

# The Freethinker

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AUGUST 15TH, 1962, was a momentous date in scientific annals, for the two Russian astronauts, Colonel Popovitch and Major Nicolayev, completed what is probably to date, the most daring, as well as important aerial achievement yet performed by human beings in outer space. However, the precise date on which the two astronauts returned to our planetary surface, was apposite as well as intriguing, for August 15th is the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who traditionally ascended bodily into the heavens at some date that we may reverently assume to have been round about 45 AD, soon after her divine son Jesus Christ, had initially (if we may also reverently say) blazoned the trail across the skies. Upon Ascension Day, as the BBC continually reminds us in this still Christian land, Jesus Christ was "taken up".

## Our Celestial Visitors 1531-1933

However, whilst Our Lord appears to prefer Heaven as his permanent residence, His Blessed Mother, now promoted to the elevated rank of Queen of Heaven, continues today as for many centuries past, to pay periodic visits to this planet and to its unworthy inhabitants here below. The Virgin who "went up" on August 15th, 45 AD, has since come backwards and forwards so many times, particularly it would appear in recent centuries, that (again speaking with the utmost reverence), it would almost seem that did she not, so to speak (yet more reverently) sail under her own steam, one might almost imagine that she had taken a celestial return ticket. However, the all-wise Mother of God does nothing without good and sufficient reason. Why precisely she found it necessary to pay our earth so many visits in this present century of grace and of confusion, is related with all the appropriate factual detail that the greatest sceptic could possibly require in a recent volume. This enthralling narrative of Our Lady's recurring peregrinations to and from this earth from 1531 to 1917, from Guadalupe in Mexico to Fatima in Portugal, is unfolded in this important and recently published volume strikingly and significantly entitled: *Mary versus Lucifer*, "The Apparitions of Our Lady, 1531-1933", Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1960, the work of an American Catholic historian, Father John Ireland Gallery, and the fundamental accuracy—as well as Catholic orthodoxy—of which is surely guaranteed by the ecclesiastical *imprimatur* on the title-page. This guarantees on the authority of the Infallible Church, that the often (to an unbeliever at least) startling facts presented in Father Gallery's comprehensive narrative are not only theologically orthodox, but are equally historically accurate. In fact, so exhaustive and intimate is the knowledge therein displayed of the Virgin's celestial space travels, that only the exact times of her arrival and departure are missing. As the professional advertisers would no doubt phrase it, no one interested in celestial space travel between 1531 and 1933 can possibly afford to be without this priceless narrative. Certainly not those ever-

ardent seekers after truth, both religious and scientific, who read THE FREETHINKER.

## Mary versus Lucifer—and Communism

In view of the copious details which eager readers will find so abundantly set out in our author's heavily documented pages recording a score or so of the Virgin's successive appearances, it is unnecessary to describe our Lady's appearances in places as far apart as Lourdes, Fatima and Guadalupe (the American equivalent of Lourdes and Fatima). In special relation to space travel, it is worthy of note that Our Lady of Loretto is nowadays the Patroness of aviators. What is probably more important, is the

*raison d'être* common to them all. Why did and does still, the Mother of God quit the love of her divine Son and of the Holy Ghost, the adoration of the holy angels and the ineffable joys of Paradise, merely to visit us poor mortals here below? This important question surely deserves an answer, and our expert in Mariolatry is not backward in supplying it. The Virgin comes down to earth solely in order to save mankind from Lucifer, the arch-demon, here regarded as synonymous with Satan. This foul fiend, the dragon recorded by the inspired writer of the Apocalypse, has of course been actively seeking the destruction of human souls since times long anterior to 1531, and Our Lady's first visitation to earth (at Guadalupe) recorded in this book. In fact Lucifer has been prowling around virtually non-stop since that now distant day when (in the form of the famous serpent) he first tempted humanity in the person of Eve to fall from primeval grace and thus indelibly contract the stain of original sin. As Pope Pius IX did not fail to point out (in 1854) when he proclaimed the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception—which proclaimed Mary to be forever free from the primeval taint of original sin that all mortals otherwise inherit from the Fall—and as Father Gallery does not hesitate to point out, since Mary is the second Eve (as her son is the second Adam) she is primarily interested in destroying the fell reign of Lucifer over mankind. And her successive descents to earth were not and are not, intended as feats of pure science or of pioneer space travel in anticipation of Messrs. Gagarin *et seq.*, but are solely intended to save the human race from Hell—upon which, in Father Gallery's opinion it is presently hell-bent.

## The Virgin versus Khrushchev

However, Lucifer has his earthly agents and antitypes, and the special reason we learn for the Virgin's peculiar solicitude since her 1917 trip to Fatima (which our author agrees with me in apparently regarding as her most significant visit to earth in recent years) is that Lucifer has since that date got hold of a formidable ally—in fact, quite the most useful he has ever been able to get hold of since the Fall itself—"Godless Bolshevism, Atheistic Communism", which today threatens humanity—and incidentally God's and Father Gallery's own country, USA

## —VIEWS and OPINIONS—

# Mary versus Lucifer

By F. A. RIDLEY

—with both imminent physical and spiritual destruction. This is the real Lucifer of our times, and the reason why the Virgin comes to visit us in this 20th century, she herself proclaimed at Fatima when she told the three children (according to their last survivor, Lucy dos Santos) “heed my words, or Russia will spread her errors throughout the world”. (My italics F.A.R.)

