

The Freethinker

Volume LXXXIII—No. 50

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

I SUPPOSE the American magazine, *Playboy*, is noted chiefly for its "cheesecake". Even those who haven't seen it will have heard of the clubs of the same name, owned by the same man, Hugh M. Hefner, with their scantily-clad "bunnies", who are expected to entertain male customers, but not make dates. And certainly the magazine caters for the male admirer of the feminine form. It is also notable, however, for a series of outspoken articles by its Editor-Publisher, under the heading, *The Playboy Philosophy*.

Mr. Hefner makes no apologies for presenting his *Playboy* pin-ups. He recognises that it is natural for young men—or even old men—to like to look at a pretty girl, either in the flesh or in a photo. He believes it is better to acknowledge this than to deny it. Of course he approaches the matter commercially as well: he sells the young men what they want in magazine form. But he gives them something else, too. He gives them amusement, satire, a few home-truths.

Arrest

It was inevitable that Mr. Hefner, with his frank avowal of the pursuit of pleasure, should rouse the wrath of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly when he was bold enough to identify sex with pleasure. And on June 4th of this year he was arrested in his Chicago home on the charge of "publishing and distributing obscene material". But what, you may ask, has that to do with the Catholic Church? Well, during his visit to police headquarters, Mr. Hefner talked with some of the officers, one of whom informed him that the man behind the arrest was a certain Father Lawler, who "had been there often during the past few months . . . and always with copies of *Playboy*". And who, you will ask, is Father Lawler?

Father Lawler

He is head of the Chicago Citizens for Decent Literature (CDL), a Catholic organisation which, in places, poses as interdenominational and invariably, of course, declares itself to be the guardian of morals and the protector of children. In its issue of June 1st, just prior to the *Playboy* arrest, a Negro newspaper, *The New Crusader* called Father Lawler, "a one-man terror", "a veteran in campaigns to adjust folks' morals to suit his own". Other Catholic priests disagree with his tactics, said *The New Crusader*, but dare not publicly oppose him". And, it went on, "One of Lawler's recent blitzes brought tears to the eyes of many of the area's young ladies, when he inspected the dresses of all girls attending proms of Catholic high schools and colleges. If the gown was not to the priest's liking, the guest was ejected. He advocated high collars and long, Victorian-style formals". In case readers should picture the CDL priest as aged and infirm, I ought to say that he is relatively young—probably in his later thirties. If they should draw any conclusions regarding enviousness, I am afraid, however, that I shall make no effort to contradict them.

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

"Playboy" and The Catholics

By COLIN McCALL

Dr. Benjamin Karpman, Chief Psychotherapist of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC, has observed that "This interest in obscenity—pornophilia—may take another direction. It may be covered up by a reaction formation. The interest may be denied by bitter opposition to all forms of obscenity, the same as a condemnation and attack against homosexuals can cover up latent or unconscious interest in it; that is, may cover up latent homosexuality. Crusading against obscenity has an unconscious interest at its base. The interest is negatively displaced in consciousness".

Swimming Champion

And, in passing, it is worth noting a few remarks

of CDL's Chairman, Charles H. Keating, Jr., whose qualification for judging "decent" literature is that he is a former All-American Swimming champion. When testifying before a House Sub-committee on Postal Operations, Mr. Keating declared: "The rot they peddle . . . causes premarital intercourse, perversion, masturbation in boys, wantonness in girls, and weakens the morality of all it contacts . . .". To which, my only comment is that Mr. Keating seems to have a very poor opinion of his own (Catholic) moral training if he considers it inadequate to meet such a challenge. And he may be right.

In which case, one might sympathise with Catholic efforts to prevent, say, a picture of a pretty girl, reaching Catholic boys whom it might cause to masturbate, or Catholic youths whom it might drive to premarital intercourse; or, alternatively, Catholic girls whom it might make "wanton". But Father Lawler and Mr. Keating and their CDL are not content to deprive their own religionists of such "rot". Their aim is to censor the reading, and other literature of non-Catholics, too. Moreover, they and their ilk seem to have had a good deal of success. For instance, the Springfield Catholic Women, led by a Mrs. Henry Ferguson, have managed to prohibit "rot" like Nobel-prizewinner John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Erskine Caldwell's *God's Little Acre*, as well as *Playboy*.

Chicago

In Chicago, as Mr. Hefner tells us, the CDL censorship campaign "enjoys the co-operation of the Catholic-dominated Corporation Counsel's office, which is responsible to a Catholic mayor, abetted by a predominantly Catholic police force, with cases usually tried before Catholic judges". And on several occasions recently the "appropriate concerns of church and state" have "become confused" in the city. With the aid of the Corporation Counsel, the CDL has "ridden roughshod over book and magazine dealers", though fortunately the Constitutional freedom of expression seems to have reasserted itself when the cases have been brought to court. So CDL has had what Mr. Hefner calls "the frustrating experience of achieving a great many arrests and very few convictions—even in the lower courts".

The case for revocation of the liquor-licence of Alan

Ribback, a Chicago club proprietor who had engaged Lenny Bruce (the comedian who has been refused entry into Britain) was almost certainly Catholic-inspired. After the first day's hearing, *Variety* reported (as quoted by Mr. Hefner) that: "Testimony so far indicates that the prosecutor is at least equally concerned with Bruce's indictment of organised religion as he is with the more obvious sexual content of the comic's act. It's possible that Bruce's comments on the Catholic Church have hit sensitive nerves in Chicago's Catholic-oriented administration and police department".

