

The Freethinker

Volume LXXXIV—No. 21

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

ARCHBISHOP HEENAN'S reiteration of the Roman Catholic Church's condemnation of contraception, and his attack on the ovulation-suppressing pill is no surprise. Popes have been rallying against contraception ever since the subject began to be publicly discussed, and use of the pill had already been classified as sterilisation, and as such strictly forbidden, by Pius XII. The Archbishop's statement therefore changes nothing. Nevertheless, it will be a blow to the many Catholics who have been hoping that the Vatican Council would relax the Church's ban.

Contraception is now an accepted part of the way of life of every developed country, seen as benefitting the individual, the family and society. In the past the Church has contested this, and has tried to support the condemnation it pronounces on theological grounds by a long series of statements and pamphlets, arguing—often with a complete disregard for facts and logic alike—that contraception was harmful to health, led to the degradation of marriage and family life, and would cause a catastrophic decline in population. (Among other mistakes, the Church seems to have grossly underestimated the desire for children, and the size of the family parents aim for). Now the Church has abandoned these indefensible forward positions, and has retired within its citadel—the law of God. Family planning, with all the logical arguments for limiting the number of children, is accepted, but finally the Church authorities dig their heels in—the use of artificial means of contraception, including the pill, is contrary to God's natural law, which even the Church has no power to alter. This is clear enough, but the Archbishop is less clear when he comes to explain how he knows this to be the law of God. He quotes St. Augustine as an authority, but this does not help his case much. Augustine held many repulsive doctrines, which the Church today would be ashamed to preach, and has long since abandoned. He was quite happy, for instance, believing in the damnation in a fiery hell of unbaptised infants, including the stillborn babies of good Catholics.

Unequivocal Position

The position of the Church authorities is not an enviable one, for it is quite incomprehensible to non-Catholics, and an increasing number of Catholics are questioning, and many are rejecting it. If family limitation is a good thing, why should God forbid the most effective means to it? If the Church is mistaken about this, is it in fact infallible? That way, as Church spokesmen have not failed to point out, lie heresy and lapsings. Conversations, we hear, are falling off, and who can wonder?

The Archbishop attempts to comfort Catholics faced with "an agonising choice between natural instincts and the law of God" by an assurance of his "fatherly compassion". He has, it must be admitted, a practical solution to offer them: "We urge husbands and wives to deepen their spiritual lives. Let them pray together and receive Holy Communion more often. The wider choice of times

for Mass now makes it possible for many more Catholics to become daily communicants. Thus will they be granted the strength they need and will enjoy the peace of a good conscience." Perhaps some Catholic couples will find the taking of daily Communion to be of help in this pointless fight against their natural instincts, but probably more will discover that daily attendance turns what formerly had significance for them into a monotonous and boring routine.

Sounder Basis

That sleeping together provides a sounder basis for marriage than praying together, is not merely the opinion of benighted unbelievers. Our view seems to be shared by a majority

of the Catholics concerned. On the very day on which Archbishop Heenan issued his denunciation, the *Catholic Herald* stated that an estimated 66 per cent of Catholic couples over 35 in America, use some forbidden means of contraception. The clergy who continue to rage about the sin of contraception are increasingly out of touch with the sentiments of their own flocks, whom they can apparently no longer control even with the threat of hellfire.

Celibate Priesthood

The absurd situation of a celibate clergy regulating the sex lives of the married is partly responsible for the difficulties of the Church. The education of priests is designed to cut them off as much as possible from the rest of the community. Usually the whole of their later adolescence and early manhood is spent under strict discipline, completely isolated from feminine companionship and from the ways of the world in general. Many emerge with an attitude that can only be described as prudish, while some have a pathological horror of sex. One gets the impression that some priests envy the married man to such an extent that they have no real sympathy for his problems. They seem to feel that the magnitude of their sacrifice in renouncing marriage entitles them to the ungrudging obedience of the layman when they restrict his married happiness. Only those endowed with an unusual breadth of sympathy can have any real understanding of the problems of the people they are supposed to guide, and it seems that many of their people realise this.

Restive Clergy

Many of the more enlightened clergy are also growing restive, however, as they see themselves faced with a terrifying dilemma. Either the law of God maliciously forbids what reason shows to be beneficial both to the individual and society, or the Church has mistaken the law of God. The first is absurd in itself, besides being unacceptable to the Catholic laity; the second leads to questioning the truth of the Church's claim to divine authority. The best way out for the Church would be to accept the pill as a logical extension of the approved, but unreliable rhythm method. Archbishop Heenan and other Church dignitaries who shortsightedly try to block this escape route are actually doing their Church nothing but harm.

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

A Bitter Pill for Catholics

By MARGARET McILROY

Who Were the April Fools?

By BOB CREW

APRIL was quite a month for Britain's moralists, what with Lord Longford addressing a public meeting in Croydon at the invitation of Youth Impact, the anti-pornographic movement, and the Moral Law Defence Association opening its petition against "doubtful" television plays. Then, in the name of sweet chastity, yet another organisation was formed in Glasgow called The League of Women, to strengthen the battle against immoral television plays. Against this background of virtuous activity during the month of April, one began to understand why no one should bother unduly about Mandy Rice Davies making a tatty come-back by actually singing a few songs at a meeting in Newcastle.