The Virgin spoke the above weighty words at Fatima in 1917, the year of the Russian Revolution, the year which saw the inauguration of “Atheistic Communism” as a world-force (as Fr. Gallery does not fail to remind us): the very year when the most formidably effective reincarnation of Lucifer that there has ever been from the current point of view of the Roman Catholic Church, made its appearance on this earth. In 1962, Lucifer is, no doubt, reincarnated as Mr. Khrushchev. When the Virgin orig-

inally “went up” on August 15th so many centuries ago, no doubt she foresaw that, on this self-same date, Lucifer Khrushchev—via the agency of his satanically inspired Russian spacemen—would complete yet another stage in overthrowing the Kingdom of Christ upon earth. Since the American spacemen cannot equal this feat, the only hope of America (and the free world) lies in the divine assistance of the greatest of all space travellers, the Queen of Heaven herself, who will effectively preserve Christian civilisation from Lucifer and from his modern Russian agents.

For, as Father Gallery begins his book by reminding us, did not the holy St. Grignon de Montfort once inform us: “God has set an enmity between Mary and the devil: the power of Mary over all the devils will especially shine forth in the latter times”. You have been warned!

## Secular Marriage

H. J. BLACKHAM

THEIR WEDDING DAY is red-lettered in the memories of most people, and there is a normal anxiety to anticipate this by providing an occasion worthy of remembrance. The festival, if there is to be one, is in the hands of the families concerned, but the ceremony itself, and there has to be one, is not in their hands. In this country, those who hold secular opinions have to be married in a Register Office (though the Conway Hall, London, is licensed for marriages) unless they are willing to go through a service in the Parish Church, and the incumbent consents. There may be a pull on the part of relatives, or perhaps the bride, to resort to the C of E, because it is assumed that a Register Office means a crude performance in crude surroundings, which will be endured with shame and remembered with disgust. This assumption may not have been far from the truth a generation ago, when far fewer marriages took place in the Register Office and when bumbledom might still be hardly a caricature.

If this assumption had present justification, the humanist movement would have to do something about it. Recently, the Humanist Council initiated an inquiry through its three constituents, asking members to investigate and report on local arrangements for Register Office marriages. Reports received made a sample which included Scotland and Wales, London boroughs and county towns, country places and provincial cities. This was a fairly representative sample. The evidence provided was conclusive. Only one report was unfavourable; this was indeed a case that had been endured with shame and remembered with disgust: and it took place in a country district. For the rest, there were only one or two places where the arrangements were reported as not more than satisfactory: nearly all the reports were highly favourable.

It is clear that there have been great improvements in the last ten years, and that most authorities now make a point of meeting the public need in an imaginative way. That is to say, special rooms are usually provided, with a fresh and suitable decor; there are flowers, perhaps from the parks; there may be paintings on the walls from the art gallery; there are seats for friends and relations; the registrar officiates with simplicity and dignity. Birmingham city council leads the way: a Hall of Marriage is designed as part of the new civic centre, at a cost of £52,756. The Soviet Union hardly does better.

The Humanist Council is grateful to those who took the trouble to investigate and report. There are signs that the authorities appreciate interest in what they are doing, and will be encouraged to do better. Humanist Groups should test this for themselves.

## Rationalism in New Zealand

WE ARE pleased to learn from the report of the New Zealand Rationalist Association Inc., that a “realistic evaluation of the year now under review, discloses that the future of organised Rationalism in New Zealand is most promising, providing a prudent financial policy is maintained”. The bi-monthly journal, *The New Zealand Rationalist* (in whose July-August issue the report appears) is the main tie for the widespread membership, and it is regrettable that it should have been the “vehicle for a somewhat dubious experiment” involving change of name and policy (referred to in THE FREETHINKER, 11/8/61).

However, the Association’s members elected a new council, “which promptly acted and reverted the journal to the original title and content”. The Editorial Board has managed (with the printer’s co-operation) to keep down costs yet introduce photo plates on the covers, resulting in increased sales, and it has been justly and widely applauded. As the report says, “It behoves the membership to be zealous in seeing that a high standard is maintained and that the journal continues as the voice of Rationalism”.

Our own congratulations go to the President, Mr. A. Patrick Campbell, Vice-Presidents Messrs. W. Nelson and J. Trower, Hon. Secretary Mr. James O. Hanlon (who also edits the *Rationalist*), and their Council, who were responsible for saving the Association and its journal. We were particularly happy to note that our good friend Wallace Nelson has been granted life membership. Maintenance of that “prudent financial policy” is largely in his safe hands.

## R.I. for Astronauts

ACCORDING TO the *Irish Weekly* (1/8/62), the Vatican City newspaper, *Osservatore Romano* was upset by reports that on Moscow TV, the Soviet astronauts, Popovitch and Nicolayev had replied “no”, to an old woman who asked them whether they had “met God”. “The true God, the one people believe in, travels at greatly reduced speed”, they were quoted as saying. Finding this “discomfortingly puerile and impious”, “incredibly uneducated”, *Osservatore Romano* proceeded to educate the astronauts. They met God, “sensible and providential”, it told them, “in the perfection of the laws regulating the universe and permitting men to foresee every action and reaction. They met Him in the retransmitted voices of men who surrounded their attempt with brotherhood, help and sympathy”. And, “They met Him in the unforgettable echo of august words” by the Pope “which recalled the divine value of reason and the eternal purpose of science”.

