament Studies, G. W. Anderson, had said that the Garden of Eden would never be out of date, that though "Dr. Pamplin has shown great insight in writing about the Creation in scientific terms . . . he has left out something important."

What will develop from Dr. Pamplin's second thoughts? "The Garden of Eden could not fit in any scientifically accurate story", he insists. "The idea that the perfect man and woman suddenly appeared on earth is unacceptable". But he agreed, said *The Guardian*, "that the meaning behind the story should go in." Quite a dilemma. Because, as you and I—and Dr. Pamplin—know, that story is essentially about a perfect man who sinned. I say "man", rather than "man and woman" because it is not clear whether woman was made in the image of God". Man, however, was. And both were blessed by God. So man, presumably, was just about as perfect as anything other than God can be. And, logically inconsistent though it is (how could a perfect being sin?) he sinned. Dr. Pamplin, as I say, knows this as well as you or I; like you and I he finds it scientifically unacceptable — even after second thoughts—yet the "idea", "the meaning behind the story" should go in. Well, if he gerrymanders sufficiently, if he perverts the story into "a fable showing how God intended man to be", which it clearly isn't, then he might somehow manage to find room for it among his other perversions. But he ought then to be asked how man could ever be other than "how God intended" him to be.

# Freedom of Thought

By P. de la CHEROIS CROMMELIN

ALTHOUGH I HAVE lived all my life in what journalists, politicians, and other public speakers choose to call the Free World, it has taken me more than fifty years to achieve a free mind, an independent spirit, an individual conscience. My own personal experience leads me to believe that it may be just as hard to achieve freedom of thought here in England, as it would be in Russia. If I had been born in Russia it would have been very difficult for me to think or feel in a manner alien to Communism. Here in England it is equally difficult for anyone to think or feel in a manner alien to the Establishment. If readers of THE FREETHINKER are really free thinkers, then they are rare and unusual creatures. If they are merely dominated by anti-religious prejudice, they are no more free thinkers than those who are dominated by some religious prejudice, whether Christian or otherwise.

I was indoctrinated from my very earliest years in the Roman Catholic faith. I allowed myself to be so completely indoctrinated, that I was willing to pass through a long and laborious training in order to become a priest. It is part of the Catholic indoctrination that personal liberty exists only as a natural force or power which must be sacrificed altogether "for the good of the Church". No man will be ordained a priest unless he is willing to subordinate all his personal liberty and individuality of conscience to the requirements of Ecclesiastical Authority. It is quite certain that when I was ordained at the age of twenty-six, I cannot have manifested any rebellious or heretical tendencies. If any such tendencies had at that time existed, they would have been observed, reported to my bishop, who would then have refused to ordain such a doubtful candidate. In actual fact, serious doubts about the essential validity of the Faith did *not* begin to cause me anxiety until some ten years *after* my ordination. Nor did the doubts suddenly become overwhelming; they gradually evolved until eventually they achieved a certainty which rendered further belief impossible.

Even Roman Catholic priests are potentially free-thinkers, but very few of them permit their potential scepticism to become actual. They have been too thoroughly indoctrinated in the doctrine that to doubt the Faith is a mortal sin, and in fact the worst of all mortal sins. If a priest does manage to break away from the Church and the Faith, it must be regarded as a wonderful triumph for the power of Reason. The conversion of a priest to any genuine freedom of thought is so remarkable an achievement, that Emmett McLoughlin in his open letter to the Roman Catholic Priests of America, probably gravely underestimates the actual magnitude and difficulty of the conversion he proposes.

A priest to become free, must do much more than face the problem of earning a living. He must be able to eradicate thoughts from his mind, which might seem to have become so deeply rooted as to have become an essential part of his own personal identity. He must be able and willing to alter the entire relationship of himself to his fellow-creatures, and to the world in general. This is by no means an easy task. It might be dismissed as totally impossible, were it not for the fact that it has been achieved by some.

