

The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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AN ACQUAINTANCE of mine recently remarked that the only definite reason he was able to suggest for the present enthusiasm for Christian reunion was the alarming onrush of Communism as a world-wide political and ideological force, and as such, a threat to every form of Christianity impartially. The same point was made recently in a letter in the correspondence column of this paper. It is certainly a curious feature of present-day Christianity that the large majority of the traditionally Protestant Churches, ultimately deriving from the Reformation, should be falling over each other to make contact with their old enemy and persecutor, the Roman "anti-Christ". Time was when things were very different. For example, I myself possess a copy of one of the most famous works of Protestant theology ever penned: the massive treatise against the pretensions of the papacy, written by the learned Calvinist, Pierre Jurieu, at the end of the 17th century when, under the leadership of Louis XIV of France, the Catholic counter-reformation was making alarming advances at the expense of Protestantism.

The Scarlet Woman

In his book, replete with erudition and invective, Jurieu demonstrates that the papacy is beyond any reasonable doubt, "The Scarlet Woman of the Apocalypse" and the anti-Christ in human form predicted in the Scriptures. We have certainly travelled a long way since the day when a book containing such arguments could be addressed to the leading Protestant prince in Europe, the Elector of Brandenburg. And if the change is remarkable on the Protestant side, it is even more so on the part of the "one true Church", the identical Church of the Inquisition and of St. Bartholomew's Eve.

What, for example, would "Bloody" Mary, the last English Catholic persecutor have said had she foreseen the present leader of her Church in Britain (Archbishop Heenan) speaking in his own cathedral, refer to the Archbishop of Canterbury, as his "dear friend"? Dr. Heenan then went on to describe the heretical and schismatical Church of England as "the great Church of England". It is no longer "that sacrilegious communion founded by the apostate, Elizabeth", as a famous Jesuit preacher of the last generation was in the habit of describing the Church of England. Is the age of miracles really past, one may surely inquire when such startling metamorphoses transpire before our eyes? Failing recourse to the miraculous, which is not a line of reasoning congenial to critical minds, what is the ultimate explanation of these ecclesiastical "winds of change"?

Speaking for myself, I am inclined to agree with the opinion quoted at the commencement of this article. Had it not been for the rise and world-wide expansion of Communism since the Russian Revolution of 1917, it is extremely probable that the Christian Churches would still have been plodding along in the same old sectarian ruts. The present "get-together" attitude which inspires

schemes of Christian reunion, is really an up-to-date ecclesiastical version of that famous *bon mot* which the Victorian Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne addressed to his Cabinet colleagues at a moment of acute social crisis and of incipient revolution: "For God's sake gentlemen, let us at all costs hang together since otherwise we shall all hang separately!"

In the present schemes of Christian reunion, we seem to detect a very similar attitude. The determining factor behind all the present ecclesiastical comings and goings from Canterbury via Rome, to Jerusalem and to Constantinople in quest of eventual unity, is not the Holy Ghost so frequently invoked, but a spectre of more terrestrial origin and appearance—the famous "spectre of Communism", proclaimed in 1848 in *The Communist Manifesto*, the shadow of which has been lengthened until it now lies athwart the whole world. In other words it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the effective author of Christian reunion is a modern, not an ancient Jew, not Jesus Christ but Karl Marx!

The Koran of the Socialists

At the time that Marx and Engels launched their revolutionary gospel upon the world, it attracted little attention, being in this respect somewhat similar to the initial impact of the Christian gospels. Did not Ernest Renan once remark that the Roman Caesars would have been very surprised to learn that the fame of the obscure Christian preachers, Peter and Paul, would long outlive theirs? However, percipient Christian scholars soon got wind of the new phenomenon. As early as 1870, only three years after the publication of *Das Kapital* and in Marx's own lifetime, the learned Roman Catholic scholar, Lord Acton, referred to Marx's *magnum opus* as "the Koran of the Socialists".

However, it was not really until the Russian Revolution that Communism of the Marxist vintage emerged into the full glare of world-history. Prior to that, as a modern Catholic publicist, Father Gallery, has nostalgically observed, Communists were only to be found in "slums, basements and police dossiers". Since 1917, it has no longer been possible to dismiss the spectre of Communism in this summary manner. In point of fact, the continually augmenting pressure of the new ideology, has produced a reflex action on the part of the Christian Churches. It was probably inevitable that, just as the spectacular advance of Islam in the seventh and subsequent centuries united Christendom under the leadership of Rome during the era of the Crusades (1100-1300), so today the equally spectacular expansion of Communism is bringing about the reunion of Christianity, again under the aegis of Rome.

How far is Christianity congruous with Communism? When viewed primarily from the economic angle, some kind of effective compromise is not perhaps impossible. For there have actually been several examples of Christ-

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Christianity versus Communism

By F. A. RIDLEY

ian collectivism during the pre-industrial era. I have myself drawn attention in earlier issues of *THE FREETHINKER*, to such spectacular and/or bizarre episodes as the ultra-Protestant Anabaptist kingdom of Munster and the ultra-Catholic Jesuit republic of Paraguay, both social experiments on entirely collectivist lines. In a pre-industrial era, such experiments obviously implied communism primarily in consumption rather than in production. But even since the Industrial Revolution, "Christian Socialism" has been by no means unknown in both Catholic and Protestant circles—Charles Kingsley was a prominent representative in the Church of England.