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# "America's" Jesuits and Anti-Semitism

By COLIN McCALL

WHEN, IN JUNE THIS YEAR, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the school prayer of the New York State Board of Regents was unconstitutional, President Kennedy urged support for the decision. But Cardinal Spellman of New York declared himself "shocked and frightened". It struck, he said, "at the very heart of the godly tradition in which America's children have for so long been raised". And Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles called it, "positively shocking and scandalising to one of American blood and principles". It "puts shame on our faces", he added, "as we are forced to emulate Mr. Khrushchev".

The decision was, in fact (as American Professor Walter L. Arnstein remarked in these pages, July 13th) "a bold reaffirmation of the traditional American doctrine of separation of church and state". The shock registered by the Cardinals was not to American, but to Catholic tradition: it was a severe set-back to Catholic aspirations in the USA. Not surprising, then, that the Jesuit magazine, *America*, should provide another seismograph; that it should search out a prayer of George Washington and comment in its best satiric vein: "Carbon copy to the American Civil Liberties Union. They'll know how to put a stop to that sort of thing". Or, in announcing the appointment of John A. Hardon, SJ, to the faculty of Western Michigan University as a paid professor of religion, again refer to the ruling, and add: "The hysterical fringe of militant secularists will register their usual vitriolic indignation in letters-to-the-editor pages of our popular journals".

Both these examples occurred in the September 1st issue of the misleadingly-named Jesuit weekly. It also contained an editorial, "To Our Jewish Friends", which has been justifiably criticised by the liberal—and lay—Roman Catholic weekly, *Commonweal* (September 7th)<sup>1</sup>, and which deserves a little closer attention.

Since June 25th (the date of the Supreme Court's decision), says *America*, "there have been disturbing hints of heightened anti-Semitic feeling". And, though ostensibly a plea for moderation, the editorial was in truth a warning to Jewish and other groups who support church-state separation. We should recognise, it said, with an air of magnanimity, "that full responsibility for the decision in *Engel v. Vitale* [the case in question] is not to be pinned on the Jewish community".

A wide variety of groups were active in the effort to outlaw the 22-word<sup>2</sup> Regents' prayer. Along with that well-publicised Jewish spokesman, Leo Pfeffer, and such organisations as the American Jewish Congress, responsibility for the concerted opposition to the New York prayer—and to other forms of religious practice in the public schools and in public life—belongs to the American Civil Liberties Union, the Ethical Culture Society, the Humanist associations, some Unitarians, many atheists and certain other groups with doctrinaire views on the meaning and application of the principle of separation of Church and State.

Disturbed by the "widespread public ground swell of protest", *America* continued, "certain spokesmen and leaders in the Jewish community have now formulated

plans to counteract the wave of shock and confusion that resulted from the prayer decision. Thus, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis are now taking definite steps to consolidate, in the face of this widespread opposition, the 'gains' which were made through the *Engel* decision for what they call 'fundamental American traditions of religious liberty and freedom of conscience'."

It will be noticed how those shocks keep recurring! And "what they call" is choice, after the comments of Cardinals Spellman and McIntyre quoted earlier. But *America* tried to show that it is a small group of fanatics (see "absolutistic" reference later) who have made the "gains" against "widespread opposition", and whose "long-range objective" is to create a "climate of opinion" in which "the court can more readily continue to make decisions in consonance with the principle of separation of Church and State as that principle has been interpreted in absolutistic terms by Leo Pfeffer, by the American Jewish Congress and by the Supreme Court in the *McCollum* case of 1948".

These Jewish agencies [it continued] make no secret of their view that "a favourable climate of opinion" will help stop legislation providing grants or loans to church-related institutions of higher learning. Such a "climate" is also seen as favouring the passage of bills that would provide Federal aid to public but not to parochial schools. Finally, as these Jewish leaders point out, the growth of public sentiment favourable to the prayer decision will have a helpful impact on a whole range of what are described as Church-State issues—birth control, Sunday-closing laws, censorship and child adoption. Thus, we see that intense efforts are being made in some Jewish quarters to close ranks and to exploit all the resources of group awareness, purposefulness and expertise that are to be found in the Jewish community.

"It would be most unfortunate", said *America*, "if the entire Jewish community were to be blamed for the unrelenting pressure tactics of a very small but overly vocal segment within it". "Responsible" Jewish spokesmen should therefore make it known that "the all-out campaign to secularise the public schools and public life from top to bottom, as that campaign is conceived and implemented by Mr. Pfeffer and a few Jewish organisations, does not genuinely represent the ideas of the whole Jewish community". "What will have been accomplished", the Jesuit weekly asked, "if our Jewish friends win all the legal immunities they seek, but thereby paint themselves into a corner of social and cultural alienation?"