Also, during April, another smugly-sweet organisation calling itself the London Committee against Obscenity claimed that "there is a sort of neo-Puritan movement in the country, without doubt." The main objective of the Committee is to erase obscenity from the social scene by enabling the police to put more pornographers behind bars (where, presumably, the campaign against obscenity ends so far as the London Committee and its allies are concerned).

In the words of the London Committee's Secretary, former journalist Edward Oliver, "we try to get people to come forward, but it's not easy to find someone who will admit he caught the habit of masturbation from a pornographic book." I am not in the least surprised, as I would have thought that most of us indulged in masturbation long before we could even spell the word; which prompts me to ask Mr. Oliver if he has ever wondered how many people other than avid readers of pornographic literature (of which he is obviously one — for academic reasons, of course) actually enjoy the relief of masturbation with or without dirty books. If I were not a journalist myself, I might almost be tempted to believe that journalists don't have such "habits," but then I know that's not true — perhaps the whole matter should be referred to the League of Women, some of whom, no doubt, have young sons of their own.

Youth Impact was founded by a clerk of Roman Catholic denomination who lives in Newcastle. His organisation has contributed to the prosecution of several booksellers and it has produced an inspired publication of its own about — wait for it — chastity and charity (which I doubt will ever be a popular replacement for those books it seeks to abolish among his generation).

But in addition to these organisations there is another one which is perhaps better known than most of its contemporaries — The Public Morality Council, with the Archbishop of Canterbury as patron and the Bishop of London as Chairman. This Council is greatly concerned with the grading of films and plays for their social acceptability, and one could not find two more socially acceptable personages among its principals than the Archbishop and Bishop. Knowing from bitter experience what a success this staunch body of men has had, and will continue to have in the cherry-pie climate of Christendom, I can't help wondering if there isn't some duplicity of work somewhere with so many people wanting to get in on the act under their separate banners.

However, the ways of the Almighty are mysterious indeed and one must never dampen the ardour of youth, unless, of course, it happens to be an immoral ardour. Talking of which, I for one was heartened to see that the majority opinion at a conference of the National Union

of Students, during April, was slightly less than satisfied with these neo-Puritan trends. A resolution was carried deploring recent incidents at some universities where students have been severely punished for moral offences, with such observations as: "at eighteen years a person is old enough to decide whether or not he should sleep with a woman," and (from a twenty-year-old economics student at redbrick Reading University) "it is quite impossible to control the morals of students — quite wrong to attempt to do so." Without committing myself to the wording of these comments, I must say that I agree with the general sentiments and am relieved to know that not all of Britain's youth share the fatuous pose of the Youth Impact crusaders.

Of course I do not dispute the right of Britain's would-be moral philosophers to their own opinion: the purpose of this article is to encourage a more balanced view of a subject which is so often bedevilled with Christian prejudice, favouring the neo-Puritans, in most sections of the British press. And on that note I leave it to you, dear reader, to ask yourself, who were the April fools?

Humanist Statement on Archbishop Heenan

On May 7th, the British Humanist Association issued the following press statement: —

"It is evident that Archbishop Heenan's statement recognises the frequent conflict between supposed eternal truths and satisfactory patterns of behaviour derived from experience and commonsense.

"In condemning the use of the effective oral contraceptive, the Archbishop's appeal to the so-called laws of God, for which there is no evidence whatever, is plainly at odds with human welfare and happiness.

"The British Humanist Association declares that fullest use should be made of whatever techniques modern science and research provide and that we should not be bound by outdated concepts."

This was followed, on May 8th, by the further statement:

"The British Humanist Association deplores the latest condemnation of oral contraceptives by Archbishop Heenan. Although he was obviously trying to quell the revolt against the official ruling within the Church this is a question which affects millions of people throughout the world who are neither Catholic nor Christian.

"Catholic representation on the World Health Organisation has been used consistently to block efforts to set up birth control clinics in the underdeveloped and overpopulated countries where they are most needed, the sale of contraceptives is forbidden in Catholic countries, and obstructed, when possible, elsewhere.

"Commonsense and also common humanity now unite in protesting at this latest attempt to maintain what Sir Julian Huxley has called one of the greatest scandals of the century. It would be hard to exaggerate the amount of human misery caused by relying death control instead of birth control. Many Christians as well as Humanists are unable to follow the medieval logic and are appalled by the insensitiveness shown to needless suffering. This is a matter of world concern since the global population will be doubled by the end of the century and will continue to expand unless checked."

A Papal Election at the Counter-Reformation

By F. A. RIDLEY

THE following account of the exceptionally long and hotly contested Papal Election of 1549-50 as described in contemporary Italian diplomatic sources now in the British Museum, may be of interest to the readers of THE FREETHINKER. For the benefit of those not *au fait* with the ecclesiastical politics of the Counter-Reformation, I have prefaced my chronologically successive quotations with an explanatory paragraph.