The few priests who have managed to become free men, will not I imagine, attribute their conversion to the scorn and contempt poured upon orthodox religion by Agnostics

and Atheists. It cannot give any pleasure to an ex-priest to manifest contempt for things revered so deeply at an earlier stage of his career. His attitude will be that of a grown-up person, who looks back with a certain wry amusement and quite a lot of sympathy to the absurd illusions of his childhood. "When I was a child, I thought as a child". Unfortunately for me, since it involved a considerable waste of one single, individual life, it took many years of adult life, and a painful conflict with a powerful human institution, to make me stop thinking as a child in matters of religion.

Now that I am a professed Freethinker, and a member of the National Secular Society, I try to think freely, and at the same time harmoniously with other Freethinkers. I have no desire to describe myself as a "reverent Agnostic" as I am now perfectly sure and certain that Christianity involves a falsification of reality which cannot be justified by any historical event or by any logical necessity. And just as I am willing to reject all forms of Christianity, so I am equally willing to reject all forms of religious orthodoxy, whatever the label may be.

I am not, however, prepared to assert that there is nothing in reality corresponding to the concept of First Cause or Universal Creator neither good nor bad to individual creatures but absolutely and eternally necessary to cosmic evolution. For this reason I am not prepared to call myself an Atheist. A last vestige of Theistic piety prevents me from saying definitely and positively that there is no God. I am none the less, a Freethinker now. I am quite sure that if God does exist, God derives far more pleasure from reading THE FREETHINKER, than from any amount of the so-called "Worship of God" that must be an infinite and eternal bore both to creatures and to the Creator.

God we are sometimes told by religious people, helps those who help themselves. If this is so, then I am sure that God will help Freethinkers who are willing to think freely to avoid the dangers of error that lie inherent in all contemporary modes of thought, whether they are called religious, political, artistic, scientific, or what you will.

## Culbert L. Olson

By HUGH ROBERT ORR

(Editor, *Progressive World*)

THE HONORABLE Culbert L. Olson former Governor of California and for the past five years President of the United Secularists of America, died in Los Angeles on April 13th after several months of failing health complicated by an attack of pneumonia. Born November 7th, 1876, in Utah on the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, he was 85 years of age at the time of his death.

The boy Culbert spent his early years on a farm. At 14 he became a telegrapher, and at 20 he held the city editorship of the *Daily Ogden Standard*. While still a young man he went to Washington, DC, as a newspaper correspondent and congressional secretary. He received his education in the profession of the law at Michigan and George Washington Universities and was a practising attorney in Salt Lake City from 1901 to 1920.

In 1905 he married Kate Jeremy of Salt Lake City, whose death during the first year of his governorship of

California was an irremediable blow to him and his family.

After serving his native state as senator, Mr. Olson moved to California where he continued the practice of law and was a leader in the state and national activities of the Democratic party. In 1934 he was elected state senator from Los Angeles, and five years later he defeated Governor Frank F. Merriam and became the first Democrat over a period of 44 years to occupy the Governor's chair in California.

Throughout his political career Olson was a social progressive and a strong New Dealer. One of his first outstanding acts as governor was to pardon Tom Mooney after a long study of the case in which he became convinced of Mooney's innocence. Always a champion of social justice he fought for the rights of the working people. With the general welfare of all citizens foremost in his program he defended their interests against the huge oil companies in the government suits for oil royalties. He supported the Central Valley Project, public power development, the Workmen's Compensation Act, old age pensions, and compulsory health insurance, which was the main plant in his 1938 gubernatorial platform.

After retiring from public office, Olson continued participation in political affairs by his many public addresses and his writing. In his later years he read widely in the fields of science and philosophy and was courageously outspoken as an atheistic humanist, writing frequently for the *Progressive World* magazine, and unhesitatingly presenting his atheistic views on TV programs. Elected President of the United Secularists of America in 1957, an office he held up to the time of his death, he devoted his full time and gave generously of his means to the promotion of *Progressive World* and the advancement of the secularist cause.