*Commonweal* is surely right to find this a "very odd" way of combatting anti-Semitism. "If there is any real danger of anti-Semitism among Catholics", it argued, "then it is Catholics who ought to be warned. Indeed 'warned' is too mild a word: they ought to be told as sharply as possible of the sin of any form of anti-Semitism". And I think I have quoted enough to show that the *America* editorial was essentially a warning to expect, if not a threat to exploit, anti-Semitism if Catholics aims are thwarted. For it is, significantly, the Roman Catholic Church that has been strongest in denunciation of the Supreme Court's decision. Not that the particular decision affected the Catholic parochial schools. It ruled purely on the public (or state) schools. But it was a precedent that boded ill for many of the unconstitutional "gains" made by the Catholics in the educational field.

*America* realises, like Cardinals Spellman and McIntyre, that non-Catholics in the United States are at last awaken-

<sup>1</sup> It is worth recalling, as Paul Blanshard has lately done (*Freedom and Catholic Power in Spain and Portugal*), that *America* and *Commonweal* took opposing sides in the Spanish Civil War. The former was pro- and the latter anti-Franco. Roosevelt, afraid of the Catholic vote, followed *America's* line and refused to lift the embargo on arms to the Spanish Republic, thereby virtually sealing its fate.  
<sup>2</sup> Much has been made of the shortness of the Regents' Prayer. As if the number of words affects its unconstitutionality.

(Concluded on next page)

## This Believing World

In his weekly sermonette in the "Daily Mail" the other Saturday, the Rev. Hugh Redwood quoted the epistle Paul wrote to Timothy—"Lay hold on eternal life", as if it could be done by merely saying it. About the only people who really follow advice of this sort are Spiritualists, all of whom appear to believe that a "medium" proves that there is such a thing as "eternal life".

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Incidentally, Paul turned up at one of the BBC's most interesting science talks—on computers and what they can do. It was an astonishing revelation, a good deal of "science fiction" seeming almost naive and infantile before the marvellous results now being achieved by these "thinking" machines. A computer was given the problem as to whether Paul really wrote the thirteen or fourteen Epistles in the New Testament under his name.

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The computer tackled it by noting the more persistent similarities of style in the Epistles, and came to the conclusion that only Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, had these characteristics. All the others were therefore written by other people. These conclusions are, however, exactly the same as those reached by the Tübingen school in Germany over one hundred years ago on precisely the same grounds, and they have been accepted by most liberal theologians ever since. Query—will computers ever solve the Shakespeare problem by telling us once for all who really wrote the plays?

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A proposal that there should be a TV show for children on Sunday mornings has horrified priests and parsons. They realise it would almost wipe out "family" church services and, if there is one thing they cannot stand, it is competition. According to the *Sunday Express* (August 19th) an ATV spokesman said that though "the series was not a religious one, the aim was to encourage children to look at the world in a Christian way". What exactly this means is by no means clear. What about the other religions—does a Buddhist look at the world in a Buddhist way, or a Voodooist in a Voodoo way?

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In any case, what our religious leaders complain about is that the show will keep families away from church, and that is of course quite true. So the ATV spokesman added that "a board of Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Free Church representatives were advising on the series". This kind of thing has become so ingrained that it is almost impossible nowadays to get a school book or an encyclopedia which has not been piously vetted. And of the three representatives, who has the last say? Need we ask?

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The BBC, curiously enough, did not vet an observation made by the famous comedian, Charlie Chester, when interviewed recently by Roy Plumley on the programme "Desert Island Discs". He was asked what book he would like to take with him on his desert island, and he regretted he could not take Omar Khayyam, "the greatest atheist philosopher-poet that ever lived" because he knew most of his poetry by heart. Incidentally, he mentioned the *Forsyte Saga* by John Galsworthy as a book he would like to take instead. This is very interesting, for Galsworthy has always been attacked for having left out religion from this work, though it dealt so vividly with late Victorian times when religion was a "must" for our middle classes. In actual fact, Galsworthy himself rejected Christianity.

Lovers of classical long-playing records will no doubt be pleased to learn that they can get "Hot-Gospel" records to supplement the gospel singers now playing at the London Criterion Theatre in *Black Nativity*. They, at least, resent any "rationalising" of the Bible story; and one of them, Miss Marion Williams, as the *Daily Mail* tells us (25/8/62), "won't sing anything but gospel". She claims "that God wouldn't like it", and neither would her mother. "Many American singers", comments the *Daily Mail*, "take the Bible very personally", which is a fact. There is nothing so silly in God's Word which they don't swallow literally.

### "AMERICA'S" JESUITS AND ANTI-SEMITISM

(Concluded from page 291)

ing to the Catholic menace to education, and to the whole principle of church-state separation. No longer is it only Freethinkers who oppose the Roman Church. It is now being openly challenged by powerful, organised groups like POAU (Protestants and Other American United for Separation of Church and State) and the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as by the Jewish groups referred to. Groups able to influence opinion at all levels from Congress down, and willing to follow the example of free-thinking Mrs. Vashti McCollum and test the American secular Constitution in the country's highest court. Americans are beginning to see that the Church of the Cardinals, the Jesuits, and of the President, is still a minority Church in the USA.