In my opinion, Christianity could compromise effectively with socialistic societies. I will add the perhaps at first sight surprising opinion that the Church of Rome, which is essentially collectivist in its corporate outlook, could probably do this easier than most of the Protestant sects, which are more individualistic. Historically for example, it was the Protestant Reformers, and Calvin in particular, who assisted in formulating the capitalistic ideology. I conclude accordingly, that an eventual synthesis between Christianity and Communism, is not impossible—in fact the South Bank theologians appear already to have started on its construction! But no such compromise appears to be possible with *Marxist* Communism (despite the Dean of Canterbury) which integrally and essentially is atheistic and dialectical in its innermost composition. The Christian Churches are, it is true, no strangers to dialectical reasoning. They have even dialectically managed to combine professionally working for God and Mammon. But it has yet to be proved that it is possible to combine belief in God and Historical Materialism.

The Archbishop of Dublin

ON FEBRUARY 7TH, 1964, the subject of our Views and Opinions was "The Church in Ireland" and, more particularly, the Most. Rev. Dr. John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin, the most powerful figure in Ireland who, as Colin McCall remarked, is no doubt aware of "reformist" trends in the Roman Catholic Church, as exemplified at the Vatican Council, but "shows no signs of heeding them".

Three days later, on February 10th, *The Irish Times* printed in two 24-inch columns, the Archbishop's Lenten regulations for the diocese of Dublin which will, we feel, be of interest to readers. Space limitation prevents us from reprinting the whole, so we have selected what we consider to be the more important sections—those relating to education, marriage, etc. Each section is given in full and numbered as in the original.

VII. The general law of the Church affirms in Canon 1113 of the Code of Canon Law that parents have a most serious duty to secure a fully Catholic upbringing for their children, in all that concerns the instruction of their minds, the training of their wills to virtue, their bodily welfare and the preparation for their life as citizens.

Only the Church is competent to declare what is a fully Catholic upbringing; for, to the Church alone which He established, our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, has given the mission to teach mankind to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded. (St. Matthew, xxviii, 20.)

Accordingly, in the education of Catholics, every branch of human training, in so far as faith and morals are concerned, is subject to the guidance of the Church and those schools alone, of which the Church approves, are capable of providing a full Catholic education.

Therefore, the Church forbids parents and guardians to send a child to any non-Catholic school, whether primary or secondary, or continuation or university.

Deliberately to disobey this law is a mortal sin, and they who persist in disobedience are unworthy to receive the Sacraments.

It is a grave error to think that a Catholic youth, at the conclusion of secondary studies, is so mature that he or she may, without serious risk, be exposed to the formation of a neutral or Protestant university.

It is equally a grave error to think that an immature youth only because he or she has hitherto been educated as a Catholic will, as a matter of course, alter a dominantly neutral or Protestant environment.

Nothing in the attitude or prescriptions of the Holy See concerning the very desirable movement of Christian unity has altered the very grave obligation of Catholic parents to preserve for their children, in every phase of education, our most precious heritage of the faith.

VIII. The statute 287 of the Plenary Council, 1956, concerning Trinity College, Dublin, as enacted by the Irish Hierarchy and confirmed by the Holy See, reads: "We forbid under pain of mortal sin: 1, Catholic youths to frequent that college; 2, parents or guardians to send to that college Catholic youth entrusted to their care; 3, clerics or religious to commend in any way to parents or guardians to send Catholic youths to that college or to give help or lend counsel to such youths to attend that college; 4, only the Archbishop of Dublin is competent to decide according to the regulations of the Holy See, in what circumstances and with what precautions for avoiding the danger of perversion, attendance at that college may be tolerated."

Attendance may be tolerated only for grave and valid reasons and with the addition of definite measures, by which it is sought adequately to safeguard the faith and practice of a Catholic Student.

IX. One expects amateur drama groups that are Catholic to produce only plays that are worthy. Stage-plays that in inspiration are atheistic or obscene or that disregard Christian morality are a grave peril. They who produce such plays, or who act in them, are responsible—whatever may be their intentions—for a scandal that is terrifying in its effects and that, in fact, too often is most difficult to repair.

In view of certain opinions being voiced by some Catholics concerning the pretended need for even young people of accustoming themselves to the uncleanness of much modern writing, we draw the attention of the faithful to this explicit teaching of the Holy See:

1. All the faithful should be mindful of their very grave obligation in conscience to refrain entirely from reading books and periodicals, in which things lewd and obscene are narrated, described or taught.

2. All who are charged with the training and education of youth have a very grave responsibility in virtue of their office to preserve their pupils from evil literature as from deadly poison.

3. Finally, officials holding civil authority, whose task it is to protect public morality, may not lawfully allow to be published or distributed the evil literature above referred to, which tends to destroy the very foundations and principles of human decency.

X. The Church, to safeguard the faith and morals of her children, forbids everywhere and most severely, the marriage of a Catholic with a non-Catholic. (Canons 1060 and 1071, Code of Canon Law, Statute 193, Plenary Council of Maynooth, 1956.)

For grave reasons and to avoid greater evils, the Church at times grants a dispensation, but only on condition:

1. That the Catholic and non-Catholic parties promise to have all the children of the marriage baptised as Catholics and reared as Catholics, according to the prescriptions of the Church.

2. That the non-Catholic party promise not to interfere in any way with the faith or practice of the Catholic party.

3. That it be morally certain that these guarantees will be loyally observed.

The Catholic party is obliged in conscience prudently to strive for the conversion of the non-Catholic party.

These guarantees are solemn pledges very gravely binding in conscience. Once given, they may not ever be disregarded or set aside.

XII. The faithful are warned to avoid all societies, which plot against the Church or the lawful civil authority, even though they may not be secret and do not exact an oath from their members.