In a second news story, the same paper said: "It's thought that Bruce's attacks on organised religion may have been the deciding factor in making the arrest, or so the line of prosecution questions would indicate to date". Chicago's daily newspapers made no reference to the religious implications of the trial, but *The Realist*, on the basis of sworn affidavits from two witnesses, published a conversation between the Captain of the Vice Squad and Mr. Ribback, who has since had to sell his interest in the club, following Lenny Bruce's arrest. It read, in part:

Captain McDermott: I'm Captain McDermott. I want to tell you that if this man ever uses a four-letter word in this club again, I'm going to pinch you and everyone in here. If he ever speaks against religion, I'm going to pinch you and everyone in here. Do you understand?

Alan Ribback: I don't have anything against any religion.
McDermott: Maybe I'm not talking to the right person.
Are you the man who hired Lenny Bruce?

Ribback: Yes, I am. I'm Alan Ribback.

McDermott: Well, I don't know why you ever hired him. You've good people here. But he mocks the pope—and I'm speaking as a Catholic. I'm here to tell you your licence is in danger. We're going to have someone here watching every show . . .

Now, we can agree that Lenny Bruce is not to everyone's taste, though we might add that most people who have condemned him have done so without hearing him. The question is, should those who don't like him prevent those who do from hearing him? And this applies to our own Home Secretary as well as a group of influential Chicago Catholics. Perhaps it is worth recording that one Catholic, Professor John Logan of the University of Notre Dame, has stated that he finds Bruce "a brilliant and inventive moralist in the great tradition of comic satire—Aristophanes, Chaucer, Joyce". "If his use of four-letter words constitutes obscenity", the Professor said, "then those satirists were also obscene".

To return to *Playboy*. By no stretch of a normal imagination could it be called obscene, but it is, as I have said—and as I think this article and the one below will show—outspoken. I sincerely hope that Mr. Hefner wins his case.

Religious Freedom in Chicago

By HUGH M. HEFNER

CHICAGO REMAINS one of the few major cities in America that is dominated by a single religious denomination—that is, where a majority of the officials in power belong to one Church and where their administrative decisions sometimes appear to be predicted more on religious dogma than civil law. We state this fact sadly, for it is also true that the present city administration is far and away the best that Chicago has had in many, many years.

In earlier instalments of the *Philosophy*, we cited, and criticised, a number of specific instances in which, it seemed to us, Chicago officialdom had been less concerned with the importance of maintaining a separate church and state than they should have been. The Chicago Censor Board, made up of the wives of policemen, denied a licence to the Italian film, *The Miracle*, on the grounds that it was "sacrilegious". (New York, another city that has a history of similar religious prejudice, did the same.) The Supreme Court declared this an unconstitutional basis for censorship, as it infringed upon religious freedom. In his decision in the *Times Film Corp. vs. Chicago*, Chief Justice Earl Warren stated, "Recently, Chicago refused to issue a permit for the exhibition of the motion picture *Anatomy of a Murder* . . . because it found the use of the words 'rape' and 'contraceptive' to be objectionable. . . . The New York censors forbade the discussion in films of pregnancy, venereal disease, eugenics, birth control, abortion, illegitimacy, prostitution, miscegenation and divorce. A member of the Chicago Censor Board explained that she rejected a film because 'it was immoral, corrupt, indecent, against my . . . religious principles'."

Following the Supreme Court's decision, Chicago censors promptly rebanned *The Miracle* on the basis that it was "obscene". (Which supports our earlier observation that the charge of obscenity is often used to censor material that offends a particular group for reasons that have nothing to do with sex, from religion to racial equality.)

And it should be noted that the word "contraceptive",

which Chicago censors wished to expunge from Otto Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder*, can be considered offensive to only that specific religious minority that opposes birth control.

Birth control became a major issue in Chicago earlier this year, after millionaire philanthropist Arnold H. Maremont had accepted a position as chairman of the Illinois Public Aid Commission. Maremont announced that the IPAC had adopted a resolution to make birth-control information and devices available to public-assistance recipients upon request and provided that the contraceptives were prescribed by a physician.

Maremont stated that the new IPAC programme would accomplish the following worthwhile ends (1) "It will give the needy the same option of determining the sizing and spacing of their families that others in our society have." (2) "It will curb the soaring numbers of illegitimate children we currently are closing our eyes to." (3) "It will produce a multi-million dollar annual savings for the tax-payers of this state."

Then the public furor began—with sides chosen along disturbingly, if predictably, religious lines. Prominent Catholics, including Chicago's Mayor Daley, denounced the plan as "immoral", because it would make the assistance available to public-aid recipients who were not married or married and not living with their husbands. The day before the mayoral election, which Daley won handily, Republican candidate Benjamin S. Adamowski made a bid for the city's Catholic vote by filing an anti-birth-control suit against the IPAC in Superior Court. The IPAC would have customarily been defended by Illinois Attorney General William G. Clark, but Clark, a Catholic, announced that he, too, was opposed to the programme. Clark stated that he considered the plan illegal and he advised the State Auditor not to sign and the State Treasurer not to honour warrants drawn to cover the costs of the birth-control programme.