#### THEATRE

### Sean O'Casey Festival at the Mermaid

This is real O'Casey! *Red Roses for Me*, the second of the three festival plays at the Mermaid Theatre, London, more than makes up for the disappointment of *Purple Dust*. It is beautifully acted under the direction of Julius Gellner, with a superb performance by Leonard Rossiter as the street-singing miser, Brennan o' the Moor, who steals the Blessed Virgin when she needs a wash and replaces her immaculate as ever; who wants none of his money "strolling into Peter's Pence", but safely in the vaults of the Bank of Ireland. Splendid, too, is Donal Donnelly as Ayamonn Breydon, O'Casey's hero: poor, but imaginative; painting, reading, and arguing; fighting—as his mother puts it—to "win another inch of the world's welfare"; fighting so that those who have known the emptiness of life may know its fullness.

Dublin some decades ago now, this might well be anywhere, on earth. Anywhere where there is sadness and happiness, tragedy and comedy; anywhere where there is poetry and music, anguish and love. It is indeed a microcosm of the world, brought to life by Sean O'Casey's inimitable magic. No one can compare with him in this mood, with its Catholic-Protestant antagonism and its Catholic-Protestant love; genuine human love, transcending artificial hates and giving hope—hope in this "graveyard where the dead are all above the ground". With Sean O'Casey, we hope that all mankind may yet sing and dance. And *Red Roses for Me* will especially delight Freethinkers who, like Breydon, relish Shakespeare and Haecel, and seek to solve at least some riddles of the universe. C.McC.

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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

Ilford Humanist Group (Seven King's Library), Tuesday, September 18th, 7.45 p.m.: F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT, "Religion and Morality".

## Notes and News

WE ALL have our moments of impatience and dissatisfaction at the apparently slow rate of progress of freethought and secularism. Yet we should not forget that we are living through the greatest secular revolution of all time. Christianity, though volubly aggressive, is in fact in retreat. Priests, parsons and congregations are deficient in both quantity and quality. And we have just read in *The Montreal Star* (27/8/62) that "The governing assembly of the Anglican Church of Canada resumed debate today amid recurring reminders that decisions on internal church affairs must be geared to the needs of the secular world". Wouldn't the pioneers have been cheered by that! It should encourage us, too, but not make us complacent.

ON PAGE 291, Colin McCall refers briefly to President Roosevelt's refusal to lift the embargo on arms to the Spanish Republic in 1938, for fear of the Catholic vote. Here is the relevant excerpt from *The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes* (Simon & Schuster, 1953, vol. II, p. 390): "He [Roosevelt] said frankly that to raise the embargo would mean the loss of every Catholic vote next fall . . . This proves up to the hilt what so many people have been saying, namely, that the Catholic minorities in Great Britain and America have been dictating the international policy with respect to Spain". The Secretary of State, Cordell Hull had approved lifting the embargo; Catholics like Joseph P. Kennedy (President Kennedy's father, then American Ambassador in London) protested; Roosevelt told Hull to delay; then the decision to lift the embargo was reversed.

PAUL BLANSHARD recalls these crucial facts in his new book, *Freedom and Catholic Power in Spain and Portugal* (soon to be reviewed). He also cites the Jesuit magazine *America* for August 20th, 1938. "Lift the Spanish embargo", it said, "and the United States is on the sure road to war. Let us keep out of Spain! Let us refuse to make bloody dollars through munitions profits . . . Lift the embargo and this country becomes an ally of Communism abroad and a tool of Communism here at home". It should be noted, says Mr. Blanshard, "that *America* took exactly the opposite line about intervention and aid to Spain when Franco came into power". No need, fortunately, to send a carbon copy to the American Civil Liberties Union!

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PRINCE STANISLAUS RADZIWILL and his wife, Lee, who is Mrs. Kennedy's sister, have a marriage problem (*Daily Herald*, 28/8/62). They want the Vatican Tribunal to annul three previous marriages (two of the Prince's and one of his wife's), so that they may marry in a Catholic Church and please the Prince's father, who is a devout Catholic.

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WHO WOULD have believed, asked Roman Catholic Archbishop Heenan of Liverpool, in a pastoral letter, "that within a few months the Queen, the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, would all visit the Vatican?" (*News of the World*, 2/9/62). Christians today, he pointed out, are more concerned to stress what unites them than what divides them. "They respect those who conscientiously hold other doctrines". Intolerance is to be one of the subjects discussed at the Ecumenical Council next month and Dr. Heenan tells us, "We may be quite sure that intolerance will not be allowed to masquerade under the banner of the Catholic Church". May we?

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"A BOY or girl leaving school should have acquired the habit of saying: 'I read or looked and listened, but was I conquered?' Did I look carefully at the argument?" This advice to the young came from Cardinal Godfrey, of all people, when opening the Cardinal Newman School at Bath. The voice of "a rather noisy minority", the Cardinal added with unconscious irony, "can easily deceive those who do not think" (*The Faith*, September, 1962), and "Unless our mind has gathered together what we have learned, and pondered on it, examined it with a critical eye, we cannot claim to be educated".

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JOHN PEEL, BA, Staff Tutor in Sociology to the University of Sheffield Department of Extramural Studies (St. John's, Crookes Valley Road, Sheffield 10) is engaged on a history of the birth control movement in this country. Mr. Peel, who was a founder member of Leeds University Union Secular Society, tells us: "I have been unable to trace, in any library, copies of the Malthusian League Annual Reports for the years 1879-1904". Can any reader help him?