Chief among these groups today are Communists. Communism, no matter what fair words may be used to cloak its true meaning, is a blasphemous doctrine and a perverse way of life. It denies God; it hates the Church; it attempts, by every weapon of lying, treachery and persecution, to wipe out the one, true faith of Jesus Christ.

Communism is wrong in itself, and no one may without sin collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever.

The regulations are signed,

JOHN CHARLES,
Archbishop of Dublin, Primate of Ireland.

The Fallacy of the Antiquity of the Hebrew Scrolls

Once More Exposed

By PROF. DR. SOLOMON ZEITLIN

ON MARCH 8TH (1962) the press heralded a great discovery in the caves of Qumran, that of a psalm written on goat-skin between 30 and 50 CE, belonging to the archaic psalms but not included in the Book of Psalms. In this despatch from Jerusalem (Jordanian Sector) it is stated that Dr. Sanders said that the English translation is a "tentative one". The question arises, why Dr. Sanders and the American School of Oriental Research were in a hurry to publish a tentative translation. We know from long experience that the translations into English of the Hebrew Scrolls are without exception wrongly rendered and faulty. Would it not have been fitting in the interest of true scholarship that a photostat of the Hebrew text, at least a few lines, had been published simultaneously with the tentative translation? Having a photostat one could see the paleography and also judge the correctness of the translation. A photostat was published of the rolled up scroll and also of a lamp and knife used by Dr. Sanders in his work (*New York Times*, March 8th, 1962). No photostat was given of the text which is a *sine qua non* for the true understanding of a document.

Dr. Frank Cross, of Harvard University, when interviewed about the discovery said, "It sounds like a sectarian composition and not like an archaic psalm". Since Dr. Cross expressed his first impression may I give my first impression on reading the English translation of the psalm. It is a psalm composed by the "Mourners of Zion", a sect which existed from the sixth to eighth centuries CE, most of whom were Karaites. Many Rabbinites also mourned for Zion. The members of "Mourners of Zion" made pilgrimages to Palestine and lived in caves. One is struck by the fact that the name Zion is mentioned frequently in the psalm but Jerusalem is not found even once. This was characteristic of the "Mourners of Zion".

The publicity about the discovery of this psalm deceived many people into believing that it went back to the time of David. A certain Rabbi was so impressed that he recited it in his prayers on a Sabbath before his congregation. I am intrigued to learn the Hebrew text of the psalm, particularly the verse, "Praise of thee is sweet to the nose, O Zion, ascending through all the world". "Sweet to the nose" is a peculiar expression. I would like to know the Hebrew reading.

Prof. A. Dupont-Sommer's book, *Les Ecrits Esséniens Découverts Près de la Mer Morte* has been translated into English and is entitled, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*. The jacket reads, "The most complete translation of the Dead Sea literature prepared by one of its first and foremost interpreters". To interpret a document correctly the translation must be accurate, which is a duty—not a virtue. As we shall show presently the translations are not accurate and hence the interpretations are faulty.

First I shall deal with another matter, with the author's criticism of my views on the Dead Sea Scrolls. On p. 394 Prof. Dupont-Sommer wrote, "Zeitlin's theory is no longer credited in the scientific world, and for good reason; but the author continues to complain bitterly that his arguments have never been refuted. 'Indeed they have!' answers Fr. de Vaux, very rightly. 'All his arguments have been refuted, not by reasoning but by fact, against which the best arguments in the world are valueless. I

would ask Prof. Zeitlin to read—or to read more closely the report of the archaeologists whom he derides. If he had done so he would not all the time confuse the Qumran discoveries with those of Murabba'at". Prof. Dupont-Sommer supplies a note, "RB, 1957, pp. 636-7". Any layman reading this statement without having before him the *Revue Biblique* would assume that de Vaux had reviewed my arguments against the antiquity of the Scrolls and hence I am too obstinate to retract my views.

Fr. de Vaux did not refute my arguments. He made the statement that due to archaeological evidence my arguments are not valid. This is an *ex cathedra* statement which cannot carry weight, it is not a refutation, it is an *ipse dixit*. To make a statement that the Hebrew Scrolls are ancient does not make them ancient. May I add that the seven or eight scrolls upon which the archaeologists have based their theories that they are the writings of the Essenes and that they have great value for the origin of Christianity and Judaism of that period were not discovered by archaeologists. Let us make clear once for all that the archbishop purchased five scrolls and sold four to the Hebrew University and that the late Prof. Sükenik purchased the other three from an Oriental merchant. No archaeologist, and for that matter no scholar ever saw the scrolls in the caves. *The archaeologists are confusing the laymen as well as some scholars who are not well versed in the ancient Hebrew literature*. The archaeologists and theologians do not agree even among themselves as to when the scrolls were discovered and who were the discoverers. The archbishop gives one story, Doctors Sella, Trevor, Harding, Burrows, Allegro and the Bedouin Mohammed, who was supposed to have discovered the scrolls, have given different ones. No one knows the truth as to how the scrolls were discovered or who discovered them.

Prof. Dupont-Sommer further wrote, "If only he would abandon his fruitless obstinacy, Zeitlin is certainly one of those who could do most useful work in determining the exact connections linking medieval Karaism across the centuries with ancient Essenism". I am not obstinate. On the contrary I appealed to the scholars to reply to my arguments. At the Twenty-fourth International Congress of Orientalists, held in Munich in 1957, I appealed to the scholars who held that the Scrolls were of the pre-Christian period to refute my arguments. I said, "If the protagonists of the antiquity of the Scrolls prove their case I shall surrender my position". I repeated this at the Twenty-fifth International Congress of Orientalists, held in Moscow, in 1960, so I am not obstinate. I was ready and still am to retract my views on the Scrolls if the archaeologists and theologians would refute my arguments against their antiquity. The protagonists of the antiquity of the Scrolls, including Prof. Dupont-Sommer, were present at these congresses where I advanced my proof against the antiquity of the Scrolls. They did not refute my arguments—they remained silent.