On November 10th, 1549, Pope Paul III, a member of the reigning Farnese dynasty of Parma (then an independent Italian duchy) died at the age of 83. In ecclesiastical history, Pope Paul is known chiefly as the pope who gave official recognition to the Jesuits in 1540, and who re-established the (Roman) Inquisition in 1543. By such acts, he may be said to have inaugurated the Counter-Reformation.

However, the Pope himself, who owed his original promotion to the Borgias, was a typical Renaissance pope, cultured but licentious. According to a contemporary Spanish diplomat, this pope can also claim the distinction of being the first mythicist in modern times; and the arguments by which he is said to have rejected the historicity of Jesus Christ have a surprisingly modern ring. His death left the field clear for a straight fight between the conservative wing of the Roman Catholic Church, which advocated a fight-to-the-finish with the Protestant Reformation, and the liberal wing which sought an eventual compromise hoping for what would now be styled Christian reunion. The principal candidates for the papacy at the ensuing election were Cardinal Caraffa and the Englishman, Cardinal Pole (later the last Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury under Queen Mary).

However, after a ten week conclave, a compromise candidate, Cardinal Monti, was elected as Pope Julius III (1550-55). At a later election however, Caraffa, the militant champion of the Counter Reformation, got himself elected as Paul IV (1555-59), and this election may be held to signify the final victory of the Counter-Reformation, a decision of vast importance for both European ecclesiastical and secular history. (The remainder of this article consists of extracts from contemporary despatches by Matteo Dandolo, Venetian Ambassador at Rome (c.f. *Venetian Archives*.)

November 13th: "The wagers at the bankers' shops are twenty-four in favour of England [i.e. Pole], nor does any other Cardinal get near him, but the Pope, please God, will be created in conclave by a majority of two thirds of the cardinals".

November 30th, Dandolo: "Today at the 22nd hour, after very diligent search had been made at the Vatican, seven individuals were discovered besides those authorised to be there; and having been thrust out through the wicket gate, the closing of the conclave was completed. At the bankers' shops, the odds are greater than before on the Right Reverend of England which election, should it take place, may be believed to proceed from God as although urged by many of the cardinals to assist himself on this so great an occasion, he answered them that he would never utter one single word even were his silence to cost him a thousand lives not choosing to deviate from his ancient maxim which enjoined him to follow the Lord God and to desire nothing but His Will". [N.B. Historians of the Counter Reformation have held that this excessive humility prevented Pole from becoming the second English pope].

December 5th, 1549: "Yesterday morning at the 13th hour, Cardinal Pacheco arrived and owing to his long journey, he entered the conclave more dead than alive thus perhaps causing the election of a pope to be delayed for it was expected to be made in the person of the Cardinal of England who immediately went up in the bankers' shops to 40 per cent".

The conclave then decided not to wait for the French cardinals who were detained *en route* by stormy weather, whereupon "England got up both beyond 46 and 50 at the bankers' shops, so that at the second hour of the night he was at 80 per cent and 30 per cent was wagered that he would be proclaimed this morning. At the eighth hour there were so many votes for the Right Reverend of England that they were on the point of adoring him" as Pope, and they had already commenced unveiling the cells, as a sign that the conclave was over, but his opponents "commenced explaining that in this way anyone might promote a schism unless one scrutiny at least was made. Cardinal Pole himself was in like manner very averse to the adoration, telling them to be calm as at any rate he was not to become pope by any other hands than those of God, and should He thus will it, his election would take place this morning; and he went up to 95. It is therefore more than clear that the merchants are very well informed about the state of the poll and that the cardinals' attendants in conclave go partners with them in the wagers, which thus causes many tens of thousands of crowns to change hands".

As the sequel demonstrated, Pole missed his chance, perhaps due to his own inactivity on December 5th, but still remained favourite. Dandolo ends his despatch for that day by stating: "It is true that Cardinal Pole remains at 40 nor is any other person mentioned".

December 7th: "... The Right Reverend Deacon [Senior Cardinal] said they were to be of good cheer — that a pope would be elected and that he would be a man of worth, religion and agreeable to all the princes. After this it was heard that they made a scrutiny and gave 15 votes to Veruli and 24 to England who on the first ballot had 26, which caused many to repent on seeing the votes counted. The cardinals have had a quantity of things brought into the conclave, especially linen, and gave out what was foul, there being already a great stench."

On December 11th, the French cardinals arrived by sea and a lengthy deadlock ensued. Dandolo sent the Venetian Senate a copy of the Emperor Charles V's letter to the Sacred College and also of a memorandum asserting that, "should all the French cardinals come, as they say they will, thirty six cardinals will be required to elect a pope and God knows whether they will be able to agree, or whether a schism will take place. Never were the times more perilous, nor the conclave fuller, nor more divided. The number of candidates for the Popedom is great; the members of very opposite opinions and powerful. The French cardinals have said that were they to rot they will conquer, and so say the others."