(Continued on page 398)

The Philosophy of a Social Scientist

A shortened version of a talk given to the Oxford University Humanist Group

By BARBARA WOOTTON

(Baroness Wootton of Abinger)

EVERYBODY HAS to form some kind of a philosophy towards life—and this is more true of Humanists than of other people. Most of us were brought up in a conventional religious background, and if we have discarded it, we have had to do it ourselves, which probably means that Humanists are more likely to give time and thought to their attitude to life than people who are provided from childhood with a ready-made one. My talk therefore is about the kind of philosophy that I, at any rate, have worried through to—a humanist philosophy, in the sense that its scope is bounded by the birth and death of the living human being, and a philosophy orientated to the hypothesis that this is all we know, all we are ever likely to know, and all we have to cater for.

This philosophy contains two quite diverse elements. The first one is a set of moral judgments, the origin of which is quite obscure. I cannot give a rational explanation of them, nor even agree that they are independent of arbitrary assumptions. There is a point at which we all have to make such assumptions; but they are very simple and in a sense very remote. One is, for instance, that happiness is better than misery, not only for oneself but also for other people. Theoretically this assumption is shared by a very large part of our community. Further, one of the things which makes for misery most potently is the practice of classifying people by their social status—by jobs, money, parentage, beauty or brains. The kind of social structure we have, which automatically classifies people into a hierarchy is highly pernicious.

I cannot wholly accept the view (which Dr. Bronowski sometimes puts) that you can derive the whole of your ethics from science. The practice of science does involve the assumption of intellectual integrity; but I think science is completely neutral as regards kindness, generosity and charity.

Together with a belief in the dignity and worth of human life, these premises about happiness and misery and social equality are the main pointers that have given me my direction. Knowing then where I want to go, I turn to scientific methods of thought—dispassionate, careful observation, studying the consequences of our actions—to give me the actual means of travelling towards that destination. This, of course, is not the common human practice—in our personal and social relationship we mostly (even in the most sophisticated communities) live in an extraordinarily primitive phase, largely by a type of magic. We are motivated far more by a desire to give relief to our emotions than by a search for the course most likely to promote the desired result. At a very primitive level this is man's reaction to inanimate things; but we have learned the limitations of such behaviour in relation to inanimate things. The really important advance we have got to make is to apply to social and personal affairs the same kind of rational prediction on the basis of past experience as we have used in gaining our mastery over our material environment.

We are in fact just beginning to wake up to this need in some fields—those of the social sciences. Let me take an example—the different ways of dealing with criminal offenders. For a very long time we have managed to sell to ourselves the story that all you have to do is to give the offender what he deserves, according to a rough and ready tariff that is in the minds of the courts, perhaps of

the community as well; and that by this means you will achieve a lot of other ends as well—for example, you protect the public from his doing it again, you reform him, and you teach other people not to do the same thing. Recently, psychological research has shown that these ends are frequently in head-on collision; and we have to face facts and consider what our priorities are. If your priority is to reform the offender, we are beginning to get some evidence about what methods are successful. Not surprisingly, one of the results that appears is that exactly the same treatment will make some people better and other people worse, because variations in individual personality are very great. One of the worst things one can do (apparently), is to try psychological treatment on people who are resistant to it. Simply then by recording the effects of treatment we can get to a point at which we can estimate at least the probability of success or failure in different cases.

At the moment, of course, Justice is blind in more senses than one. Those who dispense sentences in court have absolutely no idea whether they are diminishing or actually encouraging crime, because they have no systematic recording of their past experience. But that is coming.

There are a great many other such examples, e.g. regarding selection by interview, where it is, of course, possible, not always to say what are the factors one should look for, but certainly to find out who are the interviewers who can do the job well by the light of nature, simply by observing whose selections achieve the desired result. Again, what about that happy hunting ground, particularly of bishops—the baneful effect of television on our morality and behaviour? We now have quite a considerable amount of evidence showing that for the most part we take it in our stride, that children are a great deal tougher than they are given credit for, that voting behaviour is virtually unaffected by party political broadcasts—in fact that the influence of television is greatly exaggerated.

What this adds up to is that you can classify the questions in life into three categories. There are those which are permanently open, those which are open but potentially can be closed because they are dependent on scientific evidence, and those which are definitely and finally closed. An example of a permanently open question is the existence of God, about which it is singularly futile to argue because there is no convincing evidence either way (except that of personal belief, which is not communicable). An example of a partially open question is the effect of cigarette smoking on health (though you may consider this is in fact closed). It is futile for anyone to speak on such matters as this without the evidence. Then there are things like the flat earth, which are generally supposed to be closed.

One of the interesting things about our community is that it tends to turn all these things upside down. The common view is to take religious questions, which by their very nature are permanently opened, as closed, especially on official occasions and on the air, when it is assumed that the dogmas of Christianity are in fact truths. The set of partially open questions contains many of the more interesting problems of human affairs—things like the effects of different forms of educational system, of different forms of treatment of criminals, etc. There is a tendency

(Concluded on page 396)

This Believing World

A collection of paintings by the great Spanish artist Goya will be on show here in London during the winter. Goya of course came more into prominence for the general public when his portrait of Wellington was stolen so easily from the National Portrait Gallery. But Goya, besides being a superb artist and etcher, was a great satirist and, above all, an anti-clerical who loathed priests and priestcraft, so much so indeed that he left Spain in his old age and died in France.

★

One of his last engravings shows a shaft of light falling on that dark spot on earth—Spain—scaring away owls and ravens—and priests! But nearly all his life he showed his supreme contempt for priests and inquisitors, satirising them unmercifully, especially in his wonderful *Proverbs*. He hated war, and exposed its horrors in paint and print.