The theologians and archaeologists state that I am "obstinate" in my stand regarding the antiquity of the Scrolls and that I have been refuted. May I ask them, particularly the scholars whom I have named, to refute my arguments one by one in a scholarly fashion. If they succeed in doing so I say openly that I shall retract. Their

(Concluded on page 86)

This Believing World

In spite of the "Age of Reason" and similar—if not quite so effective—criticisms of the Bible, the first part of a serial publication entitled *Bible Story*, has been extensively advertised and no doubt will achieve a great circulation. We are told that it is "the story of the greatest book in the world" and "captioned with the glorious English of the Authorised Version". Of course. No other version has got quite that "reverent" touch of the "Holy" Book, even if later versions have been obliged to correct some of the blunders and mistranslations which disfigure the Authorised Version.

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But though the story of the Bible will no doubt be told in all earnestness, we are pretty sure that any genuine criticism of the Bible will not be allowed to appear. The Miracles, the Devil and Hell, the Angels, will all be called in to prove that the Bible is still God's Precious Word. And no doubt the people who buy the work will be duly impressed and believe.

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The "breakaway" sect of the fully believing Christians known as the Plymouth Brethren, now known as the Exclusive Brethren, has been in the news recently and, according to the *News of the World* (February 16th), has been making life completely miserable for everybody. Its "rules" are clearly stated in the journal, summed up by Mr. Gresham Cooke, Tory MP for Twickenham, who describes them as "full of oppression and violence". He regards the movement as "evil", and its rules as containing "sinister undertones". The collecting rules are that "no silver must be put in, only notes", and most of the other rules distinctly take us back to the dear old Christianity of its first centuries. No pale pink nonsense here!

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No matter how saintly, how reverent, and how believing, the poor parson, once looked upon as truly representing the Lord himself, tries to be in these secular times, he is now mostly the butt of all kinds of critics, some of them parsons themselves. The *Sunday Express* (February 16th) quotes a vicar who wants our "shabby old-fashioned parson" replaced by a "musical prayer wheel". We are not quite sure whether the vicar himself wants to be replaced in this way, but he appears to have given his bishop quite a headache. "He can't settle down", one of them sadly complained.

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Then there is Canon Evans of Southwark Cathedral, who, as a left-winger, peevishly objects to Royalty taking Communion outside the communion rails instead of inside, like the rest of the congregation. In fact, the Royal Family takes "priority over the Holy Communion itself" (*South London Press*, February 11th). This is terrible of course.

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You simply can't keep the spirits out of the papers. Here we have the London *Evening News* for example (February 4th) telling us that "they're not all they appear to be"—a profound observation. The author of the article, Mr. Ivor Herbert, is "convinced that powers of an immeasurable dimension operate around us, and that it is these abstract forces which occasionally erupt in poltergeists and apparitions".

THEATRE

"The Successor"

I had expected that after the production in Bristol of *The Successor*, a British premier of a play by Reinhard Raffalt, that there might be some points to send you of interest to Freethinkers, but I failed to find them!

The presence of Rupert Davies (TV's Maigret) no doubt helped to enlarge the first night audience, and he developed from a dithering "centre" Cardinal to become the papal nominee of the conservatives and of the compromisers, in spite of his personal misgivings. Compared to the twenty-odd other cardinals of all nationalities he appears as a saint with a hot-line to the holy spirit, so all the previous vicious manoeuvrings would seem quite justified, and easily to be forgotten.

Long monologues were fine for the individual characters, but rather tiring for the assembly. And there was no hint that the great majority of the world's population were indifferent to these heart searchers. The Jews, Mohammedan and Hindus were included as believers in one God—but not the Protestants.

When the cardinals of Budapest and Macao (China) did attempt to explain their problems: that the new regimes had replaced future hope with present certainty, had produced a human of "miraculous perfection", it was only to explain why it was so difficult to preach that these improvements were all the work of Lucifer. While the proletarian priest, concerned for his Edinburgh delinquents, led all his superiors in heavy symbolism of the anti-Christ and in prostrate prayer.

Believers will vary in the small crumbs of comfort offered to them, but none will be disturbed.

J. LITTLE

CINEMA

"Dr. Strangelove"

or:

"How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb"

To dissolve the Bomb and exploding supernovae in a post-Doomsday situation, Judy Garland's wartime hit, "We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when" has a deliciously macabre irony. This is the brilliant end of a remarkable film by Stanley Kubrick, appropriately called not just *comédie noire* but a "nightmare comedy". In adapting a book which had apparently been a straight thriller, the film makers made the only possible decision by turning it into a comic extravaganza. So horrifying a subject as world destruction by mistake, shot with wide screen, stereophonic immediacy, would be almost unendurable without ample punctuation of nervous laughter. Even so, weak with giggles and belly-laughter, we emerge with grave anxieties about the policy of brinkmanship, not allayed by the assurance of the US Air Force that such monstrous miscalculation just couldn't happen.