The conclave then settled down to a stalemate and the insanitary conditions then prevalent began to take a hand, as can be seen from the next Venetian dispatch on December 27th:

"On Thursday morning, Cardinal Veruli was to have re-entered conclave but on Wednesday night, being suffocated by catarrh, he went to another place where he will

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This Believing World

The "Daily Mail's" lady theologian, Miss Monica Furlong, tells us (May 8th) that "the real point of the clergyman, his proper vitality, lies not in his social work but in his faith". Well, well. Some of us have always thought that, apart from at least some of his social work, a clergyman could easily be dispensed with. Of what use is his "faith" to anybody but himself, and is it of much use even then?

★

In the ATV show "Why I believe", Miss Anne Lawson, an actress, laughingly admitted right away that she was a Roman Catholic, as were her parents. And though she appeared four times more, she could add nothing whatever to that. She believed because her Church told her to. On the other hand, a Mr. Peter Whiteley rather lugubriously claimed to be a Christian, though he was apparently subject to "doubts". However, these had been dispelled, and now he was a Christian again. Miss Furlong was so pleased that she cried "Hallelujah"! It would be interesting if ATV would tell us whether they hope to convert anybody with a gleam of intelligence by this dismal series.

★

So the gay die-hard bachelor of the Roman Church, Dr. John Heenan, has come out against contraception—any method—as against "God's Law". But who knows what is God's Law on birth control? Dr. Heenan? His Church? Neither has produced a particle of evidence that anybody knows what "God" thinks about it. But the Archbishop's pronouncement hit the headlines of our national press.

★

Dr. Heenan tells us that "Catholic and Protestant, Christian and Jew will find in me a willing servant and a loving father", and no doubt he means it. But he tactfully leaves out "unbelievers" for which much thanks! As a faithful servant of the Church, his real duty lies with it, and it is quite impossible to envisage his being "loving and willing" to anybody who told him that the Church is a huge fraud.

★

BBC TV the other week gave us a programme on "Will Shakespeare, Gent", with Mr. Fyfe Robertson in charge of an interesting survey of what we know—as far as possible—of the poet as a man. He rather ruefully admitted it was precious little, and pointed out that even the two "authentic" portraits, the famous bust, and the Droeshout engraving, were quite "suspect". But although we were shown quite a lot of places where presumably the poet lived, and of course Stratford Church where he lies buried, we had not a word about Shakespeare's religion. Yet we can say with confidence that, in a very religious age, Shakespeare omitted religion as far as he could. He was an unbeliever.

★

Whether the Archbishop of Canterbury is or is not satisfied with his own clergy here in England, we do not know, but we remember that some months ago he wanted African and Asian "missionaries" to come to England "to help convert our English Church to a closer following of Christ"; and we cannot help wondering how many coloured clergy are now here as God's missionaries? How many British parsons have now been converted "to a closer following of Christ" by their coloured brothers? But more important, how many Freethinkers have found Christ through the earnest arguments of Asiatic and African Christians? What a pity that Dr. Ramsey does not answer these questions.

A PAPAL ELECTION AT THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

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remain longer. Had he been content to remain at home, he might perhaps have attained the object for which he came [i.e. the papacy] but possibly God chose to provide better for him. It is suspected that the like may befall Santa Croce, who is so ill of his ague that tomorrow he is also to be taken out of conclave. Many conclavists, men of experience and good intellect, have quitted the conclave from illness, nor can any one of them tell who will be pope, any more than we can just as if they had not been there.

"On the evening before last, the prelates presented themselves at the wicket gate to urge the cardinals in favour of dispatch. The cardinals replied that they would not fail doing their duty by them giving hope that they would soon have a good and acceptable pontiff; but the Senior Cardinal told the prelates that they must diminish the cardinals' food, and Cardinal Farnese said it ought to be nothing but bread and water. Farnese then suggested that the sole alternative would be to issue the cardinals with swords and daggers."

The same day Pole again led with 25 votes. From then on Caraffa began to gain, and for the next six weeks Pole and Caraffa were running neck-and-neck with regular votes of 23 and 22 respectively. The ensuing dispatch is typical of many.

December 24th: "At present the contest is between Chieti [Caraffa] and Pole, and although yesterday they both spoke most eloquently, I believe matters will remain thus a long while unless the Almighty intervenes for there are strange humours on one side and the other."

Matters soon reached such a pass that Dandolo tried to hurry them up by a personal intervention, but: "The Right Reverend, the Senior Cardinal answered with a most joyous countenance that although they always received me they were moreover specially glad to do so on this occasion, and that we were to be of good cheer and that they would give us a good pope and speedily, but that we also were to do our duty in this matter so that they might accomplish it by stopping their food; whereupon all the cardinals with one voice urged and the majority commanded us not to let anything but bread and water in the conclave. Cardinal Cibo spoke most earnestly, and wished the cardinals to have wine, but with bread alone. Pacheco put his head out of the wicket gate almost in a rage, protesting that nothing should be given them but bread and water."