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THE DOWNS CREMATORIUM, Brighton, recently withdrew hymn sheets which had been purchased from the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, after it had received complaints from mourners (*Daily Sketch*, 23/8/62). A full page advertisement for five shilling courses in 24 Scottish reels was the cause of the trouble. It was printed on the back of the 23rd Psalm. "It does seem an unusual advertisement", said a Brighton SPCK official. "We do not print the sheets".

## Tricking a Scientist (2)

By H. CUTNER

WHETHER MATERIALISING "Katie King" proved too much in the ultimate for Florence Cook or not, the "materialisations" came to an end when she got married without any publicity in May, 1874, and subsequent sittings produced only "spirit faces" in her own home in Hackney. The obvious fraud was that so many people, including many prominent Spiritualists whose names are duly recorded in Mr. Trevor Hall's well documented work, were quite convinced that Florrie and Katie were exactly alike in features. When Katie appeared, a bundle of clothes made up to represent the medium could often be seen in the medium's cabinet, but it was not easy to change one's face. So Katie said good-bye to everybody including the infatuated William Crookes.

I use the word "infatuated" deliberately, for Mr. Hall produces some astounding facts about Florence's love life. In fact, after her death, one of her lovers disclosed his "affair" with Florence to both Dr. E. J. Dingwell and Mrs. K. M. Goldney (both prominent members of the Society for Psychical Research) and full particulars are given in *The Spiritualists* (Duckworth, 1962, 21s.). The reader will not, I hope, be too surprised that the question of money also played a big part in the swindle. The man with the money was a Mr. Charles Blackburn who helped Florence quite early in her career, at first with plenty, for he was a thorough believer in Spiritualism. But he later realised that she was an utter fraud, and left nothing to her in his will.

But did Florence Cook become at any time Crookes's mistress? Mr. Hall gives us all the salient facts gathered with great care, as well as some speculations. The reader with these before him must decide for himself. If an affair between them really occurred, we can quite understand why Crookes became such a champion, not only of Florence in particular, but of Spiritualism in general. And she certainly lost his favours when the news of her marriage leaked out.

In the meantime, Florence's sister, Kate Selina Cook, became a medium though, not having an eminent scientist to boost her, she remained very nearly unknown. But Mr. Hall thinks "her life and mediumship are, however, of great interest and importance to the student of the 'golden age' of Spiritualism in the latter part of the nineteenth century for . . . Kate was extremely successful" in one aim. This was "the extraction of money and property on a substantial scale from the wealthy Charles Blackburn".

As far as mediumship is considered, Kate "showed no originality whatever in the alleged phenomena she produced . . . content that the development of her mediumship should follow that of her famous sister in all details". Kate "materialised" a spirit form called "Lillie Gordon", but later Lillie preferred to produce "spirit writings" rather than appear in person. One of Kate's sitters was a Dutchman, Mr. Rosevelt, who wanted to see some of his relatives "materialised". Instead, Lillie gave him a letter in her own "spirit" writing (which Mr. Hall reproduces) and Mr. Rosevelt "was both convinced and grateful". In fact, he thanked the Almighty, for this proof of "an existence of man beyond the grave".

Charles Blackburn's considerable wealth was shared by the Cook family after his death, and a great deal of this was due to his attachment to Lillie, in whom he had the utmost belief. The real truth is that he was bamboozled almost as much as was Mrs. Lyon when she was cleverly

wheedled out of a sum of £30,000 by the "Immaculate Medium" D. D. Home—who, in a court of law, had later to repay it, the judge calling Spiritualism "mischievous nonsense", and characterising Home's "gifts" as "fraudulent and void".

In fairness to the Cook family, it is recorded that they were "to the last kind and attentive" to Blackburn. But of course that can be understood if they hoped to receive thousands of pounds in return. Mr. Hall adds that they "settled down to enjoy the results of their work" for "they had been extremely successful". Actually, it was Kate Cook who benefited most, for Florrie "alone received nothing and died later in poverty". In fact, she told one of her lovers that her sisters Kate and Edith had "persuaded a wealthy old man named Blackburn to bequeath considerable sums of money to them by means of fraudulent Spiritualism".

In any case, Florence Cook continued to give sittings not only in England but in Berlin and Warsaw. From the particulars given of these, she must have found out how the Davenport brothers succeeded so well in their "phenomena" which depended upon escaping from being "rigorously" tied to chairs. (The exact method of doing this was revealed not only by the great J. N. Maskelyne, but even in *The Boy's Own Paper*.) In Warsaw, the investigating committee "was bitterly disappointed". Its members could hardly believe that this was the famous medium known in all Spiritualistic circles as sponsored by the great scientist, Sir William Crookes. Thus when she sat again in "spirit" circles, it made little stir.

Florence died in 1904 from pneumonia, and her husband, E. E. Corner, married her sister Kate in 1907, as this was then allowed when the Deceased Wife's Sister Act came into force. Kate died in 1925, her husband in 1927, so that it was he "who ultimately benefited financially from Spiritualism to a greater extent than either of the two mediums he married".