A psychotic American air force general (Sterling Hayden) released against Russia a nuclear bomber force, subject to recall by a coded signal known only to himself, in the happy, God-fearing anticipation of hastening Kingdom-come. He was supported by a Pentagon general (George Scott), who shared his hatred of the wicked, atheistic "Commsies". But they had to reckon with the psychological insight of an RAF group captain and the honesty of an American president, who had an hilarious hot line conversation trying to break the news to a tipsy Russian chairman of ministers. Unfortunately the Russians had perfected an ultimate "deterrent", whose existence they hadn't quite got round to announcing to the world, in the shape of a programmed Doomsday machine beyond human intervention. The last word came from Dr. Strangelove, an ex-Nazi boffin, bursting as under the restraints of paralysis and democratic veneer in exultant reversion to type. Left, after editing with three of his four original characters, Peter Sellers made a tour de force of the roles of group captain, president and Strangelove, though with overmuch Chaplinesque slapstick in the last. Even *The Great Dictator* was not a "nightmare" comedy.

This film could be called a Secularist Sermon on the Brink.
DAVID TRIBE.

MEETING

The newly-formed Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group held a most successful meeting on February 28th, some sixty people being present to hear a debate "Modern Society Has No Need of Religion". The discussion was lively and intelligent. Further details of the Group may be obtained from E. Mills, 16 Lancaster Gardens, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.

THE FREETHINKER

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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, MURRAY 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

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Tuesday, March 17th, 7.30 p.m.: A. C. RAINE, "Training Youth for World Citizenship".

Havering Humanist Society (Harold Wood Social Centre, Gubbins Lane), Tuesday, March 17th, 8 p.m.: "Humanists Meet Humanists".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, March 15th, 6.30 p.m.: ERIC MAPLE, "Witchcraft in Britain".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (The Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, March 15th, 7.30 p.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "The Secular Society of Tomorrow".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, March 15th, 11 a.m.: R. W. SORESENSEN, MP, "The Human Component in Politics".

Notes and News

THE Dead Sea Scrolls have naturally attracted an enormous amount of interest. They have been the subject of many books and articles—and of much speculation. It is because we believe that different—reasonable—points of view should be heard that we are printing this week the unorthodox opinions of an American Jewish scholar, Dr. Solomon Zeitlin. Professor Zeitlin's belief that the Scrolls are Medieval was first expressed in England in September 1957, in the Jewish quarterly, *The Gates of Zion*, and the article on page 83 also appeared in that magazine in January this year. We are grateful to the editor, Rabbi Dr. J. Litvin, for permission to reprint. *The Gates of Zion* is published at 77 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1, price 4s.

IN A *Guardian* review of the book, *Apostle for Our Time* (referred to in this column a short while ago), Tony Geraghty cited two examples, given by the author, Mgr. John G. Clancy, of Pope Pius XII's benevolence towards the Italian Jewish community. In a letter to *The Guardian* (2/3/64), the paper's Rome correspondent, George Armstrong, remarked that neither seemed to be true. "Pope Pius could not have housed 15,000 Jewish refugees in his summer villa at Castelgandolfo, even if he

had wanted to. There were not that many Jews in the whole Roman area". Nor, said Mr. Armstrong, "is there any knowledge here, among the Jewish community leaders, that even one Jew was given shelter in the papal villa". Individual priests or nuns did help the Jews, but not as the result of any papal directive. Mgr. Clancy's second error, Mr. Armstrong said, is "his repetition of a story so melodramatic and appealing that no number of denials can stop it from reappearing". Pope Pius XII did not "personally send ransom gold to assist the Jewish community in Rome" when the Nazis threatened deportation of all heads of families if 50 kilograms of gold were not paid.

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WHAT HAPPENED is, Mr. Armstrong said, that a Vatican emissary told the Jews that if they couldn't raise all the required ransom, the Vatican would supply the rest. "This dramatic, last-minute gesture may have been done with the Pope's knowledge or even on his initiative". But the gold was not needed, and the Jews "were deported anyway".

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HOW FOOLISH can old men be? Leaving aside the financial aspect of the case of the late Frank Jenner, recently heard in the Probate Court, let us consider his beliefs. He believed that Mrs. Kathleen Connock had Confucius as a "control", and that the old Chinese sage (through Mrs. Connock, of course) directed his own life. He had a spiritualist temple in his garden, where Mrs. Connock went into her trances and where he himself played the organ. Or did he? According to *The Guardian* report (25/2/64), when playing the organ, Mr. Jenner "thought himself possessed by the spirits of composers and musicians". But though spiritualism was the main concern of his life, he failed to interest his wife in it. She thought it was nonsense.

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HAILED AS a masterpiece by *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times*, Nan Flanagan's translation of *The Sin of Father Amaro*, by Eça de Queiroz, is now available in paperback (Corgi Books, 5s.). For once the blurb is justified. It is "a tragic story, told with a profound understanding of human passion and human fallibility". It is, also, "a biting satire about nineteenth-century Portugal—a corrupt society ministered to by a smug and decadent clergy".

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AMONG the many valuable volumes that G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler produced was *Crimes of Christianity*, an erudite work, first published in 1885. "Christianity is a historical religion and must be judged historically", the authors argued, and then proceeded to expose it as "the triumph of barbarism". The book, long out of print, is still useful today, though inevitably a little dated. The North London Branch of the National Secular Society has decided to issue one chapter, *The Crimes of the Popes*, in pamphlet form, minus the extensive references, but with a bibliography and some suggestions for further reading. Here, for those who want it, is a brief resumé of papal crimes from 366-1549, "a handy weapon of combat", as Mr. L. Ebury remarks in an introduction. The pamphlet, 6d., plus 3d. postage, may be obtained from THE FREETHINKER Bookshop.