On December 28th: "They have walled up the small windows fronting the court, from which some of the cardinals often used to show themselves." And by January 8th, 1550: "Everyone is of opinion that there is not the slightest hope of having a pope not even in the course of a month, so the wagers at the bankers' shops continue to be brisk . . . Both factions have again taken oath not to yield to the other, and the Imperialists swear they will die with Pole on their lips and every morning continue to give him their 23 votes. Caraffa has 22, the French saying that they will also die in conclave."

Thus matters continued another month until a compromise candidate, Monti, was elected on February 8th, upon which date "the cardinals went to their homes with very haggard countenances." As was only to be expected! And on February 12th, Dandolo supplied an electoral footnote. One single merchant, he said, "has made upwards of twenty thousand crowns by wagers."

THE FREETHINKER

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1
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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 and J. A. MILLAR.
(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: 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

Havering Humanist Society, (Harold Wood Social Centre), Tuesday, May 26th, 8 p.m.: Mr. BOOKER and Mrs. WEBSTER, (Hornchurch Old Peoples' Welfare Association) "Can We Help?
South Place Ethical Society, (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, May 24th, 11 a.m.: Professor T. H. PEAR, "Extraverted and Intraverted Psychologists".

Notes and News

IN AN excellent leader on May 11th, *The Guardian* compared the problems of the Chief Rabbi and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster who, it remarked incidentally, "now sometimes compare notes". But whereas the origins and authority of the Mosaic Law are almost exclusively Jewish concerns, *The Guardian* emphasised that control of the world's birthrate and the physical and psychological health of families are "matters too far-reaching to be left to the bishops of a single Christian communion in a single country". Or, we might add, in all countries. In claiming a unique access to universal and inalienable law, Catholics, the *Guardian* continued, "distort the natural meaning of language to fit their own prior assumptions". And it castigated the assertion that "chaste living" is incompatible with the use of contraceptives. Remarks of this kind represent what Aneurin Bevan called "not policy, but emotional spasm".

★
EVENTUALLY a birth control pill may be marketed which will satisfy the demands "even of the English and Welsh hierarchies". But even if this happens, the Catholic Church will continue, as the *Guardian* pointed out, "to be involved in some fine definitions". With two forms of contraceptive in use, one "legitimate" and the other "illegitimate", the Church "will be obliged to take the view that a couple who use the first sort selfishly, sin less heinously than a couple who use the second sort responsibly".

★
MORE THAN half of the 2,670 Congregational churches in this country have 50 members or less; 756 have only 25 members, and only 169 have more than 200 members. These figures were given by the Rev. J. A. Figures, Chairman of the Congregational Union in his address to

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged £133 2s. 10d.—W. Dzus, 14s. T. Shapps, £1. R. B. Ratcliff, £1. S. J. 1s. R. C. £10. Pius John 23rd. the Second, £7 1s. 2d. R. Le Suer, 5s. D. Davies, 10s. I. Barnes, £1. D. Behr, 10s. A. Allman, 5s. G. A. Woodcock, £1. T. A. Simpson, 2s. 6d. J. D. Hocking, 10s. M. Quinton, £1 1s. H. Milne, 10s. 6d. J. Buchanan, £5. S. C. Merrifield, 3s. M. E. 4, 10s. L. Doreau, £1. A. Faiers, £1. S. C. £1. H. Meulen, £5. Prof. G. Cunelli, £1. W. Steinhardt, 7s. M. Gray, 7s. 6d. C. Morris, 10s. K. Graham, 2s. 6d. D. Ferrier, £7 14s. Total to date May 14th, 1964.—£182 17s. 2d.

the annual assembly in London. The question each local church had to ask itself was, Mr. Figures said, whether it could "go it alone"? Too many churches didn't "belong to the present" and had "no hope" by themselves (*The Guardian* 12/5/64). Too many were redundant and out of "desperate but misplaced loyalty try to preserve the bricks and mortar of large old buildings, which are so costly to maintain that they are growing steadily more derelict". The only way out of this gloomy situation, Mr. Figures decided, was in co-operation with other Churches and in being "willing to make radical adaptations". None of the Nonconformist sects it seems, can afford to be independent any more.

★
THE Church of Scotland's Committee report, *Church and Nation*, which is to be debated at the General Assembly in Edinburgh, condemns those "who seem determined to undermine the standards of private and public morality", and considers it a duty to protest against affronts to Christian ideals" (*Daily Express* 11/5/64). The trend towards unconcerned participation in and acceptance of conduct that was at times sexually perverted, would in itself be disturbing enough, says the report, but equally alarming were the attempts by some writers and commentators either to deny such activities or to whitewash them if their existence is admitted. Moreover, "Some quality London newspapers and magazines and some TV programmes seem prepared to lend themselves as media for this whitewashing . . .". Burns, thou should'st have been living at his hour!

★
SEVEN years after he was received into the Church of England, Canon Amand de Mendieta of Winchester, a former Benedictine monk, has been appointed to the 33-member commission on Roman Catholic relations set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury. As a Benedictine, Mendieta became a scholar of international repute, but "left his order because of changed views about Roman Catholic dogma" (*Daily Express* 8/5/64). Two other men on the commission are Canon Bernard Pawley, the Archbishop's "representative in Rome" and Dr. John Moorman, Bishop of Ripon, who leads the Anglican observers at the Vatican Council. But, Dr. Ramsay has also included some prominent Low churchmen to keep down criticism from Evangelicals, "some of whom remain highly suspicious of any dealings with Roman Catholics".

★
THE Spain Fights for Freedom exhibition which was inaugurated at Hampstead Town Hall in January, is to tour Britain. It may be seen at Bethnal Green Central Library from May 20th to May 23rd inclusive. It is open from 12 noon until 8 p.m. (Saturday 5 p.m.). On Saturday June 13th it will be housed in a special tent at the South Wales Mines Gala.

★
WHICH are the most segregated schools in America?, asked the *Daily Express* (8/5/64). And it gave the answer of the negro leader Dr. Martin Luther King: "Sunday schools"

Marie Curie

By ADRIAN PIGOTT

(Concluded from page 159)

THE NEWS of the discovery of radium in 1902 created immense interest in scientific circles. The Curies had a heavy postbag to attend to, one letter being from an American business man who wanted to manufacture the element for commercial purposes. They were still both badly off, but Marie was adamant. "Radium is an element," she said. "It belongs to the people, and it is not intended to enrich anybody. To patent it would be contrary to the scientific spirit." The Professor agreed so they gave away the results of their arduous labours, free of charge, to any inquirers.

However, their finances were improved by the award of the Nobel Prize which was jointly awarded to them and to Henri Becquerel, who had first noticed radiation. The Curies' share was about £3,000. Medical men began to find that radium, when applied in suitably diluted quantities, had the power of burning up unwanted growths in the human body, such as tumours and cancer. This gave the two discoverers very great satisfaction. A new word came into existence, "Curie-therapy."

Their first recognition came from England in June, 1903, when they were invited to dine in London at the Royal Institution. Mme. Curie was the first woman to attend the dinner of this august society, and she sat on the right hand of Lord Kelvin, who had been an admirer and friend of Pierre Curie for many years. Other distinguished scientists present were Lord Rayleigh, Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Ray Lankester. After the dinner Professor Curie gave a short lecture and asked for the room to be darkened and then gave some demonstrations of the powers of radium. A few months later, the Royal Society awarded them its highest honour, the Davy Gold Medal.

About this time the French Government offered the Legion of Honour to the Professor, who refused it, saying that he preferred to have the use of a laboratory — but the hint was not taken. The French treated their top-ranking scientist in such a shabby manner that he never had a laboratory of his own; but in 1904 a new Chair was created for him at the University of Paris and he left the School of Physics and Chemistry to become Professor of the Faculty of Sciences at the Sorbonne. Madame Curie was appointed as head of its laboratory, so they again worked together. She received only £100 a year for this work.

Madame Curie's five-year-old ambition of becoming a Doctor of Science had been postponed on account of her four years of activity in discovering radium. However, in June, 1903, she applied for this high degree, which necessitated a public *viva voce* examination by professors. Usually the candidates for doctorate were old grey-beards, so it was a surprise to see a slender, fair-haired woman of 36 answering questions with complete confidence. She was awarded the high degree with the additional comment, "*Très honorable*." But the spectators noticed that her hands resembled those of a charlady — eloquent evidence of the amount of heavy manual labour which she had done — and that her fingers were brown with burns caused by 4 years' association with radium.

In December, 1904, Madame Curie gave birth to her second daughter, Eve, who in 1938 published a biography of her mother.

Life progressed happily until April 19th, 1906, when a terrible tragedy took place. Pierre Curie was walking to his work at the Sorbonne when a heavy rainstorm occurred. He put up his umbrella and accidentally slipped into the street where a heavy horse-drawn wagon ran over his head. He was killed instantly.

Later on in the afternoon Madame Curie returned home and the news was broken to her. She fell into a paroxysm of grief and kissed the still warm body of the Professor. She had to be forcibly removed. However, when the first shock was over, she faced the difficulties with characteristic bravery. The French Government, which had been so unappreciative of the Professor during his lifetime, now offered her a pension, which she refused. "I am young enough to earn my own living and to provide for my children," she replied with typical independence. She had two young children aged 2 and 3 to maintain, and also the aged Dr. Curie to attend to.

The Faculty of Science unanimously decided to invite Mme. Curie to take over the position left vacant by the death of her husband. It was the first time that a woman in France had been offered such a post, and she accepted because she and the Professor had agreed some years previously that — in the event of the death of one of them — the survivor should continue their work.

So she set to work in picking up the threads of the Professor's work, a highly intricate task necessitating many consultations with his assistants. Dr. Curie (now 79) proved to be an invaluable ally, but he died in February, 1910.

Her energy and industry were absolutely phenomenal. One of her books, *Treatise on Radioactivity*, published in 1910, had 971 pages. And she gave every encouragement to her young daughters, who specialised in mathematics and music. In 1911 she was awarded her second Nobel Prize for chemistry. This was the first, and only time that a previous winner was honoured a second time.