Any man with the progressive views, the humanitarian aims, and the moral courage of Culbert L. Olson will be sure to face strong opposition on some sectors, and in spite of (even because of) his aggressive stand for the general welfare Olson was not without political enemies. But it is interesting to note that those newspapers that vigorously attacked him on political issues during his political career joined with the nation-wide press in generous tributes to him as a man of honor, justice, and ethical ideals.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### RELIGION AND SEX

I am sorry to see that the National Secular Society is issuing a pamphlet in which it is stated: "Most of us today are inclined to treat sex as a great joke". I don't think that this is the attitude of most people, but in any case it is a degrading conception of one of the most important motivating forces in life. The Victorian attitude of the unmentionableness of sex was certainly not healthy, but I am doubtful whether those who treat sex "as a great joke" have a much healthier outlook. It is true that your leaflet-to-be does say that sex has "a serious side as well". I am afraid, though, that the sentence to which I draw attention cannot be easily offset. I hope that before its publication as a leaflet the "great joke" remark will have been modified, or cut out.

G. I. BENNETT.

### "HUMANITY'S COMING OF AGE"

May I congratulate G. I. Bennett on his article "Humanity's Coming of Age" in *THE FREETHINKER* (22/6/62) in which he castigates atheists of the narrow school and appeals for more concern amongst unbelievers for matters other than religion? Personally I had a past in religion and although I have now freed myself from its shackles I still have regard for friends who are believers and a certain amount of respect for all-embracing theological systems. I now happen to consider such systems neither ultimately meaningful nor true, so I turn my attention to other

human concerns and when things look black or I think I'm getting too concerned over human existence I contemplate the vastness of time and space, much to my comfort.

I suppose I need hardly add that Spinoza is my favourite philosopher.

WALTER DYTE.

I strongly protest against the allocation of *FREETHINKER* space to Mr. G. I. Bennett, the thinly disguised Christian who endeavours to spike atheist guns.

He discourages us from beating the drums of anti-clericalism or atheism; *in order to give priests a clear field.*

He is not worried about the hold religion has on people's minds. *No one would expect a Christian to be.*

Why should we try to bring people to an untheistic frame of mind? Let them find their own way to emancipation from theology. *Don't hinder the priests.*

We should not interfere with a man's personal beliefs and contentment of mind. Who are we (*Freethinkers*) to tell him what to think?

The statement that the human species is the only one endowed (*by whom?*) with moral sense needs challenging. T. H. Huxley once said that he would rather be descended from a valiant ape than from a bishop who obscured the truth. That was before Mr. Bennett's time.

W. E. HUXLEY.

### SHORT STATEMENTS ON TOPICAL PROBLEMS

I am pleased to note the careful reading that readers of *THE FREETHINKER* are giving to the short statements on topical problems that are now appearing and for which I am responsible. It is, of course, extremely important that these be both accurate and readable — not always easy, as simplification readily leads to error.

I am extremely grateful to Professor Arnstein for pointing out that one section of the 1888 act, which allowed general affirmation, merely recapitulated another in an act of 1869. At the risk of becoming more "pedantic" perhaps I should observe that the acts above are in fact known as the *Oaths Act* and *Evidence Further Amendment Act* respectively.

As to Mr. Ebury's former objection to part of the statement on the Catholic Church, let me take this opportunity of saying that I still believe that the Vatican has come to terms with the Communist governments of Eastern Europe, whatever certain Catholic journals of the West may say about the hierarchies in these countries (which have never been excommunicated.) But as the situation lacks clear documentation, I agree that it is probably better to omit this sentence.

D. H. TRIBE.

### OBITUARY

The death of Wallace Owen on June 20th, was a terrible blow to his many Freethinking friends. And they were many. He served his apprenticeship to the movement in which his parents were active, on Clydeside. Later, in Manchester he founded the Manchester Humanist Fellowship and was its Secretary until business affairs took him to Anglesey and he was elected President. He was also a member of the National Secular Society and the Rationalist Press Association.

Like many others, I recall the delightful and stimulating times spent in the company of Wallace Owen and his wife. His knowledge was wide, his interests boundless and both were illuminated by his Freethought. I am a Freethinker in everything, he used to say.

His old friend and Treasurer of the Manchester Humanist Fellowship, Mr. Emmanuel Goodman conducted a secular service at Colwyn Bay Crematorium on June 23rd.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Owen and her family.

C. McC.

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