★

Words of wisdom do not necessarily come from our Archbishops of Canterbury, but Dr. Ramsey is quoted by the *Daily Express* (November 25th) as saying, "I do not predict an actual unity between the Roman Catholic Church and other Churches for a very long time . . .". But then he softened the blow by adding, "We may see in our lifetime a change of spirit so great . . . as to make it certain". This may be so, but if there is to be "a change of spirit", it will have to come mainly from Anglicans. There will be little from Romans.

★

But of course there are some courageous Catholics who do defy their Church like, for instance, the Catholic woman doctor who "has opened a family-planning clinic" for Catholic women at Wallasey, Cheshire, defying such a celebrity as Dr. Heenan. She says she is "not worried what people are going to say" (*Daily Mail*, November 29th). But we hope she will remember that if it had not been for Freethinkers like Richard Carlile, Dr. Knowlton, Robert Dale Owen, Charles Bradlaugh, and many others, she might not have been allowed to open any clinic, to say nothing of being consigned to burn in Hell for eternity for defying the Vatican. We hope all the same that she will convert her Church.

★

Professor M. Stekelis who is head of the department of pre-history at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, supported by Professor T. V. Tobias who is the head of the department of anatomy at the University of Witwatersrand, claims that all the evidence supports the view that the earliest man "lived in South Africa 1,750,000 years ago", and "slowly emerged from Africa and camped along the Jordan ultimately reaching Java and China". If this is true, then the first chapter of the Holy Bible is unmistakably not true. However, putting the emergence of "man" as far back as 1,750,000 years ago was too much for a London *Evening News* reporter who headed the two professors' claim: "The Garden of Eden 'was in South Africa' ". The Garden of Eden must be rescued somehow.

★

Five British clergymen who recently have been working in industry "to bridge the gulf between the Church and the working world" discovered that only 2 per cent of the workers went to church. Nevertheless, the five—James Free, Adrian Tipper, Wilfred Down, Michael Kirkwood and Kenneth Barrel—considered their experiment had been a great success (*The Guardian*, December 3rd), though of "far more benefit to the Church than to the men on the shop floors", whom they found "incurious and tolerant".

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A SOCIAL SCIENTIST

(Concluded from page 395)

in our community to regard everybody's opinion on these matters, about which there is a lot of evidence, as good as everybody else's, denying the existence of any kind of expert knowledge. The difficulty is to get it established that evidence does matter in human affairs; and above all to establish that some questions pass from the stage of partially open to that of closed—e.g., any question of the inherent intellectual differences between different races is now completely closed by the many investigations that have been made. The theory that there are such differences ought definitely to go now into the flat earth category.

This then is the sort of pattern: one has some basic original motivations, and then one turns to scientific observation to see how to get to one's destination. It is basically a progress from hunch to science. Most of the important decisions we make in life at the moment we make by hunch, by which I mean a crude organisation of very limited experience which one tries to project into the future; but gradually we are moving to a more exact observation and prediction. When I once ventured to say this in a radio talk, a Cambridge don was so inflamed as to give a talk in reply, in which he said that this was all nonsense. Hunch was a sort of divine inspiration of the human species; and every human being was a unique specimen; therefore it was nonsense to talk about systematic collection of past experience and its use for prediction.

The answer to this is that it is true that every human being *is* unique; but he does not consist of a collection of unique qualities, and it is just because we share many of our qualities with one another that we *are* able to predict human behaviour.

Alternatively, it is argued against my form of philosophy that it is cold. This is, of course, nonsense. The mere fact that one takes pains to get effectively to one's destination does not mean that one does not want to get there. Nor can we say that there is anything derogatory in the hope that we shall develop scientific methods of achieving our objectives, that we shall immensely increase our power over our social environment. After all, we do invent aeroplanes to carry us a great deal faster than our legs ever would, and far from thinking this derogatory to our legs, we think it extremely flattering to our minds. I cannot see why the development of scientific, and indeed mechanical, methods of solving a great many human problems should not equally be flattering to our minds. To achieve a mastery over our social environment in anything like the measure that we have achieved the mastery of our material environment would indeed be a magnificent achievement. It is my own great hope that the second half of the twentieth century will see developments in the social sphere at least comparable to the narrowly scientific achievements of the first half of the century . . .

In the academic world it is a very good thing that the chemist and the biologist and physicist and the sociologist and the economist should understand and respect one another; but it would be an even better thing if we could feel that we are engaged in a common enterprise. Part of the philosophy of at least one social scientist is that we are, or could be, engaged in the enterprise of mobilising our magnificent mental powers towards the achievement of those rather simple human objectives which are shared by humane thinkers and constitute the basis of human morality the world over.

[Reprinted from the *Bulletin* of the University Humanist Federation.]

THE FREETHINKER

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1

TELEPHONE: HOP 2717

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One year, £1 17s. 6d.; half-year, 19s.; three months, 9s. 6d. In U.S.A. and Canada: One year, \$5.25, half-year, \$2.75; three months, \$1.40.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1. Inquiries regarding Bequests and Secular Funeral Services should also be made to the General Secretary, N.S.S.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (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. A. MILLAR.

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

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street,) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Cinema Room, Birmingham and Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, December 15th, 6.45 p.m.: T. D. SMITH, "The Story of the Heavens".