As Mr. Trevor Hall rightly remarks, the story of the Cook family "is a remarkable one". His book must deal a shattering blow to any Spiritualist who still fondly believes in "materialisations"—except of course to reviewers on a Spiritualist journal—like Mr. M. Barbanell, for instance, writing in *Psychic News*. Florence Cook's "materialisations" must be true, according to Mr. Barbanell, because Mr. Hall believes in the Resurrection of Jesus—though how he knows this is not quite clear. There is nothing in *The Spiritualists* about the Resurrection; but it is the kind of red herring which it is hoped will reassure those Spiritualists who have the courage to read the book—and not many of them will have.

So little impressed are mediums by the "investigators" who are supposed to see that all seances are under "the strictest scientific control", that they find they can do almost anything in the way of "apports" or "messages" from the dead" or "spirit photographs" or trumpeting "voices" or rattling tambourines or playing accordions or getting out of ropes with the utmost ease. The "investigators" are always baffled; the "phenomena" must be the work of spirits. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was even quite sure that Houdini could walk through a brick wall on a music-hall stage, because he was psychic, turning himself into a "spirit" to go through the wall, and then materialising himself back when on the other side. No wonder Doyle believed in real live fairies hopping about

in ballet clothes at the bottom of his garden. Mr. Trevor Hall helped to expose the fraud of Borley Rectory being "haunted"—though, in fairness to Spiritualists, it must be said that they still believe it was. Some of them no doubt would see the ghostly coach and horses and nuns even now if they visited the spot. There is no end to superstition and credulity when it deals in "spirits". Will *The Spiritualists* put an end to the constant appeals to great scientists made by believers as supporting the

claims of "eternal life" in a world of different "vibrations" to ours—a world into which well known people move about as they do here, and send "inspirational" messages back to our own vale of tears? Not at all. Has the exposure of the infantile nonsense about the "Assumption" of Mary, or the aerial voyage of Jesus straight up to Heaven, made any difference to our believing Christians? It is this kind of delusion which has bred our Spiritualists. (Concluded)

## What Should Children Learn at School?

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the sixth 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.

WHY DOES the country spend a lot of money on education? Why do thinking people say we ought to spend a lot more? Because they recognise the importance, not only of training in skills to earn a living, but of encouragement in social awareness, so we can all live—locally, nationally, internationally—responsibly together. By studying the past, the natural world, the arts, and other non-bread-and-butter subjects, we gain understanding of basic human problems.

Some people say religion is such a subject; and so it could be, if it were taught honestly as part of the history of ideas. Instead, under the 1944 Education Act, one brand of religion is taught, even in county schools, as if it had the same validity as mathematics or French. Yet those who draw up syllabuses in religious education know perfectly well that a large and rapidly growing proportion of scholars and ordinary people consider the claims of Christianity to be as authentic as those of astrology, black magic, or teacup reading.

The same version of the Christian religion also dominates morning assembly, which is supposed to express the school's corporate life, and at which general announcements are made. From this, as from religious education periods, teachers or pupils can be excused.

What happens in practice? Members of staff who opt out of teaching religion upset colleagues who have to deputise. For teachers, however devout, find religion the hardest subject to teach. It's in frequent conflict with science, is highly coloured by the teacher's own beliefs, and confusing to children who may be getting different versions outside school. But parents hesitate to withdraw children because they fear they will be embarrassed or victimised. Teachers or pupils who don't attend "collective worship" often miss school announcements. Teachers virtually lose all chance of promotion to headships or deputy headships.

A lot of children are educated in religious schools, whose maintenance costs are met by local authorities, and three-quarters of the buildings costs by the Exchequer. Provision of different types of schools in one community involves needless overlapping and expense. And the general public is paying for some children to get sectarian indoctrination, and even doctored versions of history and science. In heavily built-up areas it's often more inconvenient or dangerous for children to reach their denominational school than the nearest county school. Notwithstanding, the Roman Catholic Church in particular brings pressure to bear on parents to send their children to religious schools.

The National Secular Society believes that church, Sunday school, and the home afford ample provision for the teaching of religion, if parents wish, and that day school curriculum should be completely secular. It believes that moral guidance should be separated from outlandish theology.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### NSS AND ALDERMASTON

Presumably, supporters of the CND movement support it for a wide variety of different reasons arising out of their fundamental ideologies. Thus, some Christians believe that New Testament principles lead them to this conclusion and carry a banner saying so in the Aldermaston march. Secularists believe that the abolition of nuclear weapons is a step towards human happiness and well-being. They carry a banner making clear their secularist principles and, in the context of the Aldermaston march, relate these principles to a particular issue.

It is difficult to see where objection can arise. Some Christians, with characteristic intolerance, object to the secularist banner because it is secularistic. Mr. Bennett at once rushes in to defend them and once again asserts his usual position that the best way in which to propagate secularism is to say as little as possible about its major propositions and to do nothing on any occasion to offend the Christians, ethical humanists *et hoc genus*. I venture to think that few who value a secularist viewpoint will agree with him or welcome him as an ally in the common cause of freedom of thought even though he may get some support from a handful of reactionaries here and there.

As we all know by this time Mr. Bennett's attitude in these matters and as its propagation can only end by harming the humanist and secularist movement generally, may I suggest that the valuable space of THE FREETHINKER be no longer occupied with these trivial protests against offending Christians and their sympathisers? If we are led to CND by way of atheism, let us not hesitate to make clear our position upon occasions which obviously call for it.

F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT.