When World War I broke out, Mme. Curie concentrated on X-ray work, and improvised a fleet of travelling X-ray units, for which she had to fight against official sloth and distrust. As a result, 220 radiological posts were established on the front, and the number of wounded soldiers treated rose to over one million. She also found time to conduct teaching classes, and between 1916 and 1918 this indefatigable heroine trained 150 X-ray technicians.

Largely as a result of her efforts, thousands of lives were saved and tens of thousands of amputations were avoided. But when the war was over, the graceless French Government gave Madame Curie absolutely no official reward at all. She had exposed the inefficiency of a government department, and bureaucrats — like elephants — never forget! Her reward lay in the love and gratitude shown to her by thousands of soldiers whose lives and limbs had been saved by her reforms. That is how Madame Curie preferred it to be.

After the war, she resumed her scientific work and supported the new League of Nations. In 1921 she was persuaded to visit the USA because the women of America had generously subscribed to buy a gramme of radium to assist her in her work. She received the Freedom of the City of New York, and left the place with her right

arm in a sling as a result of vigorous hand-shaking. Americans love to lionise a famous visitor: in 1892 they had almost killed Tchaikovsky with their kindness.

Madame Curie then went on to Washington where President Harding presented her with the key of the casket containing the precious gramme of radium. He did not give her the casket itself because it was considered too dangerous for the President to be near such perilous material. Then he told the illustrious company that Madame Curie was "a noble person, a devoted wife and a loving mother who (apart from her great scientific work) had fulfilled all the duties of womanhood."

The great lady's last years were crowned with success and happiness, and she worked unceasingly. She founded Radium Institutes at Paris and Warsaw, and was director of the former. In 1922 a vacancy occurred at the Academy of Medicine at Paris. Her name was proposed, owing to the value of radium in counteracting cancer — and, to their credit, all the other candidates stood down in her favour.

In 1923 the French Government awarded her an annual pension of 40,000 francs as a "national recompense" to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the prophetic announcement which she and Professor Curie had made in December, 1898 — "We believe that pitchblende contains a new element to which we propose to give the name Radium." The Sorbonne was crowded when President Millerand officially offered her the pension "as a feeble, but sincere, witness of the enthusiasm, respect and gratitude which follow you." In reply, she made a modest speech stressing the merits of her late husband.

In 1926 her elder daughter, Irene, married a young scientist named Joliot and, in due course, Madame Curie attained the pleasures which every grandmother enjoys. Her activities continued to be stupendous. However, by 1930, the strain on her eyes began to tell and she had her fourth operation on them.

Early in 1934 her health deteriorated, but from her sickbed she corrected the proofs of her latest book, an enormous volume of many hundred pages. The doctors recommended a transfer to the mountain air of the French Alps, and she died peacefully on July 4th, 1934. The cause of death was pernicious anaemia aggravated by her continual contacts with emanations from radium.

Tributes to the splendour of her character poured in from all over the world. Albert Einstein wrote: "It was my good fortune to be linked with Madame Curie through 20 years of sublime and unclouded friendship. I came to admire her human grandeur to an ever-growing degree. Her strength, her purity of will, her austerity towards herself, her objectivity, her incorruptible judgment — all these were of a kind seldom found joined in a single individual."

WITHOUT COMMENT

When Christian reunion will take place, only God knows; but as far as we can see, it would seem to be in the far distance, perhaps a thousand years away.
— Father John A. O'Brien, quoted in *The Faith*, May, 1964.

Sunday, June 7th, 2.30 p.m.

UNVEILING OF THOMAS PAINE STATUE AT THETFORD

Coach leaves Central London 9.30 a.m.

Details from THE SECRETARY,

National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street,
London, S.E.1, or telephone HOP 2717

American Attempt to Discriminate Against Atheists

INVOLVEMENTS with religion loom as Congress moves into areas traditionally occupied by the Churches. An example of this involvement may be observed in the debate on the Civil Rights bill in the US House of Representatives when Rep. J. M. Ashbrook (Republican, Ohio) successfully sought an amendment which would permit employment discrimination against atheists.

One section of the Civil Rights bill deals with the elimination of racial and religious discrimination in employment practices. The bill bars such discrimination on the basis of race or creed. But some doubts were raised. Would an employer be required by law to hire an atheist if he were qualified for the job?

Rep. Ashbrook pressed Rep. Emanuel Celler (Democrat, New York), the bill's manager, closely on this point. When he received the reply that the employer would indeed be required to hire an atheist if he were qualified for the job he offered his amendment. It provided that "it shall not be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to refuse to hire and employ any person because of said person's atheistic practices and beliefs."

There were many Congressmen eager to take the floor in defence of religion. Rep. Carl Elliott (Democrat, Alabama) came out strongly for it. He recalled that America had started under God and that the words "In God We Trust" were printed on our coins. This, he thought, was proof enough that an employer should have the right to refuse to hire an atheist. Rep. Paul C. Jones (Democrat, Missouri) was equally resolute. He said he felt that any man trying to run a business "based on good moral grounds" should not be required to hire an atheist. "I do not want to have any of our laws weakened to the extent we do not recognise that this is a nation that believes in God," he said. And there were others.