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Tuesday, December 17th, 7.30 p.m.: MRS. MARGARET ALDRIDGE, "Our Own Children as the Hope of the World".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, December 15th, 6.30 p.m.: ALDERMAN MARK HENIG, COUNCILLOR MRS. H. ROBERTS, COUNCILLOR MRS. L. M. MARRIOTT, COUNCILLOR E. MARSTON, "Any Questions—Local Affairs".

Manchester Branch NSS (Wheatsheaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, December 15th, 7.30 p.m.: A. RICHARDSON, "The New World Society".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (The Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, December 15th, 7.30 p.m.: DENIS McCONALOGUE, "Sanctity and Sanity".

North Staffordshire Humanist Group (Guildhall, High Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme), Friday, December 20th, 7.15 p.m.: A MEETING.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, December 15th, 11 a.m.: PETER BENENSON, "Religion and Tolerance".

Notes and News

ON DECEMBER 2nd, Monsignor Thomas Muldoon, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, delivered what the *Guardian* (3/12/63) called "a harsh attack" on ecumenically-minded Catholics, "who would have us fall down on our knees and ask forgiveness of the Protestants for any wrong we have done them". But Dom Christopher Butler, the Abbot of Downside, and an ex-Anglican, answered the Monsignor scornfully. "I do not know", he said, "if accurate knowledge of the sixteenth century has yet reached Australia. The facts, however, are admitted by both Catholic and Protestant historians. Acceptance by Catholics of our share in the blame would be the first step towards stimulating emulation among the separated brethren. Therefore we must accept our share in causing the separation and in prolonging it". It is, of course, highly probable that Monsignor Muldoon, like many another priest of Irish origin, has not yet been given "accurate knowledge of the sixteenth century". It is certainly most unlikely that he received it at school.

"A FEW words and cordialities" from "our separated brethren" should not be taken to mean that Christian unity was just round the corner, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds warned the Ecumenical Council on November 27th. Although the atmosphere of antagonism between Catholics and other Christians had given way to cordial relations there were still, Bishop Dwyer said, "many differences of faith and morals" blocking the road to unity (*Daily Express*, 28/11/63). And he referred to the Quakers, "once regarded as the most rigid" of non-Catholic communities as now saying that "fornication can be condoned if it is accompanied by true love". But, he added, in spite of the difficulties, "We must not despair".

★

TWO DAY'S earlier the tranquility of the Council had been disturbed by a "row" (as the *Daily Telegraph* called it, 26/11/63) on the steps of St. Peter's. Young priests were distributing leaflets signed by 25 bishops inviting the Fathers to vote against the Schema on Mass communications for not going far enough. The Secretary General of the Council asked the young priests to withdraw, whereupon a German bishop took the leaflets and began to hand them out. A Vatican gendarme was called, there was a "confused argument, some shouting and angry exchanges", and it was more than 10 minutes before "peace was restored and the Session could begin". The Schema was then approved, but Cardinal Tisserant, Dean of the College of Cardinals, described the incident as "unworthy of the Sacred Assembly".

★

That Was The Week That Was, regrettably due to be taken of the air at month end (lest it should satirise our politicians and perhaps affect the result of the general election!) was in good form on November 30th. Among the serious subjects treated was racialism in South Africa and the USA; in lighter vein were satires on Boy Scouts, the Salvation Army (three lassie-impersonators being delightful) and the commercialisation of Christmas. The Salvation Army sketch was prompted by the new General's advice to his men—and women—to "get with it", and the *Daily Telegraph's* (27/11/63) photograph of four girl cadets "forsaking the familiar tambourine for music in the modern idiom"—with guitars.

★

THE UNIVERSITY Humanist Federation Conference will be held at Leicester University, the first weekend in January, 1964. The main speakers will be Mrs. Florence Maude, on "Marriage: its Psychological Significance", on Friday evening, January 3rd, and Dr. James Hemming, on "Men and Women: New Roles and Relationships", on Saturday morning, January 4th. On Saturday afternoon there will be a symposium, "The Woman's View", and in the evening, the Annual General Meeting, followed by a party. Sunday will be devoted to group and plenary discussions. The Hon. Secretary of the UHF is Mr. A. F. M. Brierley, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W.8.

★

THE ROYAL Shakespeare Theatre Company's enormously successful production of Rolf Hochhuth's *The Representative*, ended its run at the Aldwych Theatre, London, on November 30th. The Marble Arch Branch of the National Secular Society organised eleven leaflet distributions outside the theatre, and also arranged a party visit. THE FREETHINKER Bookshop reports that the paperback edition of the English text of the play (with 63-page historical appendix) is now out of print, but hardback copies (at 25s.) are still available.

Religious Freedom in Chicago

(Concluded from page 394)

Maremont hired private legal counsel and vowed to carry the fight for approval of the Commission's programme to the US Supreme Court, if necessary. "This issue and all its ramifications will be aired before the highest tribunals of the land, if that is what it takes to permit us to move ahead with the programme", he said.

"This Commission has every right to establish its policy, a policy which countless individuals and organisations support . . . I have stated many times that this policy has been established with all the built-in safeguards that our conscientious and deeply concerned commissioners can provide."

Attorney Thomas C. McConnell, hired by the IPAC to defend it after Attorney General Clark sided with opponents of its programme, charged in court that Clark had "sold his client [the IPAC] down the river" by joining Adamowski in his suit. McConnell accused Clark of following "the dogmas of his own religion" and he requested a change of venue on the ground that Superior Court Judge John J. Lupe was prejudiced.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported, "Outside the court, Clark, a Roman Catholic, said: 'This is not a Catholic question, a Protestant question, or a Jewish question. All religions say that couples should marry before engaging in this type of conduct.' Clark repeated that he opposes the IPAC's programme on grounds that it encourages illicit and immoral behaviour . . ."