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DR. RONALD FLETCHER'S FREETHINKER article "Ten Non-Commandments", now issued in expanded form as a pamphlet (Pioneer Press, 2s. 6d., plus postage), has been reprinted in the American paper, *The Independent* (239 Park Avenue South, New York, 3).

The Fallacy of the Antiquity of the Hebrew Scrolls Once More Exposed

(Concluded from page 83)

claim that I have been refuted is untrue and deceptive. The readers of their publications are deluded in the belief that I have been refuted.

I ask Dr. Yadin to explain why some of the so-called letters of Bar Kokba begin with the preposition "From". I have stated previously many times, and also in this essay, that during that period the letters did not begin with the preposition "from" but with the name of the sender "to". I also ask him to explain why in the letter the title *Rabbenu* was affixed to a proper name, which Dr. Yadin considered important. The title *Rabbenu* affixed to a proper name was never used in Palestine, but was in vogue in Babylonia at a much later period. I trust that in order to ascertain the antiquity of these letters Dr. Yadin will afford us the explanation I seek.

Sir Arthur Evans was considered the greatest archaeologist of the late 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Among the triumphs of prehistoric archaeology none stands higher than his discoveries at Knossos in Crete. Evans claimed that the excavation at Knossos would revolutionise our knowledge of the remote past. In the London *Observer*, July 3rd, 1960, Prof. L. R. Palmer challenged the authenticity of Evans's discovery. On Palmer's charge the *Observer* remarked it is "a bitter blow to archaeology".

In the *Observer*, February 11th, 1962, Prof. Palmer published a letter by Duncan Mackenzie, an assistant whom Evans employed in keeping archaeological records. He accused Evans of doctoring his discoveries. He said "Circumstances are simply that the Early Minoan Series which you imagine was never found at Knossos in the W. Square Section or anywhere else". Further in this letter he wrote, as regards an Early Minoan series, "I cannot understand how you came to imagine such a series either from the W. Square Section or anywhere else at Knossos". In introducing this letter of Mackenzie, the *Observer* stated the following, "What are the conclusions to be drawn from this new evidence? One thousand years of Early Minoan history are virtually eliminated, with catastrophic effects for prehistory not only of Greece but of the whole of Europe and the Near East". It concluded "Now it is disclosed that much of Evans's system for classifying the floor levels uncovered at Knossos was pure invention. Yet this 'système de classification' was the foundation for findings which have been accepted by scholars for 50 years".

We may have analogy with the Piltdown Hoax. More than forty years ago a skull was uncovered in Piltdown, England, which palaeontologists asserted dated back 500,000 years. It became the accepted view by all the scholars. One palaeontologist doubted as to its antiquity. He was ignored. In the latter part of 1953 the jaw bone was proved to be that of a modern ape and the legend of the Piltdown Man was shattered. It was found that the skull had been treated with chemicals to give it an aged appearance. It was a hoax. However, the find is recorded in all dictionaries and encyclopaedias under the title *Piltdown Man*.

I am not insinuating that the archaeologists and the theologians misrepresented the findings of the Hebrew Scrolls, but they do show their naiveté in believing the stories of the Bedouin and the Bethlehem merchant about the discoveries. It is regrettable that not only the Christian professors but the Jewish professors as well have

demonstrated their lack of knowledge of ancient Hebrew and Medieval literature and the Karaitic literature. The history of the Jews during the Second Commonwealth and rabbinic literature are for them a *terra incognita*. We must repeat that their translations of the Hebrew text are faulty and deceptive, and that the laymen who read them are deluded into believing that the Hebrew Scrolls were written by intelligent people possessed of ideas. Such is not the case. The so-called *Manual of Discipline* was written by a semi-literate person who could not express himself and had no ideas. As a matter of fact the Hebrew text is untranslatable. Some translators, in order to assert the antiquity and value of the Scrolls, have referred to passages in some work of Hebrew literature which does not even exist. This I have pointed out many times.

Previously I have remarked that the translations of the Hebrew Scrolls are faulty. From the early days Dupont-Sommer was the champion of the view that the Hebrew Scrolls were written by the Essenes. He found parallels in the writings of Josephus and Philo about the Essenes and what is written in the Hebrew Scrolls. There is no question that there are some parallels but there are greater parallels between the Hebrew Scrolls and the writings of the Karaites. Indeed there are more dissimilarities between the ideas of the Essenes and those of the authors of the scrolls.

On reading the translations of the Hebrew Scrolls by Dupont-Sommer one would assume that their authors wrote good Hebrew and ably expressed their ideas. However this is not the case. The so-called translations by Dupont-Sommer and others are mistranslations. They are not faithful to the text. The Hebrew Scrolls were written by semi-literate persons, they are untranslatable. The expressions are incoherent.

To sum up—the Hebrew Scrolls are of the Middle Ages. Most of them fit into the period when the Persians captured Palestine from the Byzantines and promised the Jews an independent state. Some of the Scrolls are of the Karaitic period. As to the Bar Kokba letters those which have been published were not written by Bar Kokba. About the documents which were discovered in the spring of 1961, and have not yet been published, I have an open mind. I shall express my views upon their publication.

[Reprinted from *The Gates of Zion*, January, 1964.]

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

THE PROGRAMME for the 58th Annual Dinner of the National Secular Society has now been announced. The Guest of Honour will be Mr. F. A. Ridley, a former President of the Society, whose health will be proposed by his successor, Mr. David Tribe.

Dr. Bryn Thomas (formerly Vicar of the Church of the Ascension, Balham Hill), will propose a toast to the National Secular Society, and Mr. Christopher Brunel will respond.