Defenders of the atheist's right to employment were few, perhaps because atheists themselves are few. Indeed, the atheist's sole defender turned out to be a Roman Catholic, Rep. Peter W. Rodino, Jr. (Democrat, New Jersey). "I am a Catholic by faith," he said, "but I respect the right of other people to believe or not to believe. I do not see any reason to discriminate against a person on account of race, colour, national origin or religion."

When the vote was called for, the amendment prevailed by 137 to 98. In the House version of the Civil Rights bill, therefore, the only permissible form of discrimination in employment will be against atheists. No one mentioned during the debate that under the finding of the US Supreme Court in *Torcaso vs. Watkins*, the Ashbrook amendment was patently unconstitutional.

The word was quietly passed, however, that nobody need worry since the amendment would not be in the Senate version of the bill and it would be dropped by the joint conferees. But others declared such a deal could not be relied on in view of the committee's desire to avoid any amendments and therefore any return to joint conferees.

A comparable problem developed in Columbus, Ohio, when the National Council of Churches Conference on Church and State was seeking to formulate its position. Most agreed that there could be no racial discrimination in church institutions receiving tax support. But there was a prolonged battle over whether such institutions should have the right to discriminate on the basis of religion.

Administrators saw that if creedal discrimination were

to be eliminated in their institutions, both student bodies and faculties would tend to lose denominational identity. Students of all faiths, and none, would quickly inundate the traditional religious configuration. Atheists as well as others of conflicting theological viewpoints could come to the faculty without hindrance. There were those who said that if the anti-religious discrimination feature were to be pressed, a denominational institution would simply be impossible. They argued that the entire basis of the traditional denominational college was one of religious distinctives emanating from the denomination.

College presidents fought hard against the ban on creedal discrimination in institutions receiving Federal aid. But the ban stayed in the Council's position paper, nevertheless.

[Reprinted from *Church and State*, USA, April, 1964.]

THE POPE'S SILENCE

FIVE million people cannot be uprooted from their homes, taken to camps hundreds of miles away and murdered in cold blood without the word getting around. The Roman Catholic Church has the most efficient spy system in the world. In addition, the evidence indicates that Pope Pius XII knew that the Jews were being transported and murdered in a barbaric manner. This "Pope of Peace", this "Holy" Father, this self proclaimed exclusive representative of Jesus Christ on earth, remained *silent*, when a few disapproving words from him might have saved the lives of thousands and thousands of Jews. (Is there any wonder that he died in great mental agony and with great concern for his soul?)

Here was the most appalling horror in all human history, and the Pope did not raise hand or voice to save innocent people from being murdered by the Germans. The Pope may have had several reasons for not acting, aside from the age-old hatred of the Roman Catholic Church for the Jews. He also hated and feared Russia and if there happened to be a choice between Hitler and Russia, he preferred Hitler. His silence would help Hitler. Many Catholics in Germany would obey the Pope's orders. If he weakened Hitler, by speaking up for the Jews he would be paving the way for the Russian advance westward.

The Pope and Hitler had a concordat, but we can assume that either party would break that concordat, if breaking it would serve to promote its interests. We should also assume that the Pope had a realistic evaluation of Hitler and his gangs. It is fair to assume that the Pope would try to follow a policy, the results of which would do the least damage to his Church.

The "Pope of Peace" remained silent.

N.E.S. WEST.

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CORRESPONDENCE

CORRECTION

It is rare to find an error in THE FREETHINKER but in the article "Saying your Prayers" by Reginald Underwood (May 1st) the well known verse by J. C. Squire is given as:—

To God the embattled nations sing and shout,
God save England and God save the King.

If my memory serves, the correct version reads:—

God heard the embattled Nations shout,
"God strafe England" and "God save the King".

To save England, and the King, did not present any difficulty—both survived the War, the King (George V) dying in 1936—but to "strafe" England *and* save the King would seem a problem even for the Almighty.

W. COLLINS.

CROMWELL AND PRESTON

You asked, in Notes and News (8/5/64) if it was fear of Catholic intolerance that induced Preston Council to turn down a request for a plaque to Cromwell on the bridge he crossed to victory in the Civil War in 1648.

On April 15th, the *Sunday Times* reported that the proposal by the Cromwell Society, had brought "angry protests from Roman Catholics in the town", and that Councillor Joseph Holden—a Catholic magistrate—was leading the opposition. "There are 40,000 Roman Catholics here", Councillor Holden said, "and every one of them will fight this proposal".

So much for the tolerance of Preston!

A. R. BRYANT.

CARDINAL NEWMAN

I wonder if Mr. F. A. Ridley does not praise Cardinal Newman too highly? From the Catholic angle he was no doubt outstanding, but can he really be classed as a "major intellectual figure"? I know the expression is Chapman Cohen's, but Mr. Ridley quotes it with obvious approval. It is one thing to provide a stratagem whereby a changeless Church could change its dogmas, it is quite another to attain the status of "illustrious" thinker, Christian or otherwise.

GEORGE GILLESPIE.

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