I absolutely agree with Mr. G. I. Bennett re the slogan on the National Secular Society banner. I work for peace with people of differing opinions in politics and religion, from all countries of the world. It is a case of dying together, or surviving together. If we survive, we can then discuss our differences.

I think the NSS should be represented at all congresses and meetings of importance alongside other human beings who want peace and disarmament and that "The National Secular Society stands for Survival" should be on its banners.

KATHLEEN TACCHI-MORRIS.

### MOSLEY, FASCISM AND CATHOLICISM

The connections between Catholicism and successful Fascist regimes are, indeed, alarmingly close, as Mr. F. A. Ridley shows. However, it would be wrong to imply that one cannot exist without the other. Resisting the temptation to argue with Mr. Ridley as to what he means by a *successful* Fascist movement, one can see some exceptions, and I would cite the pre-war Bulgarian Fascist regime in a predominantly Greek Orthodox community as well as the present administration in South Africa where I believe it is the Dutch Reform Church that represents the religious wing of the "establishment".

I think that we should look to economic causes for the growth of Fascism in different countries, and see that either or both Fascist movements and the Catholic Church can serve the same master; it is my belief that this master is capitalism, and we should not kid ourselves that because Britain is not dominated

by the Catholic Church a successful Fascist movement could never start here.

Mr. Ridley, of course, is quite right in writing that "the present and future fight against Rome is inseparable from the contemporary and future fight to preserve and to extend civil and political liberty . . .". A number of Catholics protest their abhorrence of Mosley, Jordan and company—let us apply the acid test and see if they will join in the campaign to make the preaching of racial intolerance an indictable offence without, at the same time, trying to make religious capital out of the campaign by also wanting further to curb anti-religious propaganda.

CHRISTOPHER BRUNEL.

In his letter on Freedom of Speech in THE FREETHINKER of August 31st, Mr. Amphlett Micklewright says: "On *prima facie* evidence there could have been a case for so dealing with Sir Oswald Mosley before he went to Ridley Road a few weeks ago". (i.e., binding him over as likely to cause disturbance under the *Justice of the Peace Act*, 1360.)

One wonders whether Mr. Amphlett Micklewright has ever heard Mosley speak or read any of his works. Speaking only of what I know, I have heard Sir Oswald Mosley at Alexandra Park Gates in Manchester—practically on my doorstep—three times during the last twelve months. There was no stirring up of racial hatred and no disturbance at any of the meetings. Again, only a few months ago, Mosley was advertised to speak at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester. There was the usual squawk from the local Trades Council urging the banning of the meeting, and although I am getting past political meetings at my time of life I felt that my duty as a freethinker demanded my attendance on this occasion as a gesture against the fascist-like attack on free speech by the Trades Council. The meeting was well supported and there was no disturbance.

The fact is that it is precisely because Mosley *cannot* be silenced under existing legislation that rioting has recently been organised at his meetings and additional legislation suggested.

W. E. NICHOLSON

#### RELIGION AND THE CHILD

Regarding Mr. C. H. Hammersley's letter (31/8/62), re religious instruction, I cannot help feeling that a freethinking child should be capable of holding his own, or even beating down the opposition of his Roman Catholic schoolmates.

But I would like to express my own scheme for settling the whole of the question. It is that religious education be given for a short period outside of normal school hours, and that the parents of the children attending such should be charged a daily or perhaps weekly sum for the "privilege" of doing so. Admission fees should be paid by the child on entering the room.

This would, I feel, settle the whole question of religious education in the schools. We would see how many parents really wanted their children to have it.

ALFRED R. WISE.

Because my father refused to allow me to attend assembly and religious instruction at school, I was made to stand outside the classroom door (without even a seat to sit on) for an hour or longer every morning and sometimes in an afternoon. This was normally the punishment for a particularly naughty child, and the other children looked on me as someone they should not know or play with.

In consequence I was very unhappy in the playground and out of school hours. Nevertheless I am glad I did not attend the religious classes. I grew up without the fear and superstitions that plagued the other children, and it made me realise at an early age how unkind religious people can be to those who are free from religious beliefs.

KATHLEEN TACCHI-MORRIS.

Surely the answer to Mr. Hammersley's question is that Freethinking parents should request that their children should be separated from Roman Catholic children when both are withdrawn from religious instruction?

FRANCIS SOATER.

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#### THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

In the issue of 31/8/62, two opposing ideas are expressed. In Views and Opinions is a report of proving a "spirit" to be human by scientific examination, yet in Notes and News an expedition to Loch Ness is as good as laughed at.

I am not for one moment saying that "Nessie" exists, but many people claim to have seen it and one or two claim to have taken photographs of it. This to me is possibly another case of seeing things you want to see, as in spirits, and we must do all we can to encourage scientific examination of all mysteries, spiritual or material, in an effort to find the truth.

R. J. STEVENS.

[The cases are not analogous. Something was happening at Retiyala that was causing unhappiness. Mr. Kovoov stopped the "poltergeist" with consequent benefit to the family concerned. Nothing is happening at Loch Ness—certainly nothing that is causing discomfort to anyone. Loch Ness is but one of countless lakes with their tales of monsters and the investigators are simply wasting their time. If they report nothing the "believers" will still believe.—ED.]

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