The Dinner is to be held at the Pavilions Arms, Page Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1, on Saturday, March 14th. Tickets 21s. each from the Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.W.1.

"Where Mystery Dwells"

By EDWARD ROUX

DR. B. J. F. LAUBSCHER, author of *Where Mystery Dwells* (London: Bailey Bros, and Swinfin, 1963, 25s.), is well known in South African spiritualist circles as an enthusiastic researcher in the field of the occult. This book has the blessing of my colleague, Professor M. Valkhoff of the University of the Witwatersrand, who writes: "When Dr. Laubscher invited me to write a preface to his book on psychic experiences, I had at first some hesitations, but when I started reading the manuscript I soon became enthralled and decided to accept the honour". This is not surprising, since the Professor shares with the Doctor a belief in telepathy, precognition, telekinesis, materialisation and other "psychic" phenomena.

My problem in reviewing this book arises not so much from an unwillingness to accept the objective reality of spirits and poltergeists as from a difficulty in discovering from the text exactly how the author's mind works. In fact for me the mystery lies not so much in the alleged phenomena of spiritualism as in the nature of the spiritualist.

A considerable part of the book consists of reports of psychic events by South Africans of all races who have written to Dr. Laubscher or who have been interviewed by him. Much has been gleaned from correspondents who have read his articles in the daily press and have responded to his invitation to send him accounts of their own experiences.

It is tempting to dismiss most of this evidence as of little or no scientific value, for as David Hume long ago pointed out in his discourse on miracles, the evidence of an eye-witness must diminish in value as it is handed on from one reporter to another. However some of the accounts of psychic phenomena are provided by Dr. Laubscher himself from his own experience, and these should perhaps be put in a different category.

We need not take seriously the tricks produced by Mrs. Shearer, a number of whose seances were attended by Dr. Laubscher. He tells us that she "showed a complex personality: fun, practical jokes, hoaxes, mimicry, mime and impersonations were the order of the day even during business hours". However when Mrs. Shearer and her husband served wine and Dr. Laubscher found a large hen's egg in his glass, and afterwards observed "poltergeist manifestations" when eggs and tomatoes hurled themselves against the wall at the other end of the room, he was convinced that "these strange phenomena showed that at times Mrs. Shearer produced supernormal powers".

Similarly it is difficult to understand how Dr. Laubscher could accept as genuine messages from the spirit world the various voices that spoke through Mrs. Shearer when she was in trance. One, Bert Relton, spoke very frequently in a male voice with an American accent. Great figures of the past communicated: Tennyson, Shakespeare, Moses, and so on. Having previously told us that Mrs. Shearer was an accomplished mimic and impersonator, Dr. Laubscher appears rather naive in accepting all this as anything more than clever hoaxing.

However naiveté alone does not account for the spirit message (or was it a telepathic communication?) received by the author from his dead or dying mother-in-law. She lived in Scotland where she and Dr. Laubscher knew each other. She agreed before he left Scotland that if she died before he did she would attempt to give three knocks in his presence. Six years later when he was in Cape Town

and was lying in bed reading the newspaper he heard the three knocks, and his wife in an adjoining room heard them also. He knew then that his mother-in-law had died. He expected a cablegram announcing the death, but it did not come till four days later, having been delayed in transmission. The date and time of death corresponded exactly with the knocks he had heard. Since his wife also heard the knocks we must conclude that she too was telepathic or that the departed spirit had succeeded in producing sound vibrations in the house in Cape Town.

This is only one of a number of examples of psychic phenomena to which Dr. Laubscher testifies personally, and from his accounts it seems difficult to ascribe them to mere coincidence. Taken at their face value they are very strong evidence for telepathy if not for "survival". It is a pity that independent testimony is not provided in such cases. During the four days, for instance, when Dr. Laubscher was awaiting a cablegram telling of his mother-in-law's death, did he and his wife inform any other people whose testimony could be quoted? To ask such questions would be to display a carping spirit and the author might well reply that those who are not prepared to accept his evidence in good faith should be treated with the contempt they deserve. Psychic research is a thorny subject.

CORRESPONDENCE

PRESIDENT KENNEDY

I can understand your attitude in wishing to state your views corroborating a previous Notes and News. In my views on Mr. Kennedy I'll admit your belief that he may have been forced into the shameful policy on Cuba has some merit, but this doesn't negate the fact he must accept the responsibility. He was the President at the time this incident occurred. As to the appointees, I was referring to those immediately surrounding him, and I am of the opinion those in the immediate circle were all Catholic except one. In the Cabinet he placed first Ribicoff, a Jew, then Celebrezze, a Catholic, in Health, Education and Welfare, both very disastrous to American separation of church and state. The "inner circle" which would have been almost an impossibility for someone such as us to penetrate, and Celebrezze were the ones I was most concerned with. His brother, the attorney-general, pulled no punches as to where he stood on church and state. His brother-in-law, Shriver, is also very Catholic in his views. These last two could also have been included in the inner circle of appointment, secretary, press agent, etc.

As to the fact, you state you suspect that many of the grants to the Roman Catholics were state, I suggest you contact Mr. Gaylord Briley, Director of Promotion of POAU at 1633 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, Zone 20036. He has compiled these figures and they are federal. He stated "In fact, it is not too much to say that Catholic acquisition of Federal funds today constitutes one of our great unpublicised scandals. In the last two years the Catholic portion of total church give aways zoomed to 93.5% as against 18.4% in the period from 1946-61".