Clark neglected to mention that the "morality" aspect of the programme was actually a smoke screen raised by some of its opponents and that most of the prominent Protestant and Jewish individuals and organisations that had been contacted, as well as those of no religious affiliation, favoured the IPAC plan. The Illinois Council of Churches, representing 11 Protestant denominations, went on record as favouring the birth-control programme for public-aid recipients; the policy statement was adopted unanimously by the Council's legislative committee.

Ethel Parker, of the Independent Voters of Illinois, stated, in a letter to the *Sun-Times*: "The Independent Voters of Illinois at this time repeats its stand on using public funds to furnish birth-control information and supplies to women on relief. We are in favour of such a plan.

"Our contention is that preventing an increase of unwanted children is a policy of moral responsibility first and secondarily a prudent economic move . . . So long as birth control is not forced on anyone whose religious views forbid it, IVI fails to see how religion enters into this controversy. It is also very naive for anyone to believe that the use of contraceptives promotes immorality. In our view their use merely prevents adding to social ills resulting from promiscuity".

In another letter, in the same issue of the *Sun-Times*, a Catholic reader insisted that the State Senate intervene, altering the IPAC programme so that contraceptives could be "prescribed only by a doctor for married women living with their husbands and *only when their lives would be endangered by pregnancy*". (Emphasis added.) The reader also indicated that Governor Kerner should ask for Arnold Maremont's resignation.

Catholic Superior Judge Lupe refused to grant a change of venue, requested on the ground that he was prejudiced, and proceeded to rule against the IPAC in the Adamowski suit to halt the birth-control programme. The State Senate then passed a measure drastically curtailing the

Illinois Public Aid Commission's authority to help mothers under its care to avoid childbirth by use of contraceptives and Senator W. Russell Arrington introduced a bill to abolish the IPAC. In a seemingly inconsistent move, the Senate confirmed Governor Kerner's reappointment of IPAC Chairman Maremont, but then—in an unprecedented move—it revoked the reappointment, because a number of the senators took exception to some of Maremont's public utterances regarding the Senate and IPAC aid. Financier Maremont was thus returned to the less fickle world of his private businesses and philanthropies, and Illinois lost the services of an exceptionally gifted public-spirited citizen.

The point in this controversy over birth-control, as in the matter of censorship, is not the right of Catholics, or any other religious group, to hold and exercise whatever beliefs they choose. It is the undemocratic action of forcing their religious convictions on other citizens who do not share their views.

In commenting on the Chicago controversy in an article on religious freedom and the importance of the separation of church and state, Reverend H. B. Sissel, Secretary for National Affairs of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, wrote recently in *Look*: "Seventeen states prohibit the sale or distribution of contraceptives [to the general public] except through doctors or pharmacists; five states ban all public sale of such devices. Although these statutes were enacted in the 19th Century under Protestant pressure, times and attitudes have changed for many Protestants. Today, they believe that Catholics have no right to keep such laws in operation. Some Catholic spokesmen have agreed that their Church is not officially interested in trying to make the private behaviour of non-Catholics conform to Roman Catholic canon law. Meanwhile, the laws stay on the books, though they are being tested in the courts".

The Reverend Sissel commented on a number of other church-state conflicts in society today and concluded his thoughtful article by stating: "The so-called 'wall of separation' between church and state has been breached often by both, each using the other for its own ends . . .

"I know it is a sign of my bias as a Christian (I hope many other Christians share the bias) that I believe, in the long run, that political and civil liberties are safest when the church is free to be the church. And by 'free', I do not mean just free of external coercion. The freedom of the church lies in its recognition of its basic mission: to be deeply involved in the personal, social, political and economic life of the world—but not to be identified with the world; to encourage compassion, a desire for justice and a vision of what it means to be truly human; and to renew that vision by living close to the wellspring of its faith.

"Churches and synagogues, clergymen and churchgoers, all must regain the unique sense of purpose and mission that God has given them to perform by worship within and witness without. All need to face, and to deal with, the urgent problems bound up in the issue of church and state. And all need to recognise that when men of faith begin to look to the state as a pillar of religion, the edifice of faith they seek to save has already begun to collapse."

Nowhere is this truth more evident than in matters of free speech and press. Religious censorship reared its ugly head in Chicago in an even bigger controversy than

the recent birth-control suppression when, late in 1956, the film *Martin Luther* was scheduled to be shown over WGN-TV and then suddenly cancelled. Prominent Protestant clergymen and private citizens charged "Roman Catholic censorship" and a Protestant Action Committee issued a statement saying: "Pending a full review of the situation, the committee decided today to authorise a formal protest with the Federal Communications Commission against WGN-TV for the banning of the film".

Robert E. A. Lee, executive secretary of Lutheran Church Productions, Inc., which made *Martin Luther*, wrote of the Catholic censorship of the film in Chicago, and around the world, in *The Christian Century*, saying: "In Chicago, all the fuss is focussed on just why WGN-TV got cold feet and 'pulled the film'. *Martin Luther* was scheduled for the December date at the specific request of the station after its officials had carefully pre-viewed it . . . [Then] the showing was cancelled.

"Aroused Chicagoans were convinced that they knew why. A volunteer action committee of Protestant leaders of the city called a press conference and bluntly charged 'de facto censorship', claiming that WGN-TV had yielded to pressures 'mobilised by the Roman Catholic Church'. The station's public relations department declared, in a polished euphemism, than an 'emotional reaction' had led them to cancel. A spokesman for the chancellery of the Chicago Roman Catholic archdiocese denied that any 'official' protest was made. It is conceivable that the representative of Cardinal Stritch who visited a WGN-TV official at 2 p.m. on December 14th [one week before the planned showing] had other reasons for the appointment. But, oddly enough, a responsible station executive telephoned us in advance of the representative's visit to get information to support his own arguments as to why *Martin Luther* deserved to be televised.

"The Chicago case makes more urgent that question that many concerned individuals — including some Catholics — have been asking: Is one religious group really attempting to dictate what the public can see and hear through mass-communication media? Is the Roman Catholic Church becoming more aggressive in extending its censorship programme beyond its own sphere?"

Lee went on to comment on the banning of the film in Quebec: "In that part of the world the political influence of the cardinal is no secret. It is known that the censor received his instructions from higher authorities. And a person who discussed this situation frankly with the provincial premier revealed that the decision was 'requested' by an ecclesiastical authority. This despotism boomeranged mightily—as such despotism anywhere must sooner or later. When, in spite of the ban, a courageous group of Protestant Churches in the Montreal area staged a united demonstration by showing the film simultaneously for a week on their own premises, they had seats for only half the comers. But the government refused to rescind the ban."

The Canadian ban was not lifted until 1962, when the censorship board of Quebec was changed and the new board permitted showing of the film. Lee mentioned that a number of Catholic leaders throughout the world had not reacted so emotionally to the movie which, while showing the Protestant side of the Reformation, was in no sense anti-Catholic. Many Catholics, here and abroad, were also openly concerned about their fellow Catholics acting as censors. A letter in *Time* said: "I am one of the many Catholics, I hope, who are appalled at the shallow thinking of our Chicago brethren who became a pressure group protesting the showing of the TV film *Martin Luther*. If, as Catholics, we possess the truth,

why do they resort to such intolerance in order to prohibit what they consider to be false from the beginning. We cannot deny the historical existence of Luther and his founding of the Protestant Church. Do Chicago Catholics fear the facts of history? I wonder if they realise how much their bigotry damages the cause of Catholicism and the fellowship of man?"

Despite the controversy caused by the Chicago censorship, WGN-TV declined to reschedule the film. Sterling "Red" Quinlan, the rebel head of rival TV station WBKB, then accepted the motion picture and aired it without further incident. "Red" Quinlan is a liberal Catholic.

The banning of the June issue of *Playboy* caused no comparable public outcry—for the religious implications were less clearly defined. But as we shall see, the situation is disturbingly similar.

In *The Playboy Philosophy*, we have been outspoken in our opposition to any tyranny over the mind of man, whether invoked in the name of the state or in the name of God. We specifically criticised the part that organised religion—Protestant as well as Catholic—has played in such suppression throughout history, down to the present day. The views that we have expressed are shared by many of the more liberal clergy—of all denominations—who recognise that religious freedom requires that the church remain free from any involvement in government and any direct coercion of the citizens in a free society.

[An extract from a statement by the Editor-Publisher of *Playboy*, reprinted from the November issue of that magazine.]

Prayer, Plants and Probability

By EDWARD ROUX

I AM indebted to a friend in Canada for sending me the *Toronto Daily Star* of October 28th, 1963, with a news report on the power of prayer on plants. The experimenter is the Rev. Franklin Loehr, minister chemist. His results are said to confirm those of J. B. Rhine of Duke University, the expert on ESP.

The basic prayer-and-plants experiment, we are told, is simple. "A double planting of seeds is made, with everything being kept the same except that one planting gets prayer and the other does not. At the end of a certain time the plants are carefully measured. If all other conditions have been kept identical for both sets of seedlings, any significant difference between them must be due to prayer. In the Religious Research Foundation laboratory the test controls were rigid." How the prayer was administered to the plants is not stated, but in a similar experiment by a Dr. Grad at Montreal the water used in one case was treated by the laying on of hands and prayers. In the control untreated water was used.

The results of course were highly significant in favour of the prayed-on plants. Some 900 experiments were carried out with 150 people acting as pray-ers; 27,000 seeds were used and over 80,000 measurements were taken. A mathematician from Duke University declared that in one experiment the odds against the results being due to mere chance were 2,000,000 to one, and for the whole project the odds were even greater. When "negative prayer" was administered the seeds did not even germinate.

What are we to make of these results which so strangely parallel the earlier experiments on ESP carried out by the parapsychologists of Duke University? We must assume that the Rev. Franklin Loehr was completely honest and not pulling a "fast one". He was not putting a growth hormone in one lot of water or a plant

toxin in the other. Furthermore the statistical analysis carried out by Rhine's pet mathematician must be equally above suspicion. So there you have it: plants are influenced by prayer, and thoughts are transferred from one individual to another over great distances by processes still inscrutable. In both cases the "proof" lies in statistical analysis, and statistics do not lie.

However we should like to see any person, however prayerful, repeat these growth experiments in a botanical laboratory staffed by ordinary professional plant physiologists. No doubt the reply would be that in such a laboratory there would not be the right "atmosphere". The plants would be unable to perform when they sensed hostile feelings in the experimenters.

Points From a New Book

IN *Thanatos* (Gollancz, 21s.), ten men meet to argue about death; and the authors of this modern symposium, Maurice Richardson and Philip Toynbee, have allowed almost every point of view to be expressed. So, after the Christian has made one of his speeches, the Freudian confesses that he cannot make out what Christianity is all about as it is "such an elaborate amalgam of ideas and ideologies". He wants to know who is saying what to whom and when in the Gospels. "The mixture of oriental quietism, Stoic ethics, Jewish nationalism and slave salvationism, being adopted by the Roman Empire in decline and then evolving into feudalism, is too confusing for me altogether . . . Take the Book of Revelation, for instance. This is of special interest because of its comparatively early date. With its wild confused fanaticism, its prophecies and visions, it gives us some insight into the minds of the early Christians". They were, surely, in hopeless confusion?

Then everyone is shocked when the Catholic dismisses the rational fears of nuclear war by quoting from Newman's *Apologia*: "The Catholic Church holds it better for the sun and the moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail and for all the many millions on it to die of starvation in extremist agony, as far as any temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say, should be lost, but should commit one single venial sin, should tell one wilful untruth, or should steal one poor farthing without excuse". After this, the Linguistic Philosopher remarks that he feels that Catholics must be "certifiably insane".

But the whole book presents thoughts and schools of thoughts to vitalise the rationalist reader. For example it is pointed out that it is possible to define death as that moment beyond which revocation is impossible. Yet even here there are difficulties, for our scientists are continually pushing back the moment of irreversibility. The Communist says: "It won't be long before we can shovel a man away into cold storage and keep him on ice for four or five centuries. It may not be long before we can separate a head from its body and keep the head 'alive' as a separate entity. Won't it be a little inconvenient if you [the Christians] have to keep altering the sense in which you use the word 'dead'?" The playwright, of the school of Ionesco, goes further and suggests that the whole business will be most annoying for the old gentleman up in the sky. "Won't it be a bit provoking for the Almighty when He, too, has to adjust his conception of the word 'death' to the progress made by our biologists? He'll have to be very much on the *qui vivre*, in the most literal sense. I mean, suppose He assumed that my re-

frigerated body was a dead one and packed off my soul to the appropriate location, only to find that Brisket [a brilliant biologist] could bring it back again simply by pressing a button?"

To see how this argument, and so many others of equal fascination, develop, one must read this book about a dinner party at Quarles which can truly be called an intellectual feast.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE RELIGION OF THOMAS PAINE

Mr. Underwood has raised some important points and problems (*THE FREETHINKER*, November 29th), which I could not possibly deal with in a short letter. I shall try in a forthcoming article to elucidate what I can—but it must be remembered that Paine himself told us what his religion was in very clear terms in the *Age of Reason*. But what he wrote later is by no means so well known and it may be to this I shall have to go.

H. CUTNER.

TWO CHOSEN PEOPLES

I read with interest F. A. Ridley's discourse on "Two Chosen Peoples" in *THE FREETHINKER*.

I would like to see an article on the Rabbinical hoax that he mentions towards the end of this column. Armed with the full story and facts, I am certain that I could do some useful work in putting a few of my Jewish friends right about the facts.

TONY SHAPPS.

OBITUARY

Emlyn Davies, a lifelong Freethinker, died in hospital on November 20th. We extend deepest sympathy to his son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren.

William McIlroy, Secretary of the National Secular Society, conducted the funeral ceremony at Golder's Green Crematorium on November 25th.

Alfred E. Cole, of Hornchurch, died in hospital on November 24th, aged 62.

Mr. Cole is survived by his wife, eight children, and seven grandchildren, to whom our deepest sympathy is extended. William McIlroy, General Secretary of the National Secular Society, conducted the funeral ceremony at South Essex Crematorium, Upminster, on November 28th.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

A choir has been refused permission to present the Nativity in a Baptist Church because it "savours of Roman Catholicism".

—Daily Mail (11/11/63).

NEW PAPERBACKS

Penguin Fiction

The Captive and the Free, by Joyce Cary, 4s. 6d.
Scenes from Married Life, by William Cooper, 3s. 6d.
Image of a Society, by Roy Fuller, 3s.
The Essential James Joyce, edited by Harry Lewis, 7s. 6d.
Be Ready with Bells and Drums, by Elizabeth Kata, 3s.
The Man Who Won the Pools, by J. I. M. Stewart, 3s.
To the Islands, by Randolph Stow, 3s. 6d.
Stop at Nothing, by John Welcome, 2s. 6d.
Farewell Victoria, by T. H. White, 4s. 6d.

Pelicans

The Consumer, Society, and The Law, by Gordon Borrie and Aubrey L. Diamond, 5s.
The Family and The Law, by Margaret Puxon, 5s.
Freedom, the Individual and the Law, by H. Street, 6s.
John Citizen and the Law (re-issue), by Ronald Rubinstein, 7s. 6d.
Experimental Psychological Research, by Robert H. Thouless, 3s.

Penguin Specials

The Profumo Affair: Aspects of Conservatism, by Wayland Young, 2s. 6d.

UNWIN BOOKS

Political Ideas, by Bertrand Russell, 4s. 6d.
Mysticism and Logic, by Bertrand Russell, 8s. 6d.
Bertrand Russell: The Passionate Sceptic, by Alan Wood, 8s. 6d.
The Essential Trotsky, 8s. 6d.
Philosophical Aspects of Modern Science, by C. E. M. Joad, 6s. 4d.
Fifty Poems, by Boris Pasternak, 5s.

Please add 6d. per volume for postage