I read and enjoy your weekly very much and consider it to be one of the very finest. I recommend it to everyone and shall continue to feel the same about it as it is a great source of information with our censorship. I can't help feeling the assassination greatly enhanced President Kennedy's administration. You might look into the above factors for a story. No one is infallible.

GEORGE KISSLINGER,
Secretary, American Rationalist Federation

Perhaps the best answer to Mr. Kisslinger is the POAU's (Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State) own appraisal of John F. Kennedy in the January 1964 issue of Church and State, which we reprint below.

An appraisal of the late President John F. Kennedy's stand regarding the separation of church and state must stress two points: (1) Generally, he did very well in this regard. (2) Per-

haps his greatest test lay just ahead when a degenerate's bullet tragically ended his life on November 22nd, 1963.

Mr. Kennedy's stand for separation during his 1960 campaign for the Presidency was impeccably American. His campaign utterances should set an example for every presidential candidate who seeks to win the confidence of the American people. The pledges to uphold separation of church and state were the more noteworthy because Mr. Kennedy was a Roman Catholic. His Church had historically shown a fondness for union with the state and a concordat which would assure favoured status for Catholicism.

Mr. Kennedy would have none of this. "Whatever one's religion in private life may be", he said, "for the office holder nothing takes precedence over his oath to uphold the Constitution . . . including the First Amendment and the strict separation of church and state". And again: "I believe . . . that the separation of church and state is fundamental to our American concept and heritage and should remain so".

Some believed that Mr. Kennedy would cave in when Catholic pressure was really applied. During the campaign Mr. Kennedy said: "There can be no question of Federal funds being used for support of parochial or private schools. It's unconstitutional under the First Amendment as interpreted by the Supreme Court. I'm opposed to the Federal Government's extending support to sustain any church or its schools".

After his election, when Cardinal Spellman tried to embarrass him by precipitating the parochial school aid issue into national politics, President Kennedy refused to be baited but firmly held his ground. He continued to press for Federal school aid but made it clear that Cardinal Spellman could not expect such aid for his schools.

At his death, Mr. Kennedy seemed headed for a crucial test of his fidelity to church-state separation. Quite likely to come to his desk would have been a bill providing grants for the erection of academic buildings at church-controlled colleges. Many considered the bill an outright violation of the First Amendment. Mr. Kennedy's pledges called for a veto to this legislation. What he might have done none can know.

SPIRIT

Mr. Duncanson puts his finger on two vital points about which the psychical researcher must satisfy the secularist—how could a spirit be detected?—and how does the "spiritual" differ in nature from the "material"? The answer to both these questions depends upon our conception of the natural world.

If the "supernatural" exists—and we have no reason to think it does—then I should regard it as an extension of the natural world as we know it, not something intrinsically different from it. I should expect it to be governed by discoverable natural laws and to be similar in important respects to the more obvious physical world.

To the savage, radio communication is a supernatural phenomena—he cannot understand the principles which govern its operation, even though they are connected with the world he knows. Similarly psychic phenomena (if they exist) are supernatural to us—we are suspicious of them and prefer that our minds work in more familiar channels.

Hence I would look to the physicist to provide the tools for the genuine psychical researcher. They may be radiations or wave-motions of a type at present unknown. If such exist as separate co-ordinated entities capable of purposeful activity it may well be suitable to call them "ghosts" or "souls" or "spirits". Whether we ultimately detect such entities depends upon (a) whether they exist, and (b) whether technology becomes sufficiently sophisticated.

This interpretation of a possible "supernatural" world merely extends our understanding of the material world. I thoroughly agree with Mr. Duncanson that were the supernatural different in kind (in every respect) from the material, we could know nothing of it. I have said the same thing many times in THE FREETHINKER.

G. L. SIMONS

F. A. RIDLEY TESTIMONIAL APPEAL

Members and friends are most cordially invited to attend at the Carpenter's Arms, Marble Arch, W.1, on Saturday, March 21st, at 7.30 p.m. for the official handing over of a cheque to Mr. F. A. Ridley in recognition of his many years of services to freethought and the National Secular Society from the presidency of which he recently retired after eleven years, and which post he had filled so well.

Although the appeal was formally terminated on February 14th contributions are still being received and the present total you have most generously subscribed is £220 16s. 6d., of which I have yet to thank:—

P.K. £5 5s.; R.S.M., £1; H.C., 5s.; R.G.M., £5 5s.; F.S., 5s.; E.C.R. 5s.; Mr. & Mrs. J.V., £2; R.F., £1 1s.; A.G.B., £1; J.D., £1; G.S., £1; G.A.K., £2 2s.; N.A.B., £1; A.C., 5s.; C.B., 10s.; S.C., 10s.; T.C., 10s.; D.B. (S. Africa), £1; H.S.M., £1, and Wales and Western Branch NSS, £1 1s.

for their most generous responses. Also for the invariable kindness and warmth of your many letters.

A personal letter of thanks is being sent to all contributors.

J. A. MILLAR.

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death in Manor Hospital, Derby of T. L. Peers. He was 86.

Mr. Peers was a life-long freethinker. In his younger days he was a keen amateur actor and he produced plays by Shaw and Ibsen. He was a member of the Shaw Society.

He had been a widower for some years and there was no family. Mr. T. M. Mosley conducted a secular funeral ceremony at Nottingham Crematorium on February 19th.

TEN NON-COMMANDMENTS

(A Humanist's Decalogue)

by RONALD FLETCHER

(recently appointed Professor of Sociology in the University of York)

"... deserves great praise"—Tribune

Price 2s. 6d., postage 6